

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **CABINET** held on 2 February 2017 at 2.15 pm

Present

Councillors C J Eginton (Leader)
R J Chesterton, K Busch, P H D Hare-Scott,
C R Slade, Mrs M E Squires and
R L Stanley

Also Present

Councillor(s) R M Deed, Mrs B M Hull, R F Radford, Mrs J Roach and
F J Rosamond

Also Present

Officer(s): Andrew Jarrett (Director of Finance, Assets and Resources), Jill May (Director of Corporate Affairs and Business Transformation), Nick Sanderson (Head of Housing and Property Services), Jenny Clifford (Head of Planning and Regeneration), Christie McCombe (Area Planning Officer), John Bodley-Scott (Economic Development & Regeneration Manager), Catherine Yandle (Internal Audit Team Leader), Jane Cottrell (Group Human Resources Manager) and Sally Gabriel (Member Services Manager)

126. **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies.

127. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME 00-01-18**

Mr Arthur Shenton spoke in relation to item 4 on the agenda, Syrian Vulnerable Persons Scheme, and stated that he was a retired teacher and had taught in Tiverton for quite a while and had also been a lecturer in Education at Plymouth University. He had lived in Washfield for nearly 30 years. This morning we had emailed you a document about the position in Washfield with regard to the Syrian refugees. I am going to ask a question on behalf of my fellow villagers in Washfield, who as you will know from the email are very passionate and committed to supporting a refugee family in Washfield as a simple human response to the dreadful suffering these people have endured. Before I ask a question I would just like to remind us all that Washfield already has a proud history of supporting vulnerable people fleeing from war. In September 1939, children escaping the bombing in London were welcomed into families in Washfield and I recently discovered that two of these children, 11 year old Martin Corey and his sister Nancy were given a safe haven in the house next to where I now live and so we, the present day residents of Washfield, wish to be part of that noble British tradition of extending a helping hand to families who are in desperate circumstances. We ask that the Cabinet today makes an in principle decision that a Syrian refugee family can be resettled in the Washfield property that we are offering subject to resolution of the planning consent issues. I understand that

councils all over the country are finding it very difficult to find suitable properties but here we are offering a property. We understand that the process takes between 6 weeks and 3 months from when Mid Devon notify Devon County that a suitable property is available. We ask that today, as soon as the planning position is resolved, you will immediately notify Devon County Council and thus begin the process. We the residents of Washfield, many are represented here, and the surrounding villages, pledge to fully support the family as detailed in the document that was emailed to you earlier today.

Annabel Taylor-Ross, speaking in relation to the same item, stated that she had had the privilege of working in various refugee camps in conflict zones when she worked for the UN. It is well documented that the best place for refugees is to stay as near to home as possible so that they can return when circumstances allow but sadly in the case of Syria it is unlikely that for these particular refugees that that would happen at any time in the near future. I have been in communication this week with former UN colleagues who are still working for UNHCR and they totally support the notion that for these particular refugees who have been handpicked for this scheme that resettlement in the UK is their best chance. In the refugee camps that I have been in there are huge amounts of dignity as well as huge amounts of hope in a place where you would imagine the most dire hopelessness. We watch the news with desperation back here in the west but we don't often get the chance to do something practically that may make a difference to people by giving them the stepping stone they need to help themselves. We would like to ask the Cabinet to change their proposal from 'up to 5 refugee families' to 'at least 5 refugee families' so that if this is a success and if it does work we are not then hampered or hamstrung by paperwork, we can go straight forward and open this opportunity up for more families in the future. We would also like to congratulate the Council on having their eyes wide open to join this scheme to be able to do something at a time when the world probably needs a bit more humanity in it.

Mr Gerald Conyngham, also speaking in relation the refugee item, stated that he was from Crediton and was the convener of the 'Welcoming Refugees in Crediton' Group. We have got just under a hundred people who have been attending meetings and have offered support in Crediton. We have been going for just over a year and we are really glad that this point has now been reached and there is a recommendation to Cabinet about accepting 5 families. We very much hope that you will accept it. My question really is related to the paper that has gone to you about the role of the council in supporting these families. I am aware that there are enormous pressures on you as a council, pressures on officers dealing with homelessness etc. We in our group, and I'm sure I speak for Washfield as well and Bradninch, are very able and wanting to help in every way we can to support these families. When I read the paper I got the impression that everything was going to be done by the officers, that surely is not the case, we can do a lot, for instance, some of visits that the officers do, why can't some of that be done on your behalf by local groups working on behalf of the Council? That would relieve the pressure on you and your officers. My question is, what role do you see us being able to undertake in supporting these families which we very much hope will be coming to Mid Devon. We would like to add that we have got one or two properties that will become available in Crediton which we can pass on to you.

128. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (00-10-33)

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 January 2017 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

129. SYRIAN VULNERABLE PERSONS SCHEME (00-11-44)

Arising from a * report of the Head of Housing and Property Services, the Homes Policy Development Group had made the following recommendations:

a) Up to 5 refugee families be housed / supported, as and when properties came forward, for the duration of the scheme providing the costs were met by the Devon County Council led resettlement programme and that this be reviewed four months after the arrival of the first family (Note: the programme was currently of 4 years duration).

b) These refugee families be accommodated in Private Sector accommodation. However, further consideration must be given to the need for support (help) which would involve a minimum of weekly visits by one or more officers and also an exit strategy involving the landlord, the Council and DCC.

The Member Services Manager outlined the decision making process for this item, referring to the original Motion put before Council on 31 August 2016, the initial discussions by the Homes Policy Development Group (PDG) and decision by Council on 26 October 2016 to support the Motion. Following this, the Homes Policy Development Group had considered a report of the Head of Housing and Property Services and made recommendations; she informed the meeting that in her view it was now a business decision that should be made by the Cabinet.

The Cabinet Member for Housing stated that all were aware of the situation in Syria and he welcomed the offer of voluntary help from those present, it was however necessary to look at the issue from a Local Authority point of view and the scheme that was being run by Devon County Council with Government funding. He outlined the number of Syrian families already in place in Devon and the process that was required. He reiterated that refugees would only be housed in the private sector and properties had to be found, preferably in the urban areas so that facilities were at hand. There would be on costs for the Local Authority which would have to be funded through the Housing Revenue Account.

Addressing the questions posed in public question time, he welcomed the help offered by volunteers present but explained that the Local Authority had to follow the guidelines outlined in the scheme, the recommendation from the PDG had been that up to 5 families were housed in Mid Devon, he felt that this was a starting point and that the scheme should be trialled at this level initially. The accommodation at Washfield was welcomed and if it met the standard required (with any necessary planning permission) then it would form part of a recommendation to Devon County Council.

Consideration was given to:

- Financial implications
- The work of the volunteers within the scheme

- Possibly increasing the number of families to be housed
- The need to support the recommendation of the PDG and trial 5 families in Mid Devon

RESOLVED that the recommendation of the Policy Development Group be approved.

(Proposed by Cllr R L Stanley and seconded by Cllr P H D Hare-Scott)

Note: - *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

130. **DECANTING POLICY (UPDATE) (00-36-14)**

Arising from a * report of the Head of Housing and Property Services, the Homes Policy Development Group had recommended that the revised Decanting Policy be approved.

The Cabinet Member for Housing outlined the contents of the report stating that the review of the policy reflected changes in good practice and that it provided a framework for staff which set out the Council's approach to decant tenants from their current property due to an emergency such as fire, flood or major repairs or refurbishment.

RESOLVED that the recommendation be approved.

(Proposed by the Cllr R L Stanley and seconded by Cllr C R Slade)

Note: - *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

131. **STRATEGY FOR TIVERTON 2017/27 (00-38-27)**

Arising from a * report from the Tiverton Town Centre and Market Manager, the Economy Group had recommended that the Strategy for Tiverton 2017/27 be recommended to Council for approval.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration outlined the contents of the report stating that the production of a Town and Market Strategy for Tiverton was to enable the stakeholders of Tiverton to work towards a successful and sustainable town centre and market. He highlighted the action plan within the report and the work that had taken place to date.

Consideration was given to:

- How much had and what would be implemented
- The experience of the Town Centre/Market Manager and his vision
- Possible evaluation of achievements against objectives and that the Economy Policy Development Group would monitor the action plan
- The bad impressions highlighted in the strategy and the work that could take place with immediate effect

| **RECOMMENDED** to Council that the Strategy for Tiverton 2017/27 be approved.

(Proposed by Cllr R J Chesterton and seconded by Cllr K I Busch)

Note: - *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

132. **DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR TOURISM (1-01-34)**

Arising from a * report of the Economic Development & Regeneration Manager, regarding the draft Destination Management Plan for consultation, the Economy Policy Development Group had recommended that the draft Destination Management Plan be approved for consultation bearing in mind the comments and concerns of the Policy Development Group with regard to the small sample of people interviewed, the number of locations where this had taken place and the need for caution when considering the conclusions in the survey.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration outlined the contents of the report stating that there was a need to provide a strategic direction for the development of the tourism sector within Mid Devon. In order for Mid Devon to be a competitive destination tourist area there was a need to understand who currently visited the area and why; therefore a survey had taken place. He outlined the number of interviews that had taken place, the locations used and the findings of the survey

Consideration was given to:

- 19% of those interviewed were local residents
- The size of the document and the need for it to be more succinct
- The ageing visitor profile, which Members felt was a strength not a weakness
- The profile of population in Mid Devon
- Good clean facilities
- An audit of signage that was taking place
- Visitor leaflets, signage and marketing and work that could take place with the Parish Councils

RESOLVED that:

a) The findings of the tourism research be noted;

b) Officers be asked to secure a revised dataset based solely on visitors to Mid Devon and to analyse this data prior to finalising the draft Destination Management Plan ;

c) Approval for consultation on the draft Destination Management Plan be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration.

(Proposed by Cllr R J Chesterton and seconded by Cllr C R Slade)

Note: - *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

133. **MASTERPLAN - AREA B TIVERTON EASTERN URBAN EXTENSION (1-33-46)**

The Cabinet had before it a *report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration requesting Members to consider information on Area B of the Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension (EUE) for Stage 1 public consultation, for a Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration outlined the contents of the report highlighting by way of presentation the area within the Eastern Urban Extension named as Area B. The Allocation and Infrastructure Development Plan Document adopted in January 2010 allocated sites for development which included 153 hectares of land east of Tiverton, he explained the mechanism for the master plan that had followed for Area A but had not fully resolved the land use issue across the whole of the allocation. Since the adoption of the existing masterplan, the Council had commissioned survey work to understand Area B and that this would now form an addendum to the masterplan for the Eastern Urban Extension.

He outlined the proposed 2 stages of consultation which would commence with a scoping exercise which would highlight the key issues of the developable area and amount of development, the access to Area B, green infrastructure and the phasing of development. He also outlined the opportunities available for access to the site and the constraints. He informed the meeting that the Stage 1 consultation programme would be delayed to take into consideration the Devon County Council elections and would therefore start on 16 May 2017 for a 4 week period.

Consideration was given to:

- Reservations regarding the access points to the site
- The impact on local residents and the need for the junction at the A361 to be in place prior to construction
- The impact on Blundells Road and Halberton
- Funding issues with regard to the A361 junction.

RESOLVED that the Area B Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) be approved for stage 1 consultation.

(Proposed by Cllr R J Chesterton and seconded by Cllr K I Busch)

Note: - *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

134. **MEETING MANAGEMENT (1-59-47)**

The Chairman indicated that he would like to amend the order of business and take agenda items 17 and 18 next. This was **AGREED**.

135. **WASTE STORAGE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (2-00-06)**

The Cabinet had before it a * report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration seeking approval to adopt the Refuse Storage for New Residential Properties Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration outlined the contents of the report explaining that the document provided guidance on the design of waste recycling storage in new residential developments across Mid Devon. The issue had originally been raised at the Scrutiny Committee and that the SPD complimented existing local planning policy on design of housing (DM14) which required adequate external space for recycling and refuse storage. Effective waste storage was also a component of good design more generally under policy DM2 'High Quality Design'. The proposed Local Plan Review Policy DM12 'Housing Standards' would continue to provide the baseline for the more detailed guidance included in the SPD.

Consideration was given to developments that had commenced using the guidance established within the SPD

RESOLVED that the Refuse Storage for New Residential Properties Supplementary Planning Document be adopted.

(Proposed by Cllr R J Chesterton and seconded by Cllr P H D Hare-Scott)

Note: *Report previously circulated; copy attached to the Minutes.

136. **PERFORMANCE AND RISK**

The Cabinet had before it and **NOTED** a *report of the Director of Corporate Affairs and Business Transformation providing Members with 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 walked Members through the report and highlighted the positive performance within the Corporate Plan targets.

Note: *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

137. **GREATER EXETER GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD (2-08-35)**

The Cabinet had before it a *report of the Chief Executive seeking support for the establishment of formal joint governance arrangements for economic development and strategic planning and infrastructure project management and delivery for the Greater Exeter area to ensure that this functional economic area 'punches its weight' regionally and nationally.

The Leader outlined the contents of the report stating that agreement was being sought in principle and whether or not the devolution proposals lead to a new relationship on planning and economic development matters across the LEP geography, there was a need for a formal body that had the advantages of acting as a single organisation with one strategy, plan and decision making process bringing together direction, commitment, effort and resources to remove duplication and address major strategic issues affecting the functional economic area.

Consideration was given to:

- Whether there would be a role for scrutiny
- The need for joint governance to be open and transparent

- The work of the Partnership Working Group
- Development difficulties in the Exeter area
- Queries as to why Devon County Council were not involved

RESOLVED that:

a) The principle of the setting up of the proposed Greater Exeter Growth and Development Board together with local authorities covering the Greater Exeter functional economic area, namely East Devon District Council, Exeter City Council, Mid Devon District Council and Teignbridge District Council be approved. The Board will be a Joint Committee under s101 (5), 102 Local Government Act 1972 and s9EB Local Government Act 2000 and pursuant to the Local Authorities (Arrangement for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012.

b) Devon County Council had been asked to support this, but was not yet prepared to do so be **NOTED**.

c) It be noted that further detailed reports would be brought to Cabinet and/or full Council as appropriate on:

- The terms of reference and rules of procedure of the joint committee (Greater Exeter Growth and Development Board)
- The required amendments to the Constitution once the Terms of Reference have been agreed and approved by each Council
- Any future decisions on the creation of delivery vehicles
- Any funding decisions

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Note: - *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

138. PROPOSED HEART OF THE SOUTH WEST PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE REPORT (2-20-51)

The Cabinet had before it a *report of the Chief Executive explaining that in the absence of any 'Devolution' proposition at this time, the Heart of the South West (HotSW) partnership was seeking to take forward proposals to create formal governance for the partnership and prepare/approve a Productivity Plan in support of our future devolution asks and to replace the Strategic Economic Plan for the area.

The Leader outlined the contents of the report explaining the change of Government view with regard to the establishment of a combined authority in the HotSW area without an Elected Mayor. The new Secretary of State had now given a clear indication that a mayoral combined authority would be required in order to achieve a significant devolution deal. It was considered that the partnership must maintain the momentum achieved to date by putting in place arrangements across the HotSW area which would enable the delivery of key ambitions of raising productivity.

Consideration was given to:

- Events taking place in Dorset
- The need for closer partnership working

It was therefore:

RECOMMENDED to Council that:

a) The update about the HotSW Combined Authority / devolution deal proposals (including noting that a Joint Committee, if established, would have responsibility for developing future 'deal' and combined authority proposals for recommendation to the constituent authorities) be **NOTED**;

b) The proposals for the HotSW Productivity Plan preparation and consultation proposals be approved (including noting that a Joint Committee, if established, would have responsibility for approving and overseeing the implementation of the Productivity Plan);

c) The following was **AGREED**:

(i) 'In principle' to the establishment of a HotSW Joint Committee with a commencement date of Friday 1st September 2017 in accordance with the summary proposals set out in this report;

(ii) That the 'in principle' decision at (i) above was subject to a further report to the Council after May 2017 to: approve the establishment of the Committee; a constitutional 'Arrangements' document; an 'Inter-Authority Agreement' setting out the support arrangements; appoint representatives to the Joint Committee; and appoint an Administering Authority.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Note: - *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

139. **FINANCIAL MONITORING (2-25-23)**

The Cabinet had before it and **NOTED** a *report of the Director of Finance, Assets and Resources presenting financial monitoring information for the income and expenditure of the 2016/17 financial year.

The Cabinet Member for Finance outlined the contents of the report stating that the General Fund now showed a proposed deficit of £64k; the significant movements within the month which included reactive maintenance at leisure centres and additional income from Development Control fees and charges. He highlighted the well managed Housing Revenue Account with rental income good and arrears low. The capital budget had some slippage but that was mostly on housing projects.

Note: *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

140. **BUDGET (2-27-20)**

The Cabinet had before it a * report of the Director of Finance, Assets and Resources outlining options available in order for the Council to move towards a balanced budget for 2017/18.

The Cabinet Member for Finance outlined the contents of the report highlighting the work of officers and the Policy Development Groups to secure significant savings without reducing service delivery and maintaining the commitment to four key aims within the Corporate Plan, this had resulted in the Council only requiring £89k to set a

balanced budget which was proposed to be taken from the New Homes Bonus. He outlined the Government changes that had been made to the New Homes Bonus and that that funding stream could not be relied on in the future.

Consideration was given to:

- The need for the authority to be more commercially minded in order to raise money
- An additional recommendation to include the provision of a litter picking service
- The need for a good joined up approach with regard to the litter picking service with the Parish Councils
- The need for education with regard to the disposal of waste

The Cabinet recorded its thanks to the Finance Department for their hard work with regard to the budget process.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:

- a) Council Tax be increased by £5 to £192.15.
- b) General Fund budget for 2017/18 be approved.
- c). The 2017/18 budget required no transfer from the General Fund Balance.
- d). The General Fund Budget required a one off transfer of £89k from New Homes Bonus.
- e). HRA budget for 2017/18 be approved as outlined in Appendix 5 of the report.
- f). HRA fees/charges be approved based on the attached schedule shown as Appendix 5a of the report.
- g). That work on strategic planning for delivering balanced budgets in the future be commenced in the Spring based on the funding levels contained in the fixed 4 year Government grant settlement.
- h) To seek the provision of two operatives and a van dedicated to litter picking throughout the district, initially for a one year period commencing April 2017. The financing of this service to be considered within the street cleaning review of Spring 2017, with any surplus funding requirement provided from the New Homes bonus.

(Proposed by Cllr R L Stanley and seconded by Cllr P H D Hare-Scott)

Note: *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

141. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME (2-44-22)**

The Cabinet had before it a * report of the Director of Finance, Assets and Resources seeking Council approval for the 2017/18 Capital Programme and that the estimated amounts for 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 be noted.

The Cabinet Member for Finance outlined the contents of the report stating that the proposed Capital Programme had been produced following detailed consultation with spending officers and now mainly focussed on essential asset maintenance, funding for a range of private sector housing projects, modernisation of refuse and recycling vehicles, ICT replacement and maintenance and maintaining the housing stock. He

informed the meeting that the New Homes Bonus would form a substantial amount of funding for the programme.

Consideration was given to:

- Capital expenditure on the market
- Rear of the Town Hall, Tiverton

RECOMMENDED that:

- a) The detailed Capital Programme for 2017/18 be approved and the estimated amounts for 2018/19, 2019/20 & 2020/21 be noted.
- b) To agree to earmark New Homes Bonus (NHB) monies of £471k to support the 2017/18 Capital Programme (see para 2.3 of the report).

(Proposed by Cllr P H D Hare-Scott and seconded by Cllr K I Busch)

Note: *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

142. **NATIONAL NON DOMESTIC RATES (2-48-16)**

The Cabinet had before it a *report of the Director of Finance, Assets and Resources providing Members with an update on the income generation and financial implications of the number of Business Rate properties in Mid Devon and requesting it to approve the NNDR1 (estimated income to be generated in 2017/18 from business rates).

The Cabinet Member for Finance outlined the contents of the report explaining the business rates retention scheme, the new and old schemes, the central pooling that allowed county councils and district councils to join together to pool their growth and offset the growth of one area against a decline in another.

Consideration was given to :

- Relief for small businesses
- The changes made to the scheme by the Chancellor in the autumn statement as detailed in the report
- The re-evaluation scheme taking place

RECOMMENDATION to Council that:

- a) The calculation of the NNDR1 net yield of £ 15.033m from 2887 Business Rated properties be noted and approved for 2017/18;
- b) The proportions distributed to the respective authorities and central government be allocated as per the statutory regulations; and
- c) Members note and approve that central government will reimburse the Council through a Section 31 grant to compensate it for the reduction in collectable business rates as a result of introducing reliefs.

(Proposed by Cllr P H D Hare-Scott and seconded by Cllr C R Slade)

Note: *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

143. **POLICY FRAMEWORK (2-55-03)**

The Cabinet had before it a report of the Chief Executive requesting it to endorse the Policy Framework for the year.

The Cabinet considered the policies and the review dates.

RECOMMENDED that the Policy Framework be adopted.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Note: *Report previously circulated; copy attached to the Minutes.

144. **ESTABLISHMENT (2-55-59)**

The Cabinet had before it a *report of the Group Human Resources Manager outlining the overall structure of the Council showing the management and deployment of officers.

The Cabinet Member for the Working Environment and Support Services outlined the contents of the report stating that a significant amount of positive change had taken place and that this would continue to deliver a more effective and efficient service. She referred to the following table which gave the total number of full time equivalent posts as at 31 January 2017:

Service	FTE 2017	FTE 2016
Business Information Services (ICT)	16.49	18.49
Chief Executive (inc Electoral Services)	6	5
Communities and Governance	16.71	19.71
Customer Services (inc Revenues)	36.79	43.08
Financial Services	24.14	25.06
Housing and Property Services	119.90	123.12
HR and Development (inc Leisure)	71.96	61.32
Planning & Regeneration	34.26	36.16
Public Health Services	17.6	17.47
Street Scene	77.51	76.51
Total	421.36	425.92

She also explained that while pressures of work were rising the Council had implemented support for staff suffering with stress.

| **RECOMMENDED** that the Establishment be approved.

(Proposed by Cllr Mrs M E Squires and seconded by Cllr K I Busch)

Note: *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

145. **NOTIFICATION OF KEY DECISIONS (3-00-08)**

The Cabinet had before it, and **NOTED**, its rolling plan * for March 2017 containing future key decisions.

Note: * Plan previously circulated; copy attached to the signed Minutes

(The meeting ended at 5.27 pm)

CHAIRMAN