

Community PDG Chairman's Report 2016-17

I took over as the new Chairman at the start of the year as the PDG shortened its name to just Community. Nonetheless it retained its broad interest in well-being for the District.

Much of the work of the PDG has centred around checks and balances based on regular reports from officers and outside organisations. Some of these have been routine from financial monitoring, risk reviews through to public health plan performance and anti-social behaviour statistics. Others were less so, for example with regular updates from leisure services where changes in pricing, marketing and staffing needed review, not least with agreement to fund an extension to the Exe Valley Leisure Centre.

Other topics have been rather more demanding with important recommendations being required. Of note given their impact on the community were discussions and decisions on Safeguarding and changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. The budget was a challenge because of the increasing pressure from government funding to the District so requiring a special working group session.

Always open to new areas of relevant interest, the PDG benefitted from general awareness presentations on Modern-day Slavery and, as a separate Member Briefing, Mental Health Services in Devon.

Whilst all this work is important, the committee has sought, in line with its title, to develop some new policy. The health risks caused by poor air quality in the UK were highlighted in the national press and so were identified as a key area to address with new policy in the District. The first step was to develop an Air Quality Strategy and Policy. At the time of this report these remain work-in-progress aiming for finalisation and implementation next year.

Finally, I would like to thank all members and officers for their contributions which made it a successful year, not least Julia Stuckey our Clerk for keeping us in order.