

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a MEETING of the MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP held on 8 March 2016 at 2.00 pm

Present

Councillors

R F Radford (Chairman)
D R Coren, R Evans, Mrs E J Slade,
J D Squire, R Wright and Mrs A R Berry

Apologies

Councillor(s)

Mrs C P Daw and Mrs N Woollatt

Also Present

Councillor(s)

Mrs C Collis and N V Davey

Also Present

Officer(s):

Andrew Jarrett (Head of Finance), Andrew Busby (Property Services Manager), Adrian Cook (Open Spaces Manager), Richard Keith Hill (Environmental Protection Officer), Catherine Yandle (Internal Audit Team Leader), Suzanne Kingdom (Auditor), Stuart Noyce (Waste and Transport Manager) and Julia Stuckey (Member Services Officer)

58 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs C Daw and Cllr Mrs N Woollatt.

59 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Mr M Lucas, referring to item 6 on the agenda, Waste and Recycling Update, asked if negotiations with Devon County Council (DCC), regarding the sharing of savings had progressed. Mr Lucas asked if DCC had come forward with any proposals to help fund the new scheme by sharing the savings made to landfill costs.

Mr Lucas also asked what publicity was planned to let the residents of Mid Devon know that this authority was leading the way within the County. He stated that the public needed to be aware of how much work and effort had been put into this over the years.

The Chairman indicated that these questions would be answered at the agenda item.

60 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the last meeting were approved as a true record.

61 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had no announcements to make.

62 **MOTION 524 (COUNCILLOR MRS C COLLIS 17 FEBRUARY 2016)**

At Council on 24 February 2016 the following Motion was referred to the Managing the Environment Policy Development Group for its consideration.

Motion 524 (Councillor Mrs C Collis 17 February 2016)

That the Council supports the removal and cessation of the use of all polystyrene cups and all food containers from all council offices and associated premises.

The use of such containers continues to place non-biodegradable waste into landfill sites that will take hundreds of years to degrade and continues to threaten wildlife when digested.

Any and all such containers if used as disposable drinks or food containers should be fully certified as biodegradable or easily recycled within normal recycling parameters.

Councillor Mrs Collis explained that she proposed that this authority cease the use of polystyrene cups and packaging from its offices and associated premises in order to reduce landfill, to benefit welfare and future generations.

Discussion took place regarding:

- The need to allow operators to use up any stock of cups or containers they had;
- The benefits of reuse rather than recycling;
- The need to publicise the problems associated with the use of polystyrene and encourage other local businesses to take the same action;
- Other containers that could be made available and were recyclable.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to Council that this authority support the removal and cessation of the use of all polystyrene cups and all food containers from all council offices and associated premises.

(Proposed by Cllr R Evans and seconded by Cllr Mrs E Slade)

63 **UPDATE ON NEW COLLECTION SCHEME FOR THE WASTE AND RECYCLING SERVICE (00:17:16)**

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report * from the Waste and Transport Manager.

The Officer outlined the contents of the report, which provided details of the roll out of containers for recycling and the delivery of food waste caddies. Performance data was included in the report which showed positive results.

He further explained that progress had been made regarding 'savings sharing' with Devon County Council (DCC) and that a working group had been set up to look at the mechanism of how the scheme would work. The officer considered it likely that

the savings generated by diverting waste from landfill would be shared for a 10 year period.

Press releases had been issued to the local press regarding the increase in recycling performance but had not yet been published. The information would be posted on the website, social media and in Mid Devon Talk.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Litter that was left after collections had taken place and the fact that staff were expected to pick up what they could;
- Recycling boxes could be stacked so should not require lids;
- Haulage costs for food waste and a new contract from 2017 when DCC would take on the cost of this;
- Clarification was given that cardboard would be collected if it was presented next to recycling containers;
- There was no limit to the number of recycling boxes that could be put out for collection.

The Group recorded their thanks to the officers involved with the roll out of the scheme, which had been implemented successfully.

Note: - * Report previously circulated and attached to Minutes.

64 **FINANCIAL MONITORING (00:38:00)**

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report * from the Head of Finance providing information regarding income and expenditure so far for the 2015/16 financial year.

The Officer outlined the contents of the report and explained that there was an underspend of £740k due to the delay in ordering new recycling vehicles. This was so that information such as tonnages and routes could be collated to ensure that suitable vehicles were purchased. The car parking budget showed a £127k underspend due to vends being up on budget and Waste showed an overspend of £65k due to the reduction in the value of recylates.

The Officer confirmed that over 6300 households had joined the garden waste collection scheme and a flyer was being sent out with Council Tax bills as further promotion.

Note: - * Report previously circulated and attached to Minutes.

65 **PERFORMANCE AND RISK (00:43:50)**

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report * from the Head of Communities and Governance providing Members with an update on performance against the Corporate Plan and local service targets for 2015-16 as well as providing an update on the key business risks.

Discussion regarding this item had already taken place under agenda item 6.

Note: - * Report previously circulated and attached to Minutes.

66 **CREDITON LORDS MEADOW LINK ROAD AND AIR QUALITY (00:45:02)**

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report * from the Public Health and Professional Services Manager regarding changes to air quality in Exeter Road, Crediton (within the Crediton Air Quality Management Area) since the opening of the Lords Meadow Link Road.

The Environmental Protection Officer outlined the contents of the report, explaining that there was now 12 months data available and that results were very positive. Traffic figures from Devon County Council (DCC) showed that usage of the road was around 5000 vehicles a day with 10% of that being HGV traffic.

Discussion took place regarding:

- The recent road closure in the town centre which had encouraged new habits for drivers who were now using alternative routes;
- School bus traffic;
- Air quality had improved throughout the district.

Note: - * Report previously circulated and attached to Minutes.

67 **CLIMATE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN (00:00:55)**

The Group had before it a report * from the Head of Housing and Property Services providing Members with the updated Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for consideration.

The Property Services Manager explained that the Strategy and Action Plan was a compilation and summary of existing relevant documents and actions across the Council as well as a statement on central government policy and guidance.

The Officer highlighted the following areas which had been achieved since the adoption of the strategy:

- Increase in the recycling rate – the rate was increasing and had exceeded 50%
- Reducing Carbon Footprint of our offices and leisure centres – the arrangement the Council had with Anesco Energy Services (South) Ltd was realising energy savings in these buildings and that project was being built on when opportunity allowed during planned maintenance and replacement. The investment with solar PV on these buildings was also reaping rewards.

- Adopt a Low Emissions Strategy – this was rolled on from the previous Corporate Plan and remained an action although low emissions improvements were being driven by Local Plan policy and the ECO Stars initiative.
- Replacement of fleet with more eco-friendly vehicles - fleet replacement was ongoing as appropriate and current recycling vehicles met Euro 6.
- Prepare action plan for maintenance of open space – this remained an action to be completed.
- Reducing Fuel Poverty on Council Housing Stock – investment was ongoing and in addition to the extensive Solar PV installations included replacement boilers, controls and insulation, air-source heat pumps, solar thermal, trials of air to air heat pumps and consideration of other and emerging technology. Efforts were also being concentrated to provide a main gas supply to all Housing Stock as the preferred source of energy.
- Private Sector Housing was actively supporting that sector when able to do so. Actions included giving advice directly or via partners, enabling improvements via the former Green Deal and any replacement funding opportunity that became available.
- A Green Infrastructure Assessment had been completed and formed part of the local plan evidence (it is not a specific plan or policy as originally intended).
- The Eco Stars initiative in addition to the refuse vehicles and taxi operators had many local to national outside vehicle operators who used the roads in Mid Devon signed up to operating vehicles with lower emissions.
- Mid Devon actively participated with the Low Emissions Partnership network to deliver improved air quality.

Discussion took place regarding recycled materials such as aggregates and what influence the authority had to insist that developers used recycled material and installed energy saving devices such as solar panels and insulation.

It was **AGREED** that the Head of Planning and Regeneration be asked to provide information regarding this.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Cabinet approve the updated Climate Strategy and Action Plan.

(Proposed by Cllr D R Coren and seconded by Cllr R Evans)

Note: - * Report previously circulated and attached to Minutes.

68 **PLAY AREA RISK ASSESSMENT AND SAFETY INSPECTION REVIEW (01:12:00)**

The Group had before it a report * from the Head of Housing and Property Services updating Members regarding the way in which the Council manages its play area risk assessments and safety inspections.

The Open Spaces Manager explained that there were now fewer play areas for the authority to monitor, reducing from 105 when the policy was last reviewed to the current figure of 85. This was due to the programme for closure and the passing of some play areas to other councils. There was also a reduction in the number of pieces of equipment within play areas due to the process of managed decline, but even when there was no equipment the area still needed inspecting for safety. It was anticipated that some of the parish councils that were taking on play areas would use this authority to undertake safety inspections on their behalf.

The officer explained that the authority had a legal requirement to keep children safe from harm and to carry out risk assessments. He also outlined the benefits of using electronic hand held equipment to log inspections, rather than paper records.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that:

1. Cabinet note that the current risk assessments and safety inspections are considered adequate to meet the Council's responsibilities and for individual pieces of play equipment to be identified on the Risk Assessment forms as stated in 4.1.
2. Cabinet note that digital transformation of the current inspection method would make the task more efficient, as detailed in 4.2. and that an evaluation of this process would be undertaken by officers.

(Proposed by Cllr Mrs E J Slade and seconded by Cllr Mrs A R Berry)

Note: Report previously circulated and attached to Minutes.

69 CHAIRMANS ANNUAL REPORT

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a draft report * by the Chairman on the work of the Group since May 2015, a final copy of this report would be submitted to Council on 27 April 2016.

Note: - Report previously circulated and attached to Minutes.

70 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Update from Health and Safety visit
Tree Policy
High Hedges Policy
Review of Grass Cutting

(The meeting ended at 3.35 pm)

CHAIRMAN