

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of LED Monitoring Forum held at Online via zoom app on 25 January 2022

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.31 pm

93 Public Speaking

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

94 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 November 2021

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 November 2021 were noted as a true and accurate record.

95 Declaration of interest

Cllr P Arnott: Minutes 98 – 102; Personal Interest: Member of LED Community Leisure.
Cllr A Dent: Minutes 98 – 102; Personal Interest: Member of LED Community Leisure.
Cllr P Millar: Minutes 98 – 102; Personal Interest: Member of LED Community Leisure.

96 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

97 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There was one item to be considered in private session.

98 Update on Leisure Strategy

Liz Taylor of Strategic Leisure provided a verbal update on the Leisure Strategy, including the following:

- Site audits were completed in November 2021 for all indoor sports facilities included within the scope of work for the Leisure Strategy and for artificial turf pitches, often located adjacent to indoor provision within the district. It had not been possible to gain access to a small number of leisure facilities including, for security reasons, the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM) at Lympstone;
- Stakeholder consultation was ongoing, exploring leisure needs and what is good and bad within the district. Conversations had also taken place with Planning teams in neighbouring authorities with a view to understanding their facilities and future development plans which could impact East Devon District Council (EDDC) decisions going forward;
- Sports club and school surveys had gone out and the closing date for these was 15th February. A community survey would follow shortly but this tended to be skewed in terms of the demographic of people who completed them, with a particularly high response rate from the retired population. Depending on response rate, they might ask some schools to push the survey out to students, to get a more representative sample of responses;
- A supply and demand analysis was being completed, exploring the quality of facilities and whether they met current demand, as well as looking at future demand for those facilities.

This would give an indication of the level of future provision needed to cater for population growth.

Ms Taylor invited questions.

In discussion, the following points were made:

- Responding to a question about timescales, Ms Taylor indicated that there had been some delays for a number of reasons but she anticipated the report would be completed towards end May/early June 2022;
- A Member sought to better understand the factors taken into account in assessing the impact on the facility planning model of leisure facilities provided by neighbouring authorities. Ms Taylor explained that the model looked specifically at sports halls, swimming pools and indoor bowls, considering exported and imported demand by calculating the proportion of people going out of the district to undertake leisure activities and those coming in from neighbouring authorities, and assessing the balance of these factors;
- Conversation took place around the anticipated challenges of converting recommendations arising from the report into infrastructure on the ground, given financial constraints. The Strategic Lead Finance commented that Strategic Leisure were fully aware of constraints on local authority funding and, as part of their remit, would deliver recommendations for leisure provision that they and EDDC could work on together;
- A Member asked whether common themes had emerged from Strategic Leisure's conversations with other local authorities. Ms Taylor responded that every local authority was in a slightly different place, and shared that two neighbouring authorities in another county had worked collaboratively to jointly finance a new leisure facility for the benefit of the residents of both boroughs, as an example of what could be achieved;
- A Member commented that he could try to assist Strategic Leisure in approaching CTCRM for access, but questioned the relevance of assessing their leisure facilities given they were not available to the outside community. Ms Taylor expressed thanks for the offer and said it was her understanding that the facilities were available for hire by sports clubs and associations but, for security reasons, it was usually necessary to have a sponsor to gain access;
- In respect to the community survey, a Member commented on the importance of gathering the views of the working-age population as well as students and the retired, in order to form a valid evidence-base for the strategy. Ms Taylor remarked that the working age group were difficult to contact, and success was often dependent on participation via social media. Ideas for engaging with this group included via schools' electronic newsletters, or asking large employers in the district to circulate the survey link, if EDDC could provide Ms Taylor with the contacts;
- In clarification, Ms Taylor stated that Active Devon had helped in drafting the questions for the community survey with a view to understanding people's leisure habits and where they participate in leisure; it was hoped this would capture leisure activities which are not part of a formally constituted club, such as keep fit, yoga etc taking place in church or community halls.

99 **LED Dashboard December 2021**

The Forum received and noted key details of the performance of LED Community Leisure for December 2021, including an outline of the net promoter score.

100 **LED Facilities and Activities December 2021**

The Director of Delivery of LED Community Leisure ran through the content of the Facilities and Activities Report which had been circulated to the Forum in advance of the meeting, and highlighted the following points:

- December was traditionally a quiet month for the leisure sector but the government's 'Plan B' Covid restrictions had had a significant compounding effect, with Exmouth Pavilion badly affected;
- January had started positively; LED memberships had dropped below the target of 8,000 members in December but had now recovered and signs were encouraging;
- Staff took a good break over the festive period, which was important for the welfare of the team.

Discussion of the report included:

- A Member observed that the figures showed a slowing of growth in the pre-pandemic period and asked if this was the beginning of a plateau. The Director of Delivery responded that 2019 had been a record year for Exmouth Pavilion financially, even if attendance did not match that. It was hit hard by the pandemic but the manager had forward-booked some shows and it was hoped that 2022 would be a good year;
- Responding to a question about memberships, the Director of Delivery explained some work had been done in January 2021 on the pricing strategy and creating different membership options. Membership numbers had followed national trends, and were moving in the right direction. The challenge was in retaining new members through March and beyond, by looking after them well and ensuring the right programmes and activities were in place;
- The Forum would like greater clarity on the financial position with Exmouth Pavilion and agreed that a report should come to next meeting outlining the operational and capital costs of the facility.

101 **England Covid Impact Report Jan 2022**

The Forum received and noted the Covid impact report January 2022.

The consultative meeting then went into private session.

102 **LED CEO's January 2022 Report**

A report prepared by LED Community Leisure CEO Peter Gilpin had been circulated in advance. Mr Gilpin ran through the key points, commenting on the challenges arising from increased costs, particularly significantly increased utility costs, and outlining a number of measures that it might be necessary to take depending on the financial subsidy that is agreed.

Mr Gilpin went on to summarise the services that LED provide, over and above their contractual obligations, to support health and well being in the community and to make their facilities accessible to populations who might otherwise be unable to afford leisure, such as those on means tested benefits.

Members discussed the report at length, asking direct questions and acknowledging the challenges and potential implications arising from them. They considered the support that EDDC had contributed and could offer going forward, and the capital funding necessary to address identified health and safety issues.

Following the discussion, Members asked for a report to come to the next Forum meeting detailing i) the LED price menu; and ii) the cost to LED of the Passport to Leisure subsidy, the effectiveness of the scheme and the number of Passport to Leisure members.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

P Arnott
A Dent
B De Saram
S Hawkins (Chair)
N Hookway
P Millar (Vice-Chair)
G Pook

LED Community Leisure representatives:

Peter Gilpin, CEO
Bridgette Jones, Director of Finance
Jamie Bryant, Director of Delivery
Richard Purchase, Chairman of LED Board

Strategic Leisure representatives:

Liz Taylor

Officers in attendance:

Sarah Helman, Democratic Services Officer
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer
Tim Child, Service Lead - Place, Assets & Commercialisation
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment
Charles Plowden, Service Lead Countryside and Leisure

Councillor apologies:

P Hayward
J Rowland

Chair:

Date: