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MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**
held on 28 March 2017 at 2.15 pm

Present

Councillors

B A Moore (Chairman)
Mrs E M Andrews, Mrs H Bainbridge,
Mrs A R Berry, Mrs C P Daw, Mrs G Doe,
R J Dolley, F W Letch and Mrs E J Slade

Also Present

Councillor(s)

D J Knowles, C R Slade, Mrs M E Squires and R L Stanley

Also Present

Officer(s):

Andrew Pritchard (Director of Operations), Simon Newcombe (Public Health and Professional Services Manager), John Bodley-Scott (Economic Development & Regeneration Manager), Rob Fish (Principal Accountant), Catherine Yandle (Internal Audit Team Leader) and Julia Stuckey (Member Services Officer)

70 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

There were no apologies given.

71 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Vicky Rowe, Chief Executive Officer of Citizens Advice for the area that included Mid Devon, referring to item 5 on the agenda, informed the Committee that she had been very surprised at the outcome of the tender process. She said that a lot of work had been put into a very professional presentation and that they had been disappointed that the amount being awarded had been shared between three organisations. The amount they were being given was reduced by two thirds and she was getting the impression that Citizens Advice was not appreciated within Mid Devon despite efforts made. She confirmed that Citizens Advice would continue to provide an excellent service but there would be implications for clients and sessions would be reduced from 7 a week to 5 with only 750 clients being supported in a year rather than the current 2300. Clients wanting face to face help would be disadvantaged and Citizens Advice would have to spend valuable time monitoring the Service Level Agreement which would eat into time that could be spent with clients. Ms Rowe asked the Group to reconsider the allocation of funds.

Mr John Vanderwolfe, Clerk to Tiverton Town Council, referring to item 5 on the agenda, stated that he fully supported Citizens Advice. He worked from the same office and saw the number of clients that came for advice, and that he knew the same support was provided in Cullompton and Crediton. He asked did the Group really appreciate the impact that the reduction in grant would make and how the service would be diminished in the town. He asked Members to consider putting some more money in the pot for Citizens Advice.

The Chairman stated that these questions would be considered at the agenda item.

72 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the last meeting were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

73 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed the new Director of Operations Andrew Pritchard to the meeting.

As it was the last meeting of the municipal year the Chairman thanked Members for their attendance and attention throughout the year.

74 STRATEGIC GRANTS AND SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT PROGRAMME

The Group had before it a report * from the Chief Executive & Director of Growth updating Members on arrangements for the introduction of grant awards linked to Service Level Agreements for selected agencies during the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2020.

The Economic Development & Regeneration Manager outlined the contents of the report, reminding Members that at its meeting on 27 September 2016 the Community Policy Development Group had recommended that the Museum of Mid Devon Life and Tiverton Tourism Information Service be moved from the grants budget to a separate tourism budget, that a commissioning approach to future grant allocations should be adopted and that grants be paid on an annual basis for the remainder of the 2015-2020 Corporate Plan.

These recommendations had been approved by Cabinet on 27 October 2016.

The officer explained that the commissioning approach taken by the Council meant the ending of annual grant awards for the provision of eleven services and introducing a new Service Level Agreement Grant Programme for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2020 for the provision of the following services:

1. Welfare Advice and Information;
2. Support for Community Organisations;
3. Community Transport Services;

He explained that the service areas selected each had a social and economic benefit to the district, for example, by ensuring residents received the welfare payments to which they were entitled, that people with mobility difficulties could travel to towns and villages and charitable organisations were able to become more self-reliant and bring additional funding into the area, supporting local jobs and services. The move to a Service Level Agreement Grant Programme would enable the Council to monitor performance more effectively and achieve best value for taxpayers.

Members were reminded that the awarding of grants to external agencies was a discretionary function of the Council, it having no statutory responsibility to provide a grant programme to external organisations and that there was likely to be a

continued expectation that additional reductions to the grants budget would be required to assist the Council's overall budget setting process.

The officer outlined the possibility of creating a small budget as a transitional 'parachute' arrangement for agencies that would lose their annual grant award on 1 April 2017.

The Grants Working Group had viewed presentations and had recommended the following awards:

Welfare Advice and Information	17-18	18-19	19-20
Age UK Mid Devon	£9,650	£9,650	£9,650
CHAT (Churches Housing Action Team)	£12,500	£12,500	£12,500
Citizens Advice Bureau	£12,500	£12,500	£12,500
	£34,650	£34,650	£34,650
Support to Community Organisations	17-18	18-19	19-20
INVOLVE – Voluntary Action in Mid Devon	£12,000	£12,000	£12,000
The Onion Collective	£6,000	£6,000	£6,000
	£18,000	£18,000	£18,000
Community Transport Services	17-18	18-19	19-20
Tiverton and District Community Transport Association	£22,000	£22,000	£22,000
	£22,000	£22,000	£22,000
TOTAL	£74,650	£74,650	£74,500

Members were reminded that a number of previous grant payments had been removed from the grants process. They were the Tiverton Museum of Mid Devon Life, the Tourist Information Service, the Grand Western Canal and the Exe Rail Partnership. It was proposed that the Council entered into a 3 year SLA with Tiverton Museum and the Tourist Information Service at the current level of funding. It was also proposed that grants for Grand Western Canal and Exe Rail Partnership be retained at their current level for the next two financial years.

Consideration was given to:

- The large reduction in the payment to Citizens Advice;
- The value of the advice and support provided by Citizens Advice;
- The hope that organisations would work together to provide services, but this had not happened;
- The presentations given and how Members perceived them;
- The fact that the Town Council would be the landlord for Citizens Advice and would set their rent;

- A potential underspend of around £18k that could be used as a 'parachute' fund to help organisations that had not received a grant or to increase an award given;
- The value of the Tiverton Market Drop in Centre and the fact that they had been unable to meet the criteria for a Service Level Agreement;
- The benefit of ring-fencing any surplus that could be used to help out any organisation that was struggling during the three year period.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that:

- a) The recommended three-year funding levels set out in paragraph 2.3 of the report be approved with an additional £3k per annum for Citizens Advice;

(Proposed by Cllr Mrs H Bainbridge and seconded by Cllr F W Letch)

- b) An allocation of £2k in year 1 and £1k in year 2 be made to the Tiverton Market Drop in Centre which had been unsuccessful in its application to the new Service Level Agreement Grant Programme, as a transitional arrangement.

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

- c) The recommended level of grants to other external organisations set out in paragraph 3.0 be approved.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

- d) Any remaining funding be held in reserve in case any of those agencies awarded payments encountered problems and required additional support. These payments would be agreed by a Cabinet Member decision.

(Proposed by the Cllr Mrs G Doe and seconded by Cllr Mrs E J Slade)

Note: Report * previously circulated and attached to Minutes.

75 **SINGLE EQUALITIES POLICY AND EQUALITY OBJECTIVE**

The Group had before it a report * from the Audit Team Leader reminding it of the Council's statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010, and to seek Members' approval for the revised Single Equality Scheme and Equality Objective.

The officer outlined the contents of the report, explaining that only minor changes, such as the updating of job titles, had been made.

A Member Briefing had been put in place for 16th May in order to raise awareness.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Cabinet that:

The Single Equality Scheme together with the Equality Objective be approved for 2017-18.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

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

76 **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

The Group had before it a report * from the Health and Safety Officer advising Members that, in accordance with the Health and Safety at Works Act 1974, the Council's Health and Safety at Work Policy had been reviewed by the Health and Safety Committee and that all actions from the report dated 27 September 2016 were being undertaken.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Cabinet note the Health and Safety Policy which was approved by the JNCC on 12 January 2017, following review by the Health and Safety Committee and Unison. Members to also note the action points in the report to the Community PDG had been reviewed by the Health and Safety Committee and have subsequently been undertaken.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

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

77 **CCTV ANNUAL UPDATE**

The Group had before it an update * regarding changes to the Tiverton Town Centre CCTV system and operational overview.

The Head of Housing and Property Services outlined the contents of the report, informing Members that the CCTV system continued to work well and that it was well used by the Police. The supervisor who was contracted to work 7 hours per week continued to work considerably more hours. Recent investment of £30k had been made to upgrade the cameras and the report contained information regarding some incidents that the CCTV system had helped the police with.

The officer informed Members that the Police and Crime Commissioner had offered capital funding across Devon towards the installation and upgrading of systems. However this would only cover capital costs and the officer did not think it would be beneficial to the authority.

Discussion took place regarding:

- The fact that the authority was involved with the CCTV in Tiverton but not Cullompton and Crediton, but Tiverton Town Council did contribute to the system;
- The small budget and the potential that it could be further reduced;
- The part time officer and the number of voluntary hours that he contributed;
- Private CCTV which could also be used by the police.

Note: - Briefing paper previously circulated and attached to Minutes.

78 AIR QUALITY UPDATE

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report * from the Public Health and Professional Services Manager providing an update on progress of the revision of the statutory Air Quality Action Plans for the district.

The officer highlighted some updates that had been made to the financial and risk sections of the report to reflect the current situation. He explained that finance would rely on a variety of different mechanisms to deliver projects such as Section 106 funding, the Community Infrastructure Levy and funds from Central Government and Devon County Council. There was also a connection with the Local Plan and proposals within it such as the Cullompton relief road.

The officer informed the Group that regarding the timeline the Air Quality update was still on track but that unfortunately the joint funding bid for some proposed measures had been unsuccessful due to being massively oversubscribed. Officers were now looking for alternative funding.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Ongoing concerns regarding air quality in Crediton and Cullompton;
- Robust plans that would be required to ensure that air quality was not negatively affected by development;
- Snap-shot air quality readings at certain times of day which in isolation looked very bad but did not reflect the annual average which would give a better idea of exposure over the year;

It was **AGREED** that the Public Health Manager would distribute Air Quality Statistics as soon as they were available.

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

79 PERFORMANCE AND RISK

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report * from the Director of Corporate Affairs & 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 outlined the contents of the report.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Food safety inspections and the non compliance rate;
- School canteens and how they were monitored;
- Trim Trails and the fact that none were in place yet.

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

80 **FINANCIAL MONITORING**

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report * from the Director of Finance, Assets & Resources presenting a financial update in respect of the income and expenditure to 31 December 2016.

The Accountant explained that this was a generic report that was seen by all Policy Development Groups and the Cabinet. He informed the Group that little had changed with the overall variance since his last report and that the predicted overspend for the year was currently £64k, this was less than 1% of the overall budget.

The officer explained that the variance for areas within the remit of the PDG were reasonably high. This was mainly due to leisure income being below budget, although it was up on previous years. This was following a restructure for the service which was due to break even by 2019/20. Planning Development Control income was also down on budget.

The accountant informed the Group that the Director of Finance, Assets and Resources would be providing a verbal update to Cabinet later in the week but he could give some reassurance that the net position was broadly the same as reported here.

The Finance team were currently working on closing the annual accounts and an outturn report would be presented in June.

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

81 **ACTIVE DEVON DRAFT STRATEGY**

The Group had before it information * regarding Active Devon for consultation. The Public Health Manager informed the Group that he would feedback any comments. The officer explained that the strategy mission for Active Devon was to get people in Devon more active, starting with the least active. This fitted with the Mid Devon Corporate Plan and the adopted Public Health Plan. Active Devon worked along-side the Public Health and Leisure services to promote activities such as walking football.

Note: Information * previously circulated and attached to Minutes.

82 **ENERGY SWITCHING SCHEME**

The Public Health and Professional Services Manager provided an update regarding the Energy Switching Scheme. The scheme would support residents to ensure that they were able to save money on energy bills. The scheme would use an online calculator which would enable the public to find out which provider would be the best deal for them to switch to for gas and for electricity. It was guaranteed that the web based tool would search the market for the best possible deal over a year. There were some risks, as Age UK had found when they promoted a provider that did not give the best deal however, the website would provide a 100% guarantee that the

best deal would be provided at the time and this was verified by OFGEM. It was predicted that average savings could be £230 - £240 per year and in other areas that were using the system savings from £12 to £916 per year had been achieved. The authority would receive a referral fee for each customer that switched.

Discussion took place regarding;

- The need to cater for those that did not have access to the internet and alternatives that would be made available;
- The need to promote the service;
- The risk to reputation and the need to ensure that the information provided was correct;
- The scheme was expected to go live by May.

83 CHAIRMANS ANNUAL REPORT

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a draft report * by the Chairman on the work of the Group since May 2016, a final copy of this report would be submitted to Council on 26 April 2017.

84 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Leisure Update
Public Health Six Monthly Update
Financial Monitoring
Performance and Risk
Gypsies and Travellers Policy
Town and Parish Charter

(The meeting ended at 4.15 pm)

CHAIRMAN