

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 29 March 2023

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.59 pm

168 Public speaking

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

169 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting of Cabinet held on 1 March 2023 were agreed.

170 Declarations of interest

Min 174. Minutes of Scrutiny Committee held on 2 March 2023.

Councillor Steve Gazzard, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Reference SW Water - is a Town Councillor and resident of Exmouth.

Min 179. Exemption from Contract Standing Orders - UK Shared Prosperity Fund - OSM.

Councillor Peter Faithfull, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Member of Ottery Town Council.

Min 180. Homes for Ukraine project approval to extend the financial 'Homemaker' check service and delegated authority.

Councillor Peter Faithfull, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Member of Ottery Refugee Response Group.

Min 184. Exeter Science Park Company: Debt to Equity.

Councillor Jack Rowland, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Council appointed Shareholder of Exeter Science Park.

Min 184. Exeter Science Park Company: Debt to Equity.

Councillor Paul Hayward, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Council appointed Director of Exeter Science Park.

171 Matters of urgency

None

172 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There were two confidential items recorded at minute 183 and 184.

173 Minutes of Arts and Culture Forum held on 1 March 2023

Members agreed to note the Minutes of Arts and Culture Forum held on 1 March 2023.

174 Minutes of Scrutiny Committee held on 2 March 2023

Members agreed to note the Minutes and recommendations of Scrutiny Committee held on 2 March 2023.

Minute 106 Portfolio Holder Annual Report - Coast, Country and Environment

1. That the Council encourages South West Water to bring the new sewage treatment plants and other infrastructure improvements into operation as soon as possible for the benefit of residents and that the Council takes proactive action wherever possible to protect its residents from the effects of pollution.
2. That the Council works with other authorities in the south west and involves the relevant MPs in support of its dialogue with South West Water to achieve improvements.
3. That the Council, through its partners, ensures that food waste is reduced and recycled and that, if necessary, a campaign is introduced after the next election to educate and encourage residents.

Minute 107 Expenditure on consultants and agency staff 2021 – 2022

That where the Council has to employ consultants it always aims to achieve best value for money.

175 Minutes of Scrutiny Committee held on 9 March 2023

Members agreed to note the Minutes of Scrutiny Committee held on 9 March 2023.

176 Minutes of Housing Review Board held on 16 March 2023

Members agreed to note the Minutes and recommendations of Housing Review Board held on 16 March 2023.

Minute 53 Changes to the housing leadership team

that Cabinet recommend to Council the creation of a new post of Head of Housing Operations to be funded through the Housing Revenue Account.

Minute 54 Finance report

that Cabinet note and approve the Housing Revenue Account and Housing Capital finance 2022/23 forecast outturn report.

Minute 55 Remit Zero Cylo – Innovate UK application

1. that Cabinet support the Innovate UK funding bid and EDDC's role as a collaboration partner.
2. that Cabinet approve the funding of the Council's contribution to the bid of £125,000.
3. that should the funding bid not be successful, that Cabinet authorise the Director of Housing, Health and Environment in liaison with the Portfolio Holder for Homes and Communities to identify an alternative project that could be implemented to install Cylo as an initial pilot of ten council homes.

Minute 56 Integrated asset management contract – minor works

that Cabinet approve, in accordance with the conditions of the integrated asset management contract the change by the core group and approve that it is implemented/recorded under a formal contract amendment.

Minute 57 Void performance

1. that Cabinet note the contents of the report including contributing factors towards performance levels and details of the plan for improving performance.
2. that Cabinet recommend the additional staff resource required to implement the suggested improvements, namely an additional Housing Allocation Officer.
3. that Cabinet approve the changes to the voids lettable standard.

Minute 58 Learning from complaints

1. that Cabinet note the learning points from the report and the areas of improvement identified.
2. that Cabinet recommends to Council the appointment of an additional Complaints Officer (Housing) for a fixed 12 month period who will work within the Corporate Complaints team.
3. that Cabinet recommends to Council that additional funding in the sum of £25,409 plus on costs is approved to fund an additional Complaints Officer (Housing) for a fixed 12 month period.

Minute 59 Tenancy visits

1. that Cabinet note and agree the tenant visits policy and procedure.
2. that Cabinet agree that all properties be visited annually.
3. that Cabinet recommend to Council two additional housing officer posts and the additional budget requirement.

Minute 61 HouseMark 2023/24 membership renewal

1. that Cabinet approve that the HouseMark membership is renewed for 2023/24 at an annual cost of £8225 plus VAT.
2. that Cabinet approve that the subscription is carried forward on an annual basis unless the Housing Review Board are otherwise informed.

177 Minutes of Community Grant Panel held on 17 March 2023

Members agreed to note the Minutes and recommendations of Community Grant Panel held on 17 March 2023.

Minute 113 Community Buildings Fund

That the remaining balance of the Community Buildings Fund be carried forward to 2023/24 for future applications in that year and that the Fund is better promoted in future years, with an emphasis on green projects.

178 Broadclyst Neighbourhood Plan Examiner's Report

The report provided feedback and set out proposed changes following the examination of the Broadclyst Neighbourhood Plan. The independent examination of the Plan had now concluded and the final Examiner's report received. In accordance with the relevant legislation, the District Council must now consider its response to the Examiner's recommendations and also satisfy itself that the Plan meets the necessary 'basic conditions'.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Examiner's recommendations on the Broadclyst Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) be agreed.
2. That a 'referendum version' of the Plan (incorporating the Examiner's modifications as set out in this report) be produced and give delegated authority to the Assistant Director Planning Strategy and Development Management in consultation with the Portfolio Holder – Strategic Planning to agree a final version once the issues highlighted in paragraphs 41

and 42 of Appendix A have been addressed and to then proceed to referendum and publish a decision notice to this effect, be agreed.

3. That the Broadclyst Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group be congratulated on their sustained hard work.

REASON:

The legislation required a decision notice to be produced at this stage in the process. The Plan was the product of significant local consultation and has been recommended to proceed to referendum by the Examiner subject to modifications which were accepted by the Parish Council.

179 Exemption from Contract Standing Orders - UK Shared Prosperity Fund - OSM

The report relates to the Feasibility Study for the Ottery St Mary (OSM) Station Youth Hub that was being delivered using UKSPF funding. The UKSPF Investment Plan was approved by Government on 7 December 2022. The total allocation for Ottery St Mary is £25,000, split over 2 funding years. There was insufficient time to conduct a procurement exercise given the external funding timeframe.

Members asked that a letter be written to the District's MPs to request that any further allocations of funding; of any sort, be sent well advance of any deadline dates for allocation or spending.

RESOLVED:

That support for the action taken in accordance with para 2.3.2 of the Council's Contract Standing Orders be noted.

REASON:

To enable commencement of spend of the UKSPF allocation for OSM by 31 March 2023. To avoid having to return the funding allocation due to not delivering any expenditure by the end of this financial year.

180 Homes for Ukraine project approval to extend the financial 'Homemaker' check service and delegated authority

The report sought to extend the financial check service provided by Homemaker Southwest to assist more Ukrainian guests to move in to private rented accommodation and to introduce a delegated authority to the Homes for Ukraine project.

RESOLVED:

1. That the extension of the financial check service provided by Homemaker Southwest for an extra 2 days a week for use by Ukrainian guests looking to move in to private rented accommodation for an initial 6 month period from 1 April 2023, at a cost of £8,000 be agreed.
2. That this new service be delivered within the finances provided by the UK Government be agreed.
3. That future approval for spending on this project within existing budgets and to enter into such agreements as are required to ensure that the project meets its aims, to be delegated to one of the following - Director Finance, Director Housing, Health and Environment or Director Governance and Licensing. With such spend to be in discussion with the Portfolio Holders for Finance and Sustainable Homes and Communities be agreed.

REASON:

The extended financial check service provided by Homemaker Southwest would enable more Ukrainian guests to move in to private rented accommodation and ease the pressure the service was experiencing at this time due to the number of referrals it was receiving. The introduction of a delegation to the project would enable the Homes for Ukraine scheme to become more agile and flexible and to enable new initiatives to be agreed in a timely manner.

181 **Household Support Fund 4**

The report provided details on the proposed policy of the Household Support Fund and funding available to support households for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

Sharon Church, Libby Jarrett and the Finance team were congratulated on getting the fund to this point.

RESOLVED:

1. That the proposed policy for the Household Support Fund for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 be agreed.
2. That delegated authority to be given to the Assistant Director for Revenues, Benefits, Customer Services and Fraud and Compliance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes and Communities, to determine the targeted groups who are most in need of financial support, which takes into account data from the poverty dashboard and other relevant factors, be agreed.

REASON:

The recommendation allowed for the administration of the Household Support Fund to be targeted at those who required financial support through the cost of living crisis. In addition the proposed policy was in line with the Department for Work and Pensions guidance and was in agreement with other Team Devon authorities who continued to work together to ensure a Devon wide framework in administering these funds. This policy also continued to support the Council's Poverty Strategy.

182 **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 - Exclusion of Press and Public**

that under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting as exempt and private information (as set out against each Part B agenda item), is likely to be disclosed and on balance the public interest is in discussing the items in private session (Part B).

183 **Towards Zero Carbon Development in the West End: Project Management Capacity**

The report highlighted the good progress being made both with the development of the interconnector project and to support the ongoing roll out of district heating to the Cranbrook expansion areas. This included a successful bid to the Green Heat Network Fund.

RESOLVED:

1. That delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holders for Finance and Coast, Countryside & Environment and the Director Governance & Licensing to complete the relevant documentation.

RECOMMENDED to Council:

2. That the outcome of the bid to the Green Heat Network Fund be noted and recommends to Council that the associated funding agreement is signed.
3. That £80k is made available from the General Fund to provide additional project management support for the delivery of low and zero carbon development in the West End.

REASON:

To ensure the successful progression of the interconnector project and the ongoing roll out of district heating to serve the Cranbrook expansion areas.

184 **Exeter Science Park Company: Debt to Equity**

The Assistant Director Growth, Development & Prosperity presented his report that sought to convert the Council's £1m loan plus associated interest in to an equity stake in Exeter Science Park Limited. The proposal followed a formal request from the Chief Executive of ESPL with other shareholders expected to take similar action. This approach was necessary to ensure the future financial sustainability of the Science Park.

RECOMMENDED to Council:

that the request to convert debt to equity is agreed subject to;

1. the other ESPL Shareholders also agreeing to convert outstanding debt to equity.
2. satisfactory resolution of the position regarding the Growing Places Fund loan with the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership.

RESOLVED:

3. That delegate authority be granted to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, Portfolio Holders for Finance and Economy & Assets and Directors for Governance & Licensing and Finance, to finalise the associated legal agreements.
4. That authority be granted to the S151 Officer to sign the request of the Letter of Comfort received from the CEO Exeter Science Park.

REASON:

To ensure the future financial sustainability of Exeter Science Park Limited.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

P Arnott (Chair)
P Hayward (Vice-Chair)
G Jung
D Ledger
M Rixson
J Rowland
J Loudoun
N Hookway

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

J Bonetta
P Faithfull
S Gazzard
T Wright

Officers in attendance:

Sharon Church, Benefits Manager
Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer
Simon Davey, Director of Finance
Naomi Harnett, Enterprise Zone Programme Manager
Alison Hayward, Project Manager Place & Prosperity
Andrew Hopkins, Communications Consultant
Emily Robins, Homes for Ukraine project coordinator
Anita Williams, Interim Director of Governance and Licensing and Monitoring Officer
Andrew Wood, Assistant Director Growth Development and Prosperity

Councillor apologies:

S Jackson

Chair

Date: