

**MINUTES of a MEETING of the PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP held on 18 June 2024 at 5.30 pm**

**Present**

**Councillors**

B Fish (Chairman)  
G Czapiewski, C Harrower, G Cochran  
(Vice-Chair), C Connor and L Knight

**Also Present  
Councillor(s)**

N Bradshaw, D Broom, S Keable, S Robinson, J Wright

**Also Present  
Officer(s):**

Stephen Walford (Chief Executive), Andrew Jarrett (Deputy Chief Executive (S151)), Richard Marsh (Director of Place & Economy), Jason Ball (Climate and Sustainability Specialist), David Parker (Democratic Services Officer) and Angie Howell (Democratic Services Officer).

**Councillors  
Online**

C Adcock, E Buczkowski, J Buczkowski, J Lock, L Taylor  
and G Westcott

**Officer Online**

Stephen Carr (Corporate Performance and Improvement  
Manager)

**1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED** that Cllr B Fish be elected Chairman of the Planning, Environment and Sustainability Policy Development Group for the municipal year 2024/2025.

**2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED** that Cllr G Cochran be elected Vice-Chairman of the Planning, Environment and Sustainability Policy Development Group for the municipal year 2024/2025.

**3 START TIME OF MEETINGS**

It was **AGREED** that the start time for meetings for the remainder of the municipal year continue to be at 5.30pm.

**4 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

There were no apologies for absence.

## 5 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present and none had registered to ask a question in advance

## 6 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT

No interests were declared under this item.

## 7 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Environment Policy Development Group meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 were approved as a correct record of the meeting and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

## 8 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had the following announcements to make:

- He thanked the Group for electing him as Chairman.
- He read the Terms of Reference and Thematic areas for the Policy Development Group and advised Members they can viewed in the Constitution.

## 9 REPORT ON PLANNING MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY PDG AND AT OTHER COMMITTEES

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report \* from the Director of Place and Economy regarding Planning Matters to be considered at the Planning, Environment and Sustainability PDG. The following was highlighted within the report:-

- There was a strong interface between the Planning, Environment and Sustainability PDG and the work of other Committee's and Groups within the Council, namely the Planning Committee, Planning Policy Advisory Group (PPAG) and the Building Control Joint Committee (joint with North Devon).
- There were two recommendations within the report. Members noted the report and the PDG approved the production of a Summary Report which would seek to summarise planning matters into a report to feedback to the PDG at appropriate points in time. The report would also include key performance indicators.

Discussion took place with regards to:-

- The Building Control Joint Committee and the line of communication between other Committees. It was explained that the Building Control Joint Committee was the initial decision maker but that recommendations fed through to Cabinet and at times Full Council.
- That all Members were welcome to attend PPAG meetings and participate in discussions to help shape the production of the new Local Plan.

It was **AGREED** that a Planning Summary Report be presented to the PDG at the appropriate times.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Note: \* Report previously circulated.

Reason for the decision

To provide clarity and transparency, efficient decision making and ensure the best use of limited resources.

**10 PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD QUARTER 4**

The Group were presented with the Performance Dashboard for quarter 4 showing performance against target in 2023-24 and the General Fund Revenue Account Outturn Summary for 2023-24. The following was highlighted within the report:-

- The Performance Dashboard highlighted measures for what was then the Environment PDG and as such the measures did not exactly align to the new PDG.
- The Dashboard would be reviewed by Officers due to the new Corporate Plan and PDG structure. Any changes would then be reflected in the new Dashboard for Quarter 1.
- The Outturn report, currently showed figures against the old Environment PDG, focussed on Waste. From Q1 onwards this data would not be shown for this PDG.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Whether information could be provided regarding the corporate risk on climate change. The Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager would forward this information to all members of the PDG.

Note: \* Performance Dashboard previously circulated.

**11 CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED** a report\* from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change with an update on the Council's Climate and Sustainability Programme, and progress on its response to the Climate Emergency. This included the following:-

- There had been an exciting development on Biodiversity Net Gain as the Planning Committee approved the signing off of Section 106 agreements for the development of 2 Habitat Banks in Mid Devon which would help developers unable to achieve on-site gains at 10% or above.
- Congratulations to the Economy Team who had secured Shared Prosperity Funding towards the new flexible workspace at Tiverton town centre, set to be transformed into a vibrant co-working hub and other grant funding from the LEP to support investment by businesses in to green initiatives aimed at reducing carbon emissions and improving efficiency.
- Net Zero Advisory Group (NZAG) had identified priority areas of action, community engagement, partnership and teamwork.

- Following the State of District Debate steps have been taken to increase capacity and speed towards meeting the Council's Net Zero targets by encouraging Councillors to volunteer as champions for each theme.
- All parties were welcome to attend NZAG meetings.
- Cllr Bradshaw also expressed thanks to Jason Ball, Climate and Sustainability Specialist for all of his hard work.

Discussion took place with regard to:-

- Community engagement and the importance of listening to communities.
- How progress was measured and reported back to Members and the public.

Note: \* Report previously circulated.

## 12 MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN

The Group had before it a report \* from the Chief Executive presenting the draft Corporate Plan for 2024-2028 and inviting feedback before recommending the Corporate Plan back to Cabinet.

The contents of the report were outlined by the Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager and the following was highlighted within the report:-

- The Corporate Plan had been developed over the past 6 months and had been presented to Cabinet on 4<sup>th</sup> June.
- It provided a summary of the Council's strategic objectives and ambitions and highlighted the key areas for each Policy Development Group.
- The name of the Corporate Plan was still to be decided and the Cabinet may choose to leave it as the 'Corporate Plan 2024-2028'.
- All PDG's were being asked to provide feedback so that the new Corporate Plan was in the best state it could be before being approved by full Council.
- Comments from Members can be forwarded to the Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager outside of this meeting.

Discussion took place with regards to:-

- Electric car points on sites throughout Mid-Devon and whether the aims were realistic.
- The Medium Term Financial Plan and the funding gap.
- Fly tipping and whether the Corporate Plan should clarify that this related to public land, not private land.

The PDG wished for their comments regarding fly tipping be considered at Cabinet.

**RECOMMENDED** to the Cabinet that the draft Corporate Plan for 2024 – 2028 be approved

(Proposed by Cllr Guy Cochran and seconded by Cllr C Harrower)

Note: \* Report previously circulated.

### Reason for the decision

Setting out the Council's aims and objectives through a Corporate Plan helped the Council demonstrate its performance in relation to Value for Money considerations.

## 13 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Group had before it the draft Work Programme \* for the Planning, Environment and Sustainability Policy Development Group.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Including the Planning Summary Report.
- To also incorporate Motion for the Oceans to ensure a high profile is maintained and to invite South West Water to a future meeting.

It was **AGREED** to add the Planning Summary Report and Motion of Oceans into the Work Programme for 2024/2025:

Note: \* Draft work programme previously circulated.

(The meeting ended at 18:32)

**CHAIRMAN**