

MINUTES of a MEETING of the SERVICE DELIVERY & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP held on 24 June 2024 at 5.30 pm

Present

Councillors

M Fletcher (Chairman)
M D Binks, C Connor, M Farrell, B Fish, A Glover,
C Harrower (Vice Chairman), M Jenkins, J Poynton and
Matthew Page

Also Present

Councillors

D Broom, G Czapiewski, F Letch MBE, J Lock, S
Robinson, L Taylor, J Wright and D Wulff

Present

Officers

Stephen Walford (Chief Executive), Andrew Jarrett (Deputy
Chief Executive (S151)), Darren Beer (Operations
Manager for Street Scene), Luke Howard (Environment
and Enforcement Manager), Simon Bruford (Operations
Manager Street Scene Services), Jan Moreland
(Accountant), Laura Woon (Democratic Services Manager)
and Sarah Lees (Democratic Services Officer)

Councillors

Online

J Buczkowski

Officers

Online

D Emery and L Lewis

1 Election of Chair

RESOLVED that Cllr M Fletcher be elected Chair of the Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement Policy Development Group for the municipal year 2024 – 2025.

2 Election of Vice Chair

RESOLVED that Cllr C Harrower be elected Vice Chair of the Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement Policy Development Group for the municipal year 2024 – 2025.

3 **Start time of Meetings**

It was **AGREED** that meetings of the Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement Policy Development Group be held at 5.30pm on Monday evenings for the remainder of the municipal year.

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 **Declaration of Interests under the Code of Conduct**

No interests were declared under this item.

7 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman had the following announcements to make:

- a) He thanked the Group for electing him as Chair.
- b) He stated that the new Policy Development Group provided an exciting opportunity to work for the people of Mid Devon to address service improvement wherever appropriate.
- c) He stated that the new PDG had the following thematic areas under its umbrella:

Open Spaces and Play areas

Ground Maintenance

Cemeteries

Waste Collection and Recycling

Street Cleaning

Environmental Enforcement(includes abandon vehicles, animal control, fly tipping)

Clocks and Monuments

Leisure

Car Parking

Customer Service

Complaints

Trade Waste

Clinical Waste

8 **Draft Corporate Plan 2024 - 2028 (00:10:00)**

The Group had before it a report * from the Chief Executive, Head of People, Performance and Waste and Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager considering the draft Corporate Plan for 2024-28. The Group were invited to provide feedback on the document to recommended back to the Cabinet before the final draft was presented to full Council for approval.

The following was highlighted in the report:

- The draft document had been developed by officers and Members over the past 6 months and set out the draft aims and objectives of the Council from 2024 – 2028.
- Draft performance measures and targets were set out within the report. It was explained that these metrics were still in development and comments were invited.

Consideration was given to:

- Concern was expressed that the target for satisfaction with the overall repairs service and home safety was set at 70% and not 100%. It was explained that there was a challenge in understanding the base line approval rating, it was about trying to find the right balance at a comfortable level. Targets would be as ambitious and as relevant as possible. However, was trying to achieve 100% in all areas the best way to spend the Council's limited resources?
- The Council also needed to look at the national picture when setting its targets. The targets were aspirational set against increasing cost pressures to the Council.
- Regarding leisure memberships, a suggestion was made that the positive and negative costs per member be identified. It was explained that the current overarching draft targets showed that the Council was trending in the right direction.
- There needed to be a joined up approach with town and parish councils in setting some of these metrics.
- Concern was expressed that under the Medium Term Financial plan (MTFP) a table had been inserted using 8% as the inflation rate, where as it is currently at 2%. It was explained that the graph had been constructed in October 2023 when the inflation rate was 8%. This had been used as the forecasted rate. Nobody knew what the inflation rate would be after the General Election. This was the best guess and a snap shot taken at the time of constructing the graph. Inflation rates were not static and it was not possible to constantly change the graph to reflect this.

RECOMMENDED to the Cabinet that the draft Corporate Plan 2024-28 be approved subject to consideration of the comments of the Group.

(Proposed by the Chair)

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.

Note: * Report previously circulated.

9 Performance Dashboards for Quarter 4 (00:37:00)

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, summary performance information * via Dashboards, covering the service areas falling under the umbrella of this PDG.

It was explained that because this was a new PDG, Dashboards had been included that covered various service areas for the last quarter of 2023/2024. This was not entirely appropriate or helpful at this stage of the newly established Group and it was suggested that a new Dashboard be worked up representing the services now falling under the overall remit of the new Group. This was **AGREED** and was requested to be presented at the next meeting.

Note: * Dashboards previously circulated.

10 **Future Waste and Recycling Options (00:55:00)**

The Group had before it a report * from the Operations Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces and the Head of People, Performance and Waste setting out options regarding the provision of the Waste and Recycling service to the residents of Mid Devon.

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

- The raft of Government legislation on the horizon which the Council would need to comply with.
- The Group were asked to comment on what areas it wanted officers to focus on and eventually to recommend to the Cabinet.

Discussion took place with regard to:

- The aspiration of being able to recycle soft plastics.
- Possible trials of re-useable nappies.
- The practicalities involved in residents wanting to recycle pots and pans. A suggestion that Mid Devon could be pioneers in trialling something new regarding this and the recycling of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment recycling (WEE).
- The Waste and Recycling team were already doing a great job for the residents of Mid Devon and their feedback supported this view.
- It took many hundreds of years for a nappy (or other sanitary products) to biodegrade. Some countries in Europe had found a way to recycle used nappies and incorporate the incinerated by-product into asphalt used to repair roads. Further investigations were needed and the Group were keen that this be treated as a priority in addition to the pots and pans recycling.
- The overall ambition was to increase recycling wherever possible and as much as possible.
- Officers needed to bring a report back to the Group, regarding the priority areas the Group had identified, showing costs, logistics, practicalities, possible trials, what other authorities were doing both nationally and internationally.
- There was still considerable work to be done on encouraging more recycling of food waste.
- Black bags still contained too much waste that could have been recycled.
- Whilst the priority areas had been identified, it would be worth investigating the other suggested areas within the report to ascertain whether some could be achieved quickly and cheaply, for example, education around using instant coffee from a recyclable jar rather than using coffee pods.

RECOMMENDED to the Cabinet that the financial and practical feasibility of the following areas be further investigated to ascertain whether they could be introduced as practices within the District:

- Nappy waste collections
- Collecting unwanted metal pots and pans

(Proposed by the Chair)

Reason for the decision

It should be noted that an increase in recycling tonnages for each material would increase our recycling credits for that material. This increase also had an effect on the income received from each product. At present this was difficult to determine due to the constant variations in market values. Shared savings through the DCC Shared Savings Scheme would potentially increase as the Council decreased waste and increased recycling.

An increase in recycling would further enable the Council to reduce its carbon footprint and hit its carbon net zero commitment. Recycling was one of the most 'mainstream' concepts of addressing overarching sustainability goals, therefore it was vital to make sure that the Council was maximising the effectiveness of both its scheme design, but also its operational implementation.

Note: * Report previously circulated.

11 Public Spaces Protection Order - Dog Control (01:06:00)

The Group had before it a report * from the Environment and Enforcement Manager and the Head of People, Performance and Waste seeking an extension to the period that the Mid Devon (Public Spaces Protection) (Dog Control) Order 2021 was in force for in addition to its variation.

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

- The report reviewed the decision taken on 7 October 2021 regarding the Council's Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order.
- It also took into consideration amendments requested by town and parish councils.

RECOMMENDED to the Cabinet that:

- a) On being satisfied that the statutory grounds for extending and varying the Mid Devon (Public Spaces Protection) (Dog Control) Order 2021 ("the Dog Control PSPO ") are met, as detailed in the Report, to allow Officers to commence statutory consultation for the following:
 - i. To extend the period the Dog Control PSPO was in force by a further period of three years
 - ii. To vary the Dog Control PSPO by:
 - Designating the Playing Area known as Jacks Acre in Cheriton Fitzpaine (as shown on the plan at Appendix 1) as an area where dogs were not allowed;

- Designating the Playing Field at the top of Wood Lane Morchard Bishop as an area where dogs must be on a lead (as shown on the plan at Appendix 2);
 - Removing from the Dog Control PSPO the existing plan of the Recreation Ground at Oakford as an area where dogs are not allowed and replacing it with a plan of a new Play Area at the said Recreation Ground to be subject to the prohibition of no dogs allowed (a plan of the new Play Area is shown at Appendix 3); and
 - Removing from the Dog Control PSPO the existing plan of the Play Area Amory Park Tiverton as an area where dogs were not allowed and replacing it with a plan of a new Play Area at the said Amory Park to be subjected to the prohibition of no dogs allowed (a plan of the new Play Area was shown at Appendix 4).
- b) Delegated Authority be granted to the Director of Legal, HR & Governance (Monitoring Officer) to draft the Orders extending and varying the Dog Control PSPO to go out to consultation.
- c) In the event that there were no material objections to the extension and variation as determined by the Operations Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Environment, to grant delegated authority to the Director of Legal, HR & Governance (Monitoring Officer) to make the Orders extending and varying the Dog Control PSPO as recommended in the Report.
- d) In the event that the Operations Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Environment, determine that objections by the owners of any land which was subject to the Dog Control PSPO should be upheld, to then grant delegated authority to the Director of Legal, HR & Governance (Monitoring Officer) to vary the Dog Control PSPO by removing any land for which an objection(s) had been upheld.

(Proposed by the Chair)

Reason for the decision

The Dog Control PSPO was designed to curb anti-social behaviour arising from irresponsible control of dogs and dog fouling. The Dog Control PSPO would expire on the 7 October 2024 unless it was extended beforehand.

Note: * Report previously circulated.

12 Formal Review of Bin-It 123 (01:10:00)

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, a report * from the Operations Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces and the Head of People, Performance and Waste outlining the effectiveness and progress of the Council's waste and recycling scheme known as the Bin-It 123 scheme, as implemented on 10 October 2022.

The following was highlighted within the report:

- Bin-It 123 had been a huge success, however, there was still a lot more to do in terms of recycling more and producing less residual waste.

- The report showed a good set of results. There had been a reduction of residual tonnage. Currently Mid Devon were in the top 10% nationally and the Council had been recognised for achieving considerable improvements.
- Instances of side waste had reduced from 4000 to approximately 200 and there was a compliance rate of just over 90%. Despite this there was still a lot of recycling in residual waste as had been evidenced in recent depot open days. Town and parish council representatives were encouraged to attend more open days planned in the near future.
- New statutory guidance was awaited following the General Election.
- Food waste was still an issue across the county in terms of needing to do more of it.
- More recycling meant more income to the Council.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Cullompton High Street looked untidy on bin collection days, could anything be done to target hotspots where this happened? Were there communal schemes that could be established?
- It would be interesting to know what the authorities in the top 10% were doing differently to the Council.
- Concern was expressed that a large amount of food waste was not being picked up and a suggestion was made that residents be given smaller caddy bins to store food waste, especially those that had very small kitchens or limited storage facilities. This would need investigation and the costs worked out. Small caddy bins had been issued to residents some 10 years ago. It may be that some residents still had these. Perhaps a flyer could be sent out asking if people still had these and if they didn't and wanted one to contact the Council?
- There was huge potential to build on the momentum of recycling food waste with more education.
- To do weekly collections would cost the Council an additional £1.6m. If all residents recycled in the way that they should it would give the Council an additional £800k in income.
- A difficult balance needed to be struck between proactive enforcement and greater education.
- The more the Council could get information out there the better and working collaboratively with town and parish council's would be vital in achieving this.
- Primary school visits had been undertaken with a view to educating the next generation. There was a suggestion that pre-school visits also be undertaken as even young children could get involved and understood what cardboard and plastic was.
- It was also suggested that perhaps a competition be held to name waste vehicles. It was agreed that these ideas could be explored further.

Note: * Report previously circulated.

13 **Annual Environmental Enforcement Report (01:42:00)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, a report * from the Environment and Enforcement Manager and the Head of People, Performance and Waste providing an overview and review of the Environment and Enforcement service for the 2023/24

financial year and the improvements that had been made during this period. The report provided a top line review of this service and showed that there had been a decrease in fly tipping.

Discussion took place with regard to whether anything could be done with CCTV at hot spot areas suffering fly tipping? It was explained that one requirement was that the problem needed to be continuous. Feedback from Members was a vital part of this process as they were the 'eyes' and 'ears' out in the community and therefore Members were encouraged to get in touch whenever incidents of fly tipping became apparent.

Note: * Report previously circulated.

14 **Access to Information - Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The Chair indicated that discussion with regard to the following item, required the Policy Development Group to pass the following resolution to exclude the press and public having reflected on Article 12 12.02 (d) (a presumption in favour of openness) of the Constitution. This decision was required because consideration of this matter in public would disclose information falling within one of the descriptions of exempt information in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The Policy Development Group decided, in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption interest in disclosing the information, outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED:

That, in accordance with Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for item 15, for the reason set out below:

Information under paragraph 3 (contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person including the authority holding that information).

(Proposed by the Chair)

15 **Extending the Fleet Contract with Specialist Fleet Services**

The Group had before it a report * from the Operations Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces and the Head of People, Performance and Waste considering the extension of the Council's current contract regarding its fleet provision with Specialist Fleet Services Limited (SFS).

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

- Vehicles were a crucial part of the entire waste operation. They were large complex vehicles.
- A contract with SFS had been in place since 2019 and had been agreed for 7 years. The Council needed to plan ahead and work needed to be done now to think about what happens after 2026. The report therefore sought an extension to the contract of a further 7 years taking it to 2033.
- A summary of the 'pro's' and 'con's' regarding the recommendation to extend the contract with SFS as provided at section 2.7 of the report. The company's

extremely good position within the supply and purchase chain as well as the excellent relationship that existed between them and the Council was emphasised.

- Quarterly meetings were held with them in an atmosphere of openness and honesty.

At this point in the meeting, the Group agreed to continue the discussion under Part II arrangements as it wanted to discuss confidential matters.

Returning to open session, it was:

RECOMMENDED to the Cabinet that it considers what additional supplier benchmarking or other market testing information might be made available to help inform a decision regarding the fleet contract.

Following this, it was **FURTHER RECOMMENDED** that:

- a) The decision to extend the contract with SFS (Specialist Fleet Services Limited) for a further seven year period to cover 2026-2033 at the earliest possible opportunity be approved.
- b) Lease borrowing in the Capital Programme be included.
- c) The negotiation of the removal of the indexation rate from the master contract for all new vehicles as soon as possible and replace it with a fixed rate for the term of the individual contract be authorised.

(Proposed by the Chair)

Reason for the decision

The current contract provided for lease and maintenance contracts until June 2026, thereafter lease only for the remainder of the individual vehicle contract term. This exposes the authority to an increased financial risk in terms of the significantly increased costs associated with maintaining an aging fleet.

Note: (i) * Report previously circulated
(ii) Cllr M Binks requested that his vote against the decision be recorded.

16 **Work Programme - 2024/2025**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, the current draft Work Programme * for 2024 – 2025.

It was **AGREED** that the following items be included in the work programme for consideration at an appropriate time:

- The possibility of recycling blister packs.
- A feasibility study into the provision of big bins for house clearances.
- Costing exercise for providing smaller kitchen caddies for kitchen waste.
- Leisure Service surveys, ensure that the Group receive regular reports on satisfaction levels and constructive feedback from users.

- Refillable water stations, were these possible?
- Employee satisfaction surveys.
- Education events at all school on recycling.
- 'Let's Talk Mid Devon' – Group to gain a better understanding of public engagement and their experience, address any specific feedback
- Examine sickness rates and how this is dealt with following receipt of the 6 monthly Establishment Report.

Note: * Draft Work Programme previously circulated.

17 Identification of items for the next meeting

In addition to the items already listed, the following was requested to be on the agenda for the next meeting:

- A further report on 'Future Waste and Recycling Options' with a focus on nappy waste collections and collecting unwanted pots and pans.
- A costed exercise on the provision of small kitchen caddies (if it had not been included for consideration in the report above).

(The meeting ended at 20:10pm)

CHAIRMAN