

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**
held on 1 August 2017 at 2.15 pm

Present

Councillors B A Moore (Chairman)
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

Apologies

Councillor(s) Mrs E M Andrews

Also Present

Councillor(s) R F Radford and C R Slade

Also Present

Officer(s): Jill May (Director of Corporate Affairs and Business Transformation), Andrew Pritchard (Director of Operations), Rob Fish (Principal Accountant), Catherine Yandle (Internal Audit Team Leader), Kevin Swift (Public Health Officer) and Julia Stuckey (Member Services Officer)

13 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs E M Andrews. Members of the Group asked that their best wishes be sent to Cllr Mrs Andrews who was celebrating her 90th Birthday.

14 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

15 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

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

16 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reminded Members that the next meeting of the Group would be held at Crediton.

The Chairman explained that an informal meeting (workshop) had been put in place for Monday 21st August at which Members were invited to bring ideas for future agenda items. The implementation of this workshop followed the Peer Review and a paper from the Chief Executive in which it was proposed that Members be more involved in making policy.

17 PARKS AND OPEN SPACES 10-YEAR MANAGEMENT PLANS AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES

At its meeting on the 11 July 2017 the Environment PDG had before it a discussion paper regarding parks and open spaces. The Group resolved to ask the Community PDG to discuss the paper with regard to the health and wellbeing of families using open spaces, in particular to section 8 concerning play areas. The Environment PDG would debate the matter again at its meeting on 5 September and would take the views of the Community PDG into consideration when so doing.

The Director of Operations explained that the report * the Group had before it had been produced as a discussion paper to enable the formulation of policy for open spaces over the next 10 years. The Environment PDG had asked the Group to give particular consideration to the built environment which included areas such as pathways, benches and play areas. The officer stressed that the health, safety and wellbeing of children was of paramount importance and for example in the case of fencing around play areas, would always be replaced if required for those reasons. The officer also asked Members to consider whether or not the Play England document referred to within the report should be used as a reference point.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Assurance that when necessary for health, safety and wellbeing reasons play areas would continue to be fenced;
- Concerns regarding a specific play area which would be addressed outside of the meeting;
- The importance of consultation prior to works being undertaken in open spaces and parks;
- When items such as fencing or benches were removed the area must be left in a safe state;
- The use of wild flowers and indigenous trees;
- The fact that it was sometimes necessary to remove trees if they were in the wrong location and a request for replacement trees to be planted elsewhere when this happened;
- Headstone runners at the cemeteries and the fact that these would prevent health and safety issues regarding headstones.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Environment PDG be asked to ensure that the Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Management Plan be clear that:

- a) Play areas must be fenced when necessary for health and safety reasons, as the health, safety and wellbeing of children was of paramount importance:
- b) Play England criteria be used;

- c) When work was undertaken to remove fences or other items such as benches, the work must be undertaken safely and no hazards left:
- d) That communication and clear consultation must take place with all parties being updated.

(Proposed by Chairman)

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

18 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 2017-18 as well as providing an update on the key business risks.

The Audit Team Leader informed Members that the number of performance indicators for the area within the remit of the Group had reduced and asked that they let her know if there were any areas that they would like further information for in future.

Performance indicators for Leisure Services had been removed from the report. The Director of Operations explained that this was due to the commercial sensitivity of the information provided. It was **AGREED** that in future the performance indicators for Leisure would be provided in Part II to allow Members to review performance without risk to the Leisure business.

Discussion took place regarding:

- The plant rooms at the Leisure Centres and the level of risk;
- Potential car parking overcrowding at leisure centres and measures that had been put in place to prevent inappropriate parking in disabled bays, mother and baby bays and on yellow lines;
- Whether the hoped for success of the extension at Exe Valley could result in further parking issues.

Consideration was given to the need to look at other means of promoting health and wellbeing, which was a Corporate Aim, as well as by use of the Leisure Centres. It was **AGREED** that the Audit Team Leader be tasked to provide a performance indicator regarding other methods of improving health and wellbeing within the District.

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

19 REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN 2016/17

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report * from the Director of Finance, Assets & Resources presenting the revenue and capital outturn figures for the financial year 2016/17.

The Principal Accountant informed Members that the annual accounts had been presented to the Audit Committee on 17 July, and that the authority was amongst the first in the country to do so. The accounts team were dependant on the entire organisation providing timely information in order for this to happen.

The officer informed the Group that both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account were under budget at year end. He highlighted collection rates which were good and informed Members that reserves had been increased in order to provide a buffer for future uncertainty.

Areas within the remit of the group with significant variances included Planning and Regeneration which held a favourable position of £390k. This was mainly due to successful grant applications and those funds had been placed in earmarked reserves for future spend. Revenues and Benefits showed a favourable variance, mainly due to effective recovery of overpayments and Government subsidy. Leisure Services showed an adverse variance, as had been indicated throughout the year by means of financial monitoring, mainly due to the management restructure and a challenging income budget.

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

20 TRIM TRAILS

The Public Health Officer provided a verbal update regarding progress with trim trails.

The officer informed Members that he had been in discussion with the Planning Service and had an agreement in principle that funding would be allocated for a Trim Trail in Tiverton. The intention was to start with one Trim Trail to allow for assessment of usage and suitability of equipment.

Initial plans were to site a couple of pieces of equipment in each of the Tiverton parks, Westexe, Amory, Peoples and the Canal, creating a loop to the Leisure Centre. The Trail needed to be accessible and appropriate for all age and ability groups to use.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Placing of the trail and ensuring it was accessible as well as not being so public that people would feel uncomfortable using it;
- The possibility that the public would use the equipment rather than join the gym and the implications for the Leisure Service;
- Trim Trails were within the Conservative Manifesto from the last election. It was intended that they would be throughout the district but Tiverton was being used as an initial trial;
- Basic equipment would not involve expensive maintenance in the way that equipment with moving parts would;
- Other areas that already had trim trails.

The officer would report the progress of this project to future meetings of the Group.

21 **DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL'S JOINT SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND MDDC GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES**

The Group had before it a report* from the Director of Corporate Affairs & Business Transformation and Corporate Safeguarding Lead Officer updating Members on the Joint Devon District Wide Safeguarding Policy along with MDDC guidance and procedures.

The Director explained that the Lead Safeguarding Officer had been working with the Devon Districts to review the adopted joint Devon Safeguarding Policy.

The Lead Safeguarding Officer informed Members that the MDDC guidance and procedures for Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk had been updated. The policy had been amended to include new information in terms of Child Exploitation and Online Protection, Radicalisation and Prevent.

The officer explained the actions that had been taken to increase awareness of the Safeguarding Policy.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Cabinet approve the Devon District Councils joint Safeguarding Policy (Appendix A) and the MDDC guidance and procedures (Appendix B).

(Proposed by the Chairman)

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

22 **IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

Customer Services and the impact of closing surgeries at Cullompton and Crediton
Financial Monitoring
Performance and Risk
Air Quality
Community Engagement Strategy
Gypsy and Traveller Policy
Town and Parish Charter

(The meeting ended at 3.36 pm)

CHAIRMAN