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MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP** held on 28 March 2023 at 2.15 pm

Present

Councillors

Mrs M E Squires (Chairman)
Mrs C Collis, W Burke, L J Cruwys, R J Dolley, B Holdman,
S Pugh and Mrs E J Slade

Also Present

Councillors

Cllr S J Clist

Present

Officers:

Maria De Leburne (District Solicitor and Monitoring Officer), Lisa Lewis (Corporate Manager for Business Transformation and Customer Engagement), Matthew Page (Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste), Dr Stephen Carr (Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager), Andrew Seaman (Member Services Manager), Angie Howell (Member Services Officer) and David Parker (Member Services & Policy Research Officer)

48 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (0:03:19)

There were no apologies or substitute Members.

49 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (0:03:26)

Members were reminded of the need to make declarations where appropriate.

50 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (0:03:38)

There were no members of the public present.

51 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (0:03:49)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 January 2023 were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

52 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS (0:04:05)

The Chairman had no announcements to make.

53 COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY (0:04:17)

The Group had before it a report* from the Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation which provided Members with the revised Communication and Engagement Strategy and accompanying Media and Social Media Policy.

The contents of the report were outlined with reference to the following:

- These policies were reviewed every 2 years.
- There were no substantive changes to the document or to the approach.

- Recently completed another customer survey with an aim to engage with customers on the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in June 2023. An analysis of the results of this survey were ongoing.

The following was discussed by the Committee:

- The Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement would provide a written response regarding the amount of residents who had asked for more than 1 bin.
- The Committee were concerned for elderly people that don't have access to on-line facilities or those that are uncomfortable with payment for services over the telephone using their bank card. The Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement advised that residents could pay with their cards within Phoenix House, Tiverton.
- Whether the payment method for larger waste removals could be managed differently was raised by the Committee. It was advised by the Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement that the context of this question was more appropriate for the Waste Service.
- The possibility of staggered opening times for Reception was raised, to which the Chair noted that this would likely be for the new Administration to discuss.
- The reputation of the Council was raised and further clarification was sought on the Council's responses to news articles that made reference to Council decisions. The Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement advised that officers always remained politically neutral and would always liaise with the Cabinet Member or the Portfolio Holder where necessary.
- The Committee suggested that Members be reminded of the policies set out in the Social Media Guidelines outlined on pages 32/33 which included: Dignity at Work; Single Equality Scheme; Member Code of Conduct; Officer Code of Conduct and the MDDC Safeguarding Policy.
- The Committee were concerned about the level of communication and engagement. The Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement advised that better communication and engagement would be addressed as the Customer Service System was due to be replaced. This would bring a more efficient service as it would keep our customers up to date with tracking. It would also enable us to communicate with customers to keep them aware of progress. Attempts were also made to engage with customers by carrying out customer surveys.
- It was raised that on Page 18, paragraph 10.0 a typo needed to be corrected, from "plan" to "plain".
- A concern was raised by Committee regarding the CRM system as it would only be as good as the inputted data. In addition, there was a need to ensure that new Members and Officers were made clear when they come on board to avoid a duplication of work.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the Cabinet that the content of the revised Communication and Engagement Strategy and the Media and Social Media Policy be approved.

(Moved by the Chair).

Reason for the decision: As set out in the report.

Notes: * Report previously circulated.

54 **SINGLE EQUALITIES POLICY AND EQUALITY OBJECTIVE (0:28:34)**

The Group had before it a report* from the Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager which provided Members with an update on action taken to help meet the Council's statutory duties under the Equality Act (2010).

The contents of the report were outlined with reference to the following:

- This report was presented annually to the Community PDG.
- Mid Devon has a population of circa 83,000, with a growth of 6.5% since 2011.
- Mid Devon had an aging population.
- The percentage of residents who were economically active decreased.
- The number of residents reporting that they have no religion had increased.
- The percentage of residents with a level 3 qualification or above increased.
- There were no proposed changes to the Council's Equality Objectives.

The following was discussed by the Committee:

- That all protected characteristics must be considered including ethnicity.
- As an employer it needs to be representative of the community it serves.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the Cabinet that the content of the Single Equalities Policy and Equality Objective Policy be approved.

(Moved by the Chair).

Reason for the decision: As set out in the report.

Notes: * Report previously circulated.

55 **REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS (0:36:19)**

The Committee received and **NOTED** verbal update from the District Solicitor and Monitoring Officer on the Regulation of Investigatory Powers. The District Solicitor and Monitoring Officer explained that there had been no request for applications under these powers.

56 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT (0:37:39)**

The Committee received the Chairman's Annual Report for 2022/2023.

The Chair thanked officers for their hard work. Councillors also thanked the Chair for all her efforts over the past 4 years.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Chairman's Annual Report be noted at Full Council.

57 **WORK PROGRAMME (0:37:56)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, the “Community Policy Development Group Work Plan for 2022-2023.

(The meeting ended at 2.55 pm)

CHAIRMAN