

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a MEETING of the COMMUNITY WELL BEING POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP held on 29 March 2016 at 2.15 pm

Present

Councillors

Mrs B M Hull (Chairman)
Mrs E M Andrews, Mrs H Bainbridge,
Mrs A R Berry, Mrs J B Binks, R M Deed,
F W Letch and Mrs E J Slade

Apologies

Councillor(s)

Miss C E L Slade

Also Present

Councillor(s)

C R Slade and Mrs M E Squires

Also Present

Officer(s):

John Bodley-Scott (Community Development and Regeneration Manager), Rob Fish (Principal Accountant), Catherine Yandle (Internal Audit Team Leader) and Julia Stuckey (Member Services Officer)

65 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Cllr Miss C E L Slade.

66 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

67 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Subject to clarification of the recommendation at Minute 62 to read as below the Minutes were approved as a true record.

It was RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the Leisure Pricing report be approved subject to the following:

- a) All basic fees, lets, rents and charges be increased by 5% from 1 April 2016;
- b) That discounts for 60+ Zest membership be set at:
 - 1) 30% for 2016/17
 - 2) 20% for 2017/18
 - 3) 10% for 2018/19
 - 4) And from 2019/20 be as per the appropriate Zest membership fee;
- c) That concessionary Junior Zest memberships be discounted by 10% from the appropriate junior monthly Zest membership fee;
- d) That within six months a full review of all fees, rents, lets and charges be undertaken with a view to further simplifying the tariff structure;

e) That within six months a full review of Leisure services income and expenditure resources be undertaken to ensure a positive financial result for the service in the financial year ending 31/3/2020.

68 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman thanked the Members of the Group for their attendance and interest during the last year.

69 RURAL ISOLATION

The Chairman introduced Mr Andy Gerrard to the Group. Mr Gerrard was a Rural Support Worker in the local area.

Mr Gerrard outlined the problem of rural isolation, which he explained could be caused by a number of reasons including geographical isolation, self-imposed isolation, language barriers and a lack of literacy/numeracy skills. He explained that rural isolation was first recognised 20 years ago and initially came about due to a reduction in the number of people working on farms. He informed the Group that farms that used to employ a number of people could now only support one.

Mr Gerrard explained that retired farmers could also suffer from rural isolation because they often had no personal vehicle and no access to public transport. Visitors such as the postman and sales representatives no longer called.

Farmers were at high risk of suffering from mental illness, fatal accident levels were high and so were the levels of suicide. Statistically one farmer per week committed suicide. He stated that mental state was often compounded by isolation. Issues in the farming community such as TB added to the pressure, as did financial stress.

Mr Gerrard explained that he covered the whole of Devon and that he tried to find out what help was available to those suffering. Organisations such as the Samaritans, WI and farming charities could help.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Young Farmers groups and how they could help, as well as work being undertaken to support a group for the next age bracket:
- Organisations that delivered food in the area;
- The need for coordination so that it was easy to find out what help was available from which groups.

Mr Gerrard offered to forward a list of his contacts so that Members could cascade this information to their parishes.

The Chairman thanked Mr Gerrard for his attendance.

70 SINGLE EQUALITIES SCHEME

The Group had before it a report * from the Head of Communities and Governance regarding the Single Equality Scheme.

The Community Development Officer outlined the content of the report, explaining that Under the Equality Act 2010 local authorities had a duty to have 'due regard' to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that was prohibited by or under the Act; advance equality of opportunity between persons who shared a relevant protected characteristic and persons who did not share it; and foster good relations between persons who shared a relevant protected characteristic and persons who did not share it.

The way a local authority showed it had 'due regard' was by evidencing how equality was considered as part of its decision-making processes. The Single Equality Scheme indicated how this would be done. Local authorities also had specific duties under the Act to publish Equality Information annually and 'Equality Objectives' at least every four years.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Training for Members - the officer explained that it was important to ensure that training was set at an appropriate level for each officer or Member, dependant on their role, and not just a general session for all.
- Feedback – the officer explained that feedback was gained from the Customer First Complaints and Feedback system and that any comments made were looked at and analysed by the Corporate Equality Group.
- Gender equality and the importance of using appropriate language.
- Digitalisation and the fact that not all residents had access to the internet.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that the Single Equality Scheme, together with the Equality Objective for 2016-17, be approved.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

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

71 PERFORMANCE AND RISK

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report * from the Head of Communities and Governance providing an update on performance against the Corporate Plan and local service targets for 2016-17 as well as providing an update on the key business risks.

The Audit Team Leader outlined the contents of the report and clarification was sought regarding targets for empty shops in the town centres. The officer highlighted food hygiene performance which had been identified as performing poorly in the previous year but following the recruitment of an additional officer had improved.

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

72 FINANCIAL MONITORING

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 Principal Accountant outlined the contents of the report which indicated an overspend of £372k.

Areas within the remit of the Group, which showed an overspend, were identified as recreation/sport and planning. Some of the overspend was from lower than budgeted income at Exe Valley Leisure Centre. There had been a drop in swim and general memberships but an officer had been appointed, as part of the restructure, to improve this. Salaries were over budget for all three leisure sites but this included some redundancy costs.

Planning also showed an overspend, which included £80k for enforcement action in Cullompton and some costs associated with a restructure in the service.

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

73 YOUNG CARERS

At its request the Group had before it information * regarding Young Carers. Members considered the information to be clear and thanked the representative from Devon Carers for putting it together for them.

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

74 CHAIRMAN'S 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.

75 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Tap Fund update
Mental Health Masterclass
Public Health/Leisure Services
Targeted Families

(The meeting ended at 3.25 pm)

CHAIRMAN