

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 21 November 2019

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.05 pm

41 Public speaking

There were no public speakers.

42 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 and 31 October 2019 were agreed and signed as a true record.

43 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

44 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

45 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There were no confidential/exempt items.

46 Decisions made by Cabinet called in by Members for scrutiny in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules

There were no decisions called in.

47 Police and Crime Commissioner

Members noted that this item had been withdrawn due to the restrictions of purdah. The Chairman confirmed that the Police and Crime Commissioner would be invited to a future meeting of the Committee.

48 Presentation from the Recycling and Waste Team

Members of the Committee received a presentation from Andrew Hancock, Service Lead – Street Scene and John Golding, Strategic Lead - Housing, Health & Environment on aspects of the Waste and Recycling contract. Members noted that all the materials collected were valuable resources which were put to good use to give both environmental and economic benefits. They were used as secondary raw materials for manufacturing, used to make products for agriculture or used to generate electricity.

Members noted that the system produced segregated materials which were of good quality with good levels of demand despite volatile market conditions. The total material

sales income in 2018-19 was £902,022 and the total recycling credits income for 2018-19 was £852,714. The District recycling rates were just under 60% which put East Devon in the top twenty districts for recycling in the country. We were also the second lowest producer of residual waste in the country. The arrangements for vetting the processors who bought the recycled materials were also discussed and a webpage on the East Devon website giving details of end destinations highlighted.

During discussions the following points were noted:

- All of the recycling materials were at the moment traded in the UK. Infrastructure does not exist at present in the south west to recycle much of the material.
- End destinations are recorded through a statutory reporting mechanism. Once our materials are sold, we don't have the legal or technical ability to track material from East Devon, but all processors are vetted to ensure they are EA compliant and that we are doing the right thing with our material; legally, ethically and environmentally.
- Information on our environmental responsibility and end destinations is now published on our website.
- The cost of the waste and recycling service was circa £6M and this was reduced to £4M by monies from the sale of recycling materials.
- What happens to black plastics? Black plastics were not picked up by some optical sorters and were often left in recycling stream. Any which were not sorted for recycling were put to energy from waste production.
- Our system was all about the quality of our recyclables.
- People should be encouraged to buy drinks in aluminium cans rather than plastic bottles as this would reduce plastic and also give us a valuable recycling income.
- There was a very low price for recycled glass at the moment, 0.2p per tonne.
- Damp cardboard could still be recycled.
- A large amount of smaller electrical items, such as mobile phones and computer screens could be recycled as long as they fitted in the green box.
- The service was working with 'Recycle Devon' to encourage home composting. Information would soon be on the East Devon website as well as recycledevon.org.
- There was zero waste being sent to landfill at present.
- It was more carbon neutral to send crisp packets to the energy from waste centre than recycle them through Terracycle.
- The contents of the dog waste bins were currently being sent to the energy from waste centre in Exeter.
- Around 30% of waste in the black wheelie bins was still recyclable. What was the service doing to educate people to improve recycling rates further? Targeted material campaigns are being used to remind, nudge and educate people about recycling the high % materials still going in rubbish bins.
- The possibility of more education and marketing around Refuse, Reduce, Refill and Re-use to improve recycling rates was being investigated, but this would come at a cost of more staffing.
- An additional 1% of recycling in the district would produce another £20k of income, but require a lot of marketing and education input.
- Issue of producers/retailers putting packaging on all their products, such as cabbages. It was understood that it would be government policy to make producers pay for this unnecessary packaging.

- What happens when through ill health or incapability, households were not able to recycle? There was capability within the service to offer assistance to such households with their recycling.
- Possibility of EDDC adopting the End Destination of Recycling Charter, which would be an excellent achievement and chartermark.
- The quarterly report to Councillors by Karen Simpkins, Strategic Lead – could include greater details of recycling information that was provided at this meeting.
- It was likely that due to increased costs, there would be a need to increase the Waste & Recycling budget by £500k in 2020/21 (half from expected contract increases tied to property growth and half resulting from falling recyclate income due to volatile market conditions). Which would provide more problems with the Council meeting a balanced budget.
- EDDC recycling was a success story that should be more widely advertised.
- What needed to happen to achieve first place residual waste? Further education and participation marketing (tied to more capacity/FTEs to 'door step' residents).

RESOLVED:

1. that the officers be thanked for their excellent presentation and also thanks be sent to all recycling staff for the excellent service, the level of recycling they achieved and work with the Alexa app.
2. that the ommittee wishes to indicate its support for the various educational proposals to increase the recycling rates.
3. that, where possible more graphics be introduced to explain recycling rates and procedures.
4. that the team be congratulated on the success of the green waste service.
5. that the service pursue achievement of the End Destination of Recycling Charter.
6. that the presentation slides be circulated to all Councillors.

49 **Section 106 Funding and CIL Update**

Members noted that the report was designed to provide an update on progress with changes to the systems and processes regarding the collection and spend of monies secured through Section 106 agreements and CIL. The report related to both the Council response to the Finance audit of these issues published in 2016 and also concerns previously pressed by Members.

Ed Freeman, Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management reported that the reason for the recommendations was to enable the completion of the project to provide a new fit for purpose system for monitoring the collection and spend of Section 106 and CIL monies.

It was noted that the majority of monies collected through Section 106 agreements were for open space and play. The Council would occasionally collect monies for other matters and it would depend on what it was as to how spend was determined. For example if it is a contribution for affordable housing then we would engage with housing to determine how that was spent. The only case that he was aware of a tourism contribution being collected was the Fortfield Hotel in Sidmouth where in the spirit of participatory budgeting the Council were engaging with the Town Council and awaiting their proposals for engaging with the community and local businesses over spend. In principle where appropriate we would look to engage with the local community.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- Getting the database completed and launched was important to allow Councillors to understand the information and database. It was hoped that this would be available in the New Year.
- Need for users to have confidence in the system for monitoring 106 and CIL monies.
- The data was constantly evolving and changing.
- Need to provide training sessions for town/parish councils on the new system.
- Concern that the new information system for S106 and CIL should have been done sooner. The depth of information available was important.
- Will Councillors receive regular emails on the progress of S106 and CIL? Ed Freeman agreed to check the functionality of the new system to ensure that this was available.
- We were ahead of the game compared to other local authorities. The new system was 'state of the art' and not currently available within Exeter City or Teignbridge. A lot of resources had been put into the new system of information provision. The previous system used was a system of spreadsheets.
- Have previously tried to find out information on S106 in Exmouth and found it difficult. Hope that information would be logged. Ed Freeman confirmed that the system would be well monitored.
- Is there a policy for deciding how s106 money is allocated to proposed projects? Who are the decision makers?
- Previous issues with lack of staffing.
- S106 and CIL was an extremely involved and complicated area of work.
- Hope that the new system would provide greater transparency.

RESOLVED: 1. that the progress that has been made available to support the implementation of the new system for monitoring Section 106 and CIL monies be acknowledged.

2. that STRATA will be asked to progress implementation of the public portal into the Exacom system to permit public access to the data held as a matter of urgency once officers are satisfied that the data held is complete and accurate and Ed Freeman – Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management be requested to provide a progress report for the February meeting..

3. that the Overview Committee be requested to review the process of defining the process for funding and also the responsibility for decision making.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

A Dent (Chairman)
K Bloxham (Vice-Chairman)
T McCollum
V Ranger
J Rowland
M Chapman
B De Saram
C Gardner
P Jarvis

F King

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

S Bond
P Faithfull
G Jung
D Ledger
T Wright

Officers in attendance:

Ed Freeman, Service Lead Strategic Planning and Development Management
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment
Andrew Hancock, Service Lead StreetScene
Christopher Lane
Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor (and Deputy Monitoring Officer)

Councillor apologies:

K McLauchlan
E Rylance
J Whibley

Chairman

Date: