

NORTH DEVON COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Policy Development Committee held at Virtual - Online meeting on Thursday, 16th July, 2020 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Members:

Councillor D. Spear (Chair)

Councillors Campbell, Jenkins, Mack, Walker and York

Officers:

Bereavement (Crematorium) Manager, Sustainability Officer, Head of Place and Head of Resources

Also Present:

Councillors Pearson

50. VIRTUAL MEETINGS PROCEDURE - BRIEFING AND ETIQUETTE

The Senior Corporate and Community Services Officer outlined the virtual meeting procedure and etiquette to the Committee and attendees.

51. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence received.

52. TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 FEBRUARY 2020 (ATTACHED).

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2020 (circulated previously) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

The following declarations of interest was announced:

Councillor Walker Item 7 – personal interest as a Member of the North Devon Crematorium Joint Committee.

54. NORTH DEVON CREMATORIUM - TRAFFIC UPDATE

The Committee received an update by the Crematorium Manager in relation to traffic issues.

The Crematorium Manager advised the following:

- The crematorium was a key local resource which must be accessible during its operating times. It was not like a supermarket where if the road is blocked you can return later or go to an alternative provision, it needed to be accessible at the time.
- The crematorium conducted 1600 services a year and often accommodated services of up to 400 people and on rare occasions as many as 800. Car parking was available on site for 130 cars and the gardens were open to visitors 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
- The current situation regarding traffic had existed since 2000 when Devon County Council closed Old Torrington Road, putting the crematorium in a cul-de-sac. To maintain bus access it put in place a traffic order restricting traffic transitioning from Gratton Way into Old Torrington Road.
- This restriction was never correctly marked as it was incorrectly and inadequately signed as a bus lane which it never was. The consequence was that even the buses were using the junction illegally and the only exempt motor vehicles were motorcycles.
- The Crematorium Manager's intervention with the Police and Devon County had resulted in every fixed penalty notice being withdrawn.
- The restriction relied on a rising bollard which rarely worked and was now apparently beyond repair.
- There was always a concern that in the event of an accident on the Sticklepath roundabout it would effectively close the crematorium to vehicular traffic.
- It was vital that any traffic measures implemented must ensure a two route access to the crematorium. Any measure that closed Old Torrington Road and forced traffic to exclusively use Gratton Way would be disastrous for access.
- The crematorium had been vastly increased in facilities and capacity and well over 200 homes had been built in the last five years all accessing the junction. All construction traffic and the 800 new to be built homes and new school traffic would have to use this route as well as any crematorium traffic. This also included the new Lidl, which resulted in a road that struggled to cope with current traffic and would be utterly overwhelmed by the lack of capacity combined with an exponential increase in traffic volumes.
- The construction phase in particular would be extremely challenging with shoppers, students, funeral traffic, residents, large HGVs and trade vehicles mixing throughout the day which was a real risk for accidents which can easily close the road.
- Any solution must retain a two route access to the crematorium at all times. Until the new junction on the link road was constructed in six years time the access could only be achieved by either retaining Old Torrington Road access or open access from the Roundswell roundabout.
- Roundswell was not practical for two way access but a one-way operation may be feasible, though expensive. Old Torrington Road would be possible with a timed restriction to eliminate rush hour traffic whilst allowing daytime access (possibly open from 9.30am – 4.30pm).
- Appropriate exemptions should be encompassed in the order for emergency vehicles, local authority (refuse), any traffic on authority of a constable

(emergency use), cycles and motorcycles. Exempting funeral vehicles would be a legal minefield to word correctly and would lead to endless timely and expensive appeals. Private enforcement of cameras tended to lead to a very robust regime of enforcement that may not sit well with people attending funerals and the local negative publicity would probably be extensive and prolonged.

- To do otherwise would result in congestion, access being blocked by any accident and mass accidental non-compliance. There were still people entering the Crematorium through the wrong entrance five years after it had been changed.

55. NORTH DEVON COUNCIL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY 2020

The Committee considered a report by the Climate Action Team, Environment and Climate Change Lead Members and Head of Place (circulated previously) regarding North Devon Council Environmental Policy 2020.

Councillor Pearson, Lead Member for the Environment presented the Environmental Policy 2020 to the Committee.

During the consideration of the Policy, the Committee were advised that the Policy was a living document and that a strategy and an action plan would be formulated. The Committee made the following suggestions for inclusion within the Environmental Policy Strategy and Action Plan:

- As a Licensing Authority consider reviewing its policies and procedures to require licence holders to use suppliers and contractors that reduce the impact of their goods and services by considering whole life cycle impact.
- Investments into green industries as a form of income to the Council be explored.
- Further details regarding education and community engagement being included. Community engagement was fundamental to the delivery of the policy.
- As a Planning Authority consider how powers can be used to maximum effect to help make the District carbon neutral by 2025.

The Head of Resources advised that the strategy and policy would also link to the Commercialisation Strategy, Licensing policy and other policies of the Council.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the draft North Devon Council Environmental Policy 2020 be endorsed;
- (b) That the Strategy and Resources Committee be recommended to adopt the proposed draft North Devon Council Environmental Policy 2020;
- (c) That the Strategy and Resources Committee be

recommended to create a temporary post of Climate Change Officer to support the implementation of the Environmental Policy 2020 and development and delivery of the Climate Action Plan;

- (d) That community engagement and consultation be undertaken on the Environmental Policy.

Chair

The meeting ended at 11.00 am

NOTE: These minutes will be confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting of the Committee.