

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP** held on 14 March 2023 at 5.40 pm

Present

Councillors

J Wright (Chairman)
W Burke, D R Coren, Miss J Norton, R F Radford, R L Stanley
and L D Taylor

Present

Officers:

Matthew Page (Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste), Andrew Busby (Corporate Manager for Property, Leisure and Climate Change), Luke Howard (Environment and Enforcement Manager), Jason Ball (Climate and Sustainability Specialist), Sarah Lees (Member Services Officer), Andrew Seaman (Member Services Manager) and David Parker (Member Services & Policy Research Officer)

55 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (0.02.19)

None received

Cllr E J Berry attended via Zoom.

56 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (0.02.24)

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

57 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (0.02.33)

There were no members of the public present.

58 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (0.02.37)

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2023 were agreed as a true record and duly **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

59 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (0.03.02)

The Chairman had no announcements to make.

60 ENVIRONMENT ENFORCEMENT: QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE UPDATE (0.03.09)

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, a *report from the Environment and Enforcement Manager providing an update on the quarterly performance update for environment enforcement.

Consideration was given to:

- Operation "File Name" was a joint operation with Devon and Cornwall Police, DVLA, NHS and Mid Devon Housing to reach difficult community groups, in Q3 it focussed around the Two Sisters factory in relation to Environmental crime, it was noted that operation "File Name" would continue throughout the year.
- Quarter 3 performance revenue hitting the £65k mark for car parking.

- Abandoned Vehicles - During Q3 80 abandoned vehicles were reported of which 17 required action with 10 being moved by the owners and 7 vehicles removed by MDDC contractors. Four Fixed Penalty Notices were issued in Q3 relating to abandonment of vehicles.
- Littering and Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) – During Q3, 80 Patrols lasting a day each have been conducted resulting in seven fixed penalty notices being issued four for PSPO breaches and three for littering, the patrols in known dog walking areas and in the towns had been a good opportunity to engage with the public.
- The Team had been focussed on Fly Tipping, 8 people were interviewed under caution resulting in two fixed penalty notices being issued. It was expected that the Council removed carcasses of deer from roadsides.
- The Team had carried out public engagement exercises with Primary Schools concentrating on specific towns and highlighting the impacts of littering, fly tipping and the benefits of recycling.
- Penalty Charge Notices (PCN) may be written off due to appeals. The reason that more PCN's were outstanding in Q3 2022 compared with previous years there had been less time to recover the PCN's as compared with previous years, the PCN's outstanding for Q3 in 2019, 2020 and 2021 were sat with the Council's debt collection agents.
- Parking Machine income usually dipped in the months of December to March.

Note: *report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

61 CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE (0.15.28)

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, the *Climate and Sustainability update presented by the Climate and Sustainability Specialist which documented progress against the Climate Action Plan.

The Officer gave an overview of his report and highlighted:

- The leisure centre decarbonisation project was going well at Exe Valley and Lord's Meadow, ground source heat pumps, air source heat pumps and solar panels were planned to be added to the heating systems and linking to the biomass heating boiler at Lord's Meadow. LED lights had been installed in the floodlights on the all-weather pitches to save energy.
- Tree planting event had been planned which aimed for circa 1000 trees to be planted.
- The planning sustainability guidance was approved by cabinet on 7 March.
- The procurement strategy was also approved on 7th February which had environmental benefits.

Consideration was given to:

- How long it took before a tree started absorbing carbon.

- Planting trees was also aimed at helping particular species such as the hazel dormouse. The trees were broadleaf native species, selected as being suitable to forecast climate scenarios and UK grown. This should futureproof the habitat.
- Exmouth swimming pool was noted to be heated via a Data Processing Centre; officers were asked to look into this potential solution.
- Hydro-power plant proposal. It was asked how many days a year it would work. It was explained that the business case was based on a forecast output powering Council Offices and the power line would likely be routed along the road. This would be used to reduce or offset the energy bought. There was a request for MDDC to talk to Three Rivers Housing about e.g. noise impact on properties. (Note: Verbal answer provided October 2022 explained the evidence accepted by Planning showed no noise issue.)
- Working in partnership with farmers. Example – milk buyers had implemented contract terms with strict environmental performance standards and monitoring; it was asked if officers might find a way to work with farmers in a similar way.
- Planning - the environment PDG should be able to work closer with planning e.g. in relation to Anaerobic Digester plants and Solar Panels. Consultation was still active with the national planning policy framework, and was renewables positive.
- It was suggested Environment PDG could invite a farming and carbon expert.

Note: *update previously circulated and attached to the minutes

62 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2022/2023 (0.33.01)**

The chair was thanked for his chairmanship over the past 12 months and the PDG endorsed the reports. Committee members thanked the Environment and Enforcement Manager, the Climate and Sustainability Specialist and Corporate Manager for Property, Leisure and Climate Change for their work. The chairman thanked everyone for their work.

RESOLVED:

That the Environment PDG recommends this report to the next Full Council.

Note: *update previously circulated and attached to the minutes

63 **IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (0.37.48)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, the items identified for the next meeting.

(The meeting ended at 6.17 pm)

CHAIRMAN