

## **MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MINUTES** of a **MEETING** of the **ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**  
held on 9 January 2018 at 2.00 pm

### **Present Councillors**

D R Coren, Mrs C P Daw, R Evans,  
Mrs J Roach, Mrs E J Slade, J D Squire and  
R Wright

### **Apologies Councillor(s)**

R F Radford, D J Knowles and Mrs N Woollatt

### **Also Present Councillor(s)**

C J Eginton and R L Stanley

### **Also Present Officer(s):**

Andrew Jarrett (Director of Finance, Assets and Resources), Andrew Pritchard (Director of Operations), Stuart Noyce (Group Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces), Catherine Yandle (Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security) and Julia Stuckey (Member Services Officer)

## **41 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies were received from Cllr D J Knowles, the Chairman, Cllr R F Radford (Cllr D R Coren, Vice Chairman took the Chair), and from Cllr Mrs N Woollatt who was substituted by Cllr Mrs J Roach.

## **42 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no members of the public in attendance.

## **43 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the last meeting were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

## **44 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman had no announcements to make.

## **45 MOTION FROM COUNCIL**

The Group had before it the following Motion that had been forwarded from Council to the Policy Development Group for consideration.

### **Motion 542 (Councillor Mrs J Roach – 30 November 2017)**

That this Council consider the use of recycling trolleys as a pilot project, hopefully in Silverton, as an alternative to assisted collections for those who wish to try out such a system.

Cllr Mrs Roach distributed photos of the trolleys that she was proposing and explained that although she appreciated the trolleys were expensive she thought they would be worthwhile and hoped that a trial would be possible in Silverton as an alternative to assisted collections for the elderly. She explained that older people often found it hard to carry boxes but they would be able to wheel this system which would reduce the number of assisted collections needed and even if an assisted collection was still required, it would be easier for the collectors. With an ageing population Cllr Roach anticipated that requests for assisted collections would increase. The system was also a neat, space saving way to store recycling and following trials on Anglesey had been implemented throughout the island.

The Group Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces explained that there were currently 662 assisted collections throughout the District. Assisted collections could be requested for various reasons such as physical disabilities, mobility issues, dexterity, learning difficulties and frailty. He did not consider that the use of trolley boxes would resolve all of these assisted collection requirements as residents with severe physical disabilities and frailty may not be able to use the trolley and would still require an assisted collection from an agreed location.

Cllr Roach considered that the trolleys would allow residents to maintain their dignity and independence.

He further explained that on average trolley box cost £38 per unit, price would vary to ensure boxes were compatible with our boxes. So there could be a potential initial cost of around £25,156 plus delivery to householders. An ongoing replacement budget would be required based on a 5-10 year life.

He considered that the use of trolley boxes would need to be risk assessed due to the use of a different collection method. Trolley boxes were not a complete replacement for assisted collections as most collections included food waste caddies and refuse. He suggested that there would be a need to consider who was eligible for a trolley box and update procedures and policies. Customers would be restricted to 3 boxes on standard trolley.

Cllr Roach informed the Committee that she had personally spoken to local residents that had expressed an interest in these trolleys.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Recycling boxes could be stacked and people with assisted collections were not expected to sort their recycling if they were not able;
- There had not been any complaints registered regarding assisted collections;
- Boxes used in the unit would have to be compatible with vehicles;

- Budget limitations;
- Whether or not the trolleys would save time for operatives;
- There were more than three recycling materials collected in Mid Devon so further containers would be required;
- Whether or not the cost of the trolleys could be offset by the time saved collecting;
- Recycling could be collected from the trolleys if the resident bought one for their own use as long as the boxes were compatible;
- Welsh authorities had targets with penalties for failure to achieve;
- Agreement that the trolleys looked user friendly but concerns about the cost;
- Whether it was appropriate to undertake a trial if the finance would not be available to implement it if it proved successful;
- The need to keep uniformity to waste and recycling services provided across the district.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to Council that Motion 542 not be supported.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Note: - Cllr Mrs J Roach asked that her vote in support of the Motion be recorded.

#### 46 **GRASS CUTTING WORKING GROUP 00:47:00**

The Group had before it a report \* from the Director of Operations outlining the findings of the Grass Cutting Working Group.

The officer outlined the contents of the report, in which he explained that he had posed the question 'where do you want to be in the future?' to the Working Group.

The Working Group had been informed that the current charging mechanism was based on a 'per square metre' method for all work undertaken. He explained that this methodology tended to work for cutting areas such as recreational grounds and sports pitches which required one piece of equipment and took a consistent amount of time. However, areas that might require strimmer's or blowers or smaller more time consuming areas, could cost considerably more. He proposed an alternative would be to charge what it actually cost in terms of labour and equipment rather than on a per square metre basis.

The officer further explained that following consideration of Motion 538 (Cllr Mrs J Roach - 1 June 2017) and a report of the Director of Operations regarding grass cutting issues in Mid Devon, the Group had recommended that invoices to Town and Parish Councils regarding grass cutting should confirm the number of cuts undertaken with dates.

Discussion took place regarding:

- The importance of providing accurate information regarding the number of cuts undertaken when issuing bills to customers;
- The need for the Housing Revenue Account to pay full costs for services;
- Pricing would be agreed in advance of work being undertaken;
- Town and Parish Councils would need to be aware of health and safety and insurance when procuring services (other than from the Council).

It was **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet:

- a) That notification to Town and Parish Councils regarding grass cutting should confirm the number of cuts undertaken with dates; this notification should take place on a monthly basis or as applicable if no cuts occurred during a month.
- b) That the Grounds Maintenance team price all work on the basis that it should recover the full cost incurred by them carrying out that work.
- c) That Town and Parish Councils be informed that a full cost recovery pricing model for grass cutting would be implemented over 3 years starting in the 2018/19 financial year. However any increase in cost will be tapered to allow for them to make provision regarding other providers and/or any required increase to their budgets.

(Proposed by Cllr Mrs J Roach seconded by Cllr R Evans)

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

#### 47 **BUDGET 00:58:00**

The Group had before it and **NOTED** an update on the budget \* from the Director of Finance, Assets and Resources setting out the revised draft budget changes identified.

The officer outlined the contents of the report stating that following initial meetings of the Cabinet and the Policy Development Groups, the Finance team and service managers had been revisiting a range of budgets to deliver more savings or increase income levels. The officer outlined the following table which showed the main budget variances affecting the 2018/19 budget:

<b>Variances</b>	<b>Amount £k</b>
<b>18/19 Budget Shortfall (Cabinet Report 26/10/17)</b>	<b>617</b>
Further Cost Pressures identified	570
Additional savings identified	(231)
<b>18/19 Revised Budget Shortfall</b>	<b>956</b>

2% Staff Pay award offer (1% previously built in)	116
Business Rate 100% Pilot bid accepted (1 year only)	(230)
Business Rate Growth (Solar & Benefit of Devon Pool)	(150)
Funding from sinking funds & reserves (ICT & Leisure)	(215)
Other additional savings identified	(174)
<b>18/19 Revised Budget Shortfall</b>	<b>303</b>
No reduction in Rural Services Delivery Grant	(86)
3% increase in C/Tax (2.6% previously built in)	(22)
<b>Draft budget gap for 2018/19</b>	<b>195</b>

The officer highlighted the provisional formula grant ward for 2018/19 which amounted to £2.7m and the fact that the Council had also been given the freedom to raise its council tax by an additional 0.4%.

Consideration was given to areas that fell within the remit of the Group and had been discussed by the Working Group. These were **AGREED**.

The additional costs required for the transfer of the Grounds Maintenance service from the Park Nursery to Carlu Close were discussed.

Further discussion took place regarding:

- Land drainage projects;
- The ongoing Mills Project;
- Delays to the implementation of Universal Credit in the area;
- The need to start work now towards the budget for the following year which would require further savings;
- The need for income generation and the potential to sell services to Town and Parish Councils.

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

#### 48 **FINANCIAL MONITORING 1:10:00**

The Director of Finance, Assets and Resources informed Members that there were no major changes to over/underspends from the previous update at the last meeting.

An area of concern was the recent issue with the sale of plastics which had come about due to the Chinese market no longer taking it. There was a national market but it was expected that this market would be flooded and the value would therefore reduce. Worst case scenario was no income at all.

#### 49 **PERFORMANCE AND RISK 01:28:00**

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report \* from the Director of Corporate Affairs and 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 Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security outlined the contents of the report explaining that with regard to the Corporate Plan Aim to increase recycling and reduce the amount of waste the authority was broadly on track but was still a little below target for % of household waste reused, recycled and composted but at 53.6% still did well compared to the mean for all English authorities on LG Inform which was 48.09% for Q2 2017/18.

The Group Manager for Street Scene & Open Spaces also remind members that the recycling was lower in the first six months due to the inability to compost street sweepings but with the opening of the transfer station this was now possible again.

The officer explained that a further risk had been added to the Risk Register regarding the sale of plastics which had been discussed at the previous agenda item.

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

#### 50 **WASTE AND RECYCLING REGULAR UPDATE**

The Group Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces provided a six monthly Waste and Recycling Service Update \*.

Discussion took place regarding the Resource Futures Project which supported projects such as 'bring and takes' and reuse. The officer explained that the project was aimed at encouraging local communities to engage in this sort of event.

Note: - \* Presentation attached to Minutes.

#### 51 **IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

Repairing Footpaths and Roads Policy  
Performance and Risk  
Bereavement Services Fees and Charges  
District Officer Discretionary Time Update  
Lantern update  
Smoking in Play Areas update

(The meeting ended at 3.58 pm)

**CHAIRMAN**