

# **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **Minutes of the meeting of LED Monitoring Forum held at Online via Zoom app on 7 June 2022**

### **Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.46 pm

### **1 Public Speaking**

One member of the public had registered to speak at the meeting.

Mr Mike Goodman made a number of points concerning the draft Leisure & Built Facilities Strategy. Firstly, he observed that the draft Strategy specified a low impact on equalities, and expressed a counterview that the Strategy would have a high equalities impact, as recognised in the leisure strategies of other councils as well as Active Devon. He asked Members to confirm that the final Strategy would include a detailed equalities report, and challenged them to demonstrate how they had considered inequalities and consulted with disadvantaged groups. Secondly, he asked why the draft strategy did not address the level of spend on sports and leisure facilities which was identified as very high relative to other local authorities costs based on population size, and proposed that the Grant Thornton report in which this was referenced be made public and discussed. Thirdly, he asked how much had been spent on the consultation strategy, and who conducted it. Fourthly, he suggested that an action plan be written as soon as possible, and the Strategy costed before being adopted by the Council. Finally, he asked that the Council consider revising the vision statement to better reflect an aspiration to make leisure in East Devon accessible to all residents, regardless of their circumstances.

The Chair thanked Mr Goodman for his contribution and indicated that a number of the points he raised would form part of the discussion of the Strategy at item 6. Officers would respond separately concerning any technical points not answered in the meeting.

### **2 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 April 2022**

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 April 2022 were noted as a true and accurate record.

### **3 Declarations of interest**

Cllr P Arnott: Minute 11; Directly relates non-registerable interest: Represents the Coly Valley ward and his wife is a member of LED Community Leisure and user of Colyton Leisure Centre. Cllr Arnott absented himself from the meeting for Item 11.

### **4 Matters of urgency**

There was one matter of urgency (minute 11 refers).

### **5 Confidential/exempt item(s)**

There was one item to be considered in private session (minute 11 refers).

### **6 Draft Leisure & Built Facilities Strategy**

The Service Lead – Countryside & Leisure introduced his report outlining the process for the issuing of a draft Leisure & Built Facilities Strategy for East Devon. Development of the draft Strategy had followed Sport England's guidance and national policy development framework; this was important since it gave credibility to the Strategy, placing the Council in a strong position for submitting future funding bids.

The following points were highlighted:

- The Strategy constitutes a framework for action over ten years and is a very high level document covering a wide range of issues including:
  - Dual use sites – ageing stock and high costs; limited community use and income and future relationship with schools;
  - Identifying where and what new infrastructure will be required e.g. Cranbrook;
  - Review of LED's management contract and fee; and
  - Health and wellbeing work delivered across the whole district.
- There has been considerable public consultation and evidence gathering in developing the draft strategy, which will enable East Devon DC to make decisions.
- Resourcing to deliver the strategy is as yet uncostered, and careful planning will be undertaken in the context of the medium-term financial plan.
- It will be appropriate to review the role of this Forum, to consider whether it needs to have more oversight going forward, in terms of delivery of the Strategy's Action Plan.

Liz Taylor of Strategic Leisure ran through the draft Strategy, including

- Findings from the Supply and Demand Analysis undertaken suggest that at a minimum, East Devon is to retain its existing provision and, in certain cases, needs to increase the provision to cater for population growth through to 2040.
- A vision and key principles are set out in the draft Strategy; these were developed in view of key issues identified from the consultation, and a Member Workshop in which these issues were discussed.
- The bulk of the strategy is around the following five key objectives produced following the consultation and the Supply and Demand Analysis:
  - Facilities that meet the current and future sporting and leisure needs of East Devon residents;
  - East Devon DC priorities are aligned to and complement outreach health and wellbeing;
  - Effective partnerships delivering a sustainable community sport and leisure offer;
  - Harnessing the value of the great outdoors; and
  - Review of the existing leisure management contract.
- Next steps should include:
  - Production of an Action Plan with timescales, and a Delivery Plan sitting alongside it;
  - Work with existing partners to identify options to meet priorities in existing facilities;
  - Identification of new potential partnership working opportunities;
  - Establishment of the resources required to deliver the priorities;
  - Investigation of external funding opportunities;
  - Periodic updating of the strategy, alongside other East Devon DC corporate plans.

The Forum were asked to comment on the draft Leisure & Built Facilities Strategy so that a final version could be issued for Cabinet and Full Council to consider and approve.

In discussion, the following points were made:

- The Chair and other Members thanked officers and Strategic Leisure for the work that had gone into completing this very comprehensive draft Strategy.
- There appeared to be no reference to the fitness centre at Seaton; Liz Taylor commented that she would check on this point before the final strategy document is issued.

- Views were expressed that Cranbrook should be given prominence in the Strategy, particularly given that its demographic is different to the rest of the district.
- A Member had observed anecdotally that there was very little usage of outdoor gym equipment. Rachel Fowler recognised that these were an important informal provision and she and Liz Taylor would explore further whether they needed more prominence in the Strategy. Outdoor gyms had not been included in the Supply and Demand Analysis because it was not possible to control their use given they were outdoors and free to use, nor was it possible to measure the numbers or age of people using them.
- Should the Leisure Strategy be approved, the Council would be in a good position to formulate business cases, and apply for any available grant funding. It was recognised that there would be a lot of work to do concerning how to deliver individual actions, and affordability.
- An important key principle is ensuring that a partner leisure provider is financially sustainable in both the short and long term. There are concerns around many facilities approaching the end of their service life, and the Strategy will guide the Council on how to fund replacements.
- A view was expressed that it would be appropriate to review in 6 months time the role of this Forum in relation to the Strategy and Action Plan.
- It was clarified that the Strategy sets a direction, linked to evidence of need, and is not in itself about money. How the ambition is realised is the next piece of work, and is about partnership and collaboration as well as funding.
- Strategic Leisure will put together some proposed Key Performance Indicators, for consideration.
- It was noted that there would be some minor changes before the draft Strategy is presented to Cabinet.

In a vote following the discussion, the Forum agreed the following recommendation:

**RECOMMENDED TO Cabinet:**

- To approve the principle of the draft Leisure Strategy.

**7 Property & FM Team Update on properties occupied by LED**

The Principal Building Surveyor presented a report which summarised property and facilities management activities at LED managed properties over the last three months, and future activities. The report also provided an update on the recently approved capital projects at LED managed properties. The Principal Building Surveyor briefly summarised the content of the report and invited comment.

In discussion, it was agreed that the table summarising approved capital projects at LED managed properties should include a split of which sites are dual-use and which are wholly owned by East Devon DC, in future reports.

The Chair thanked the Principal Building Surveyor and the Forum noted the content of the report.

**8 LED Facilities and Activities Update May 2022**

A report prepared by the LED Director of Delivery had been circulated in advance of the meeting providing an update on the activities of LED Community Leisure including operational delivery, health and fitness, customer feedback, marketing and communications, and a projects update. The LED Director of Delivery ran through the content, including the following points:

- It has been a positive month with activities well attended, swim school continuing to grow, and all types of membership growing for the fifth consecutive month; a considerable achievement given wider issues with the economy.
- Recruitment and resourcing remains a challenge, and the team are working with educational establishments to encourage school and college leavers into the industry.
- Energy costs continue to be a challenge, especially with three swimming pools to run, but the team were doing well to manage consumption across the buildings.
- The project to provide a pool water intelligent management system for the three swimming pool sites had been approved, and works will be managed by the East Devon DC property team.

Discussion of the report included the following:

- Relative to a pre-Covid year, numbers are at approximately 82%; this was considered positive given world events and the economy.
- An industry body has written to central government concerning the need for support for swimming pools given that gas prices have increased tenfold in some parts of the country.
- The LED community team have encountered challenges in trying to engage to offer facilities within Cranbrook; it was noted that resources in Cranbrook are limited but do include the Education Campus and the Younghayes Centre. Cllr Bloxham expressed a willingness to assist, and would liaise with the LED Director of Delivery outside of the meeting.
- Details of an initiative whereby Sideshore are funding swimming for school children in Exmouth will be included in the next Facilities and Activities Update report to the Forum.

The report was noted and the Chair thanked the LED Director of Delivery for his contribution.

## 9 **LED Community Engagement Report May 2022**

The LED Director of Delivery introduced the LED Community Engagement Report, commenting on the good work of the engagement team to deliver real and measurable impact, and inviting comment.

In discussion, Cllr Bloxham expressed that she would be willing to facilitate engagement between LED and Cranbrook Medical Practice with a view to developing walk leader courses in the town. She and the LED Director of Delivery would liaise on this matter, outside of the meeting.

## 10 **LED Dashboard April 2022**

The Forum received and noted key details of the performance of LED Community Leisure for April 2022, including the net promoter score.

The LED Director of Delivery commented on some anomalies with the numbers; this was mainly due to an IT issue, which would be corrected in future months.

The meeting then went into private session.

## 11 **Colyton Leisure Centre - Proposals to restructure operating arrangements with the school**

The Service Lead – Place, Assets & Commercialisation introduced his report which detailed a proposal to restructure the Colyton Leisure Centre operating arrangements

with Colyton Grammar School. He ran through the proposal and the rationale, outlining how it aligns with the draft Leisure & Built Facilities Strategy.

It was highlighted that if approved, the proposed agreement would secure improved future community use of the all-weather pitch and netball courts at Colyton Leisure Centre, and reduce the Council's/LED's share of property and running costs of the leisure centre.

It was noted that if the Council proceeds as proposed in the report, it is intended that this would become a model to potentially be introduced at other dual-use sites.

The Forum was informed of the urgency of the proposal, given that a decision was needed before the school could instruct contractors to carry out works to the leisure centre's all-weather pitch and floodlighting, during the 2022 school summer holiday. Consequently, the matter would be further considered at a Cabinet meeting tomorrow, with a view to an onward recommendation being made to Council. The Service Lead – Place, Asset & Commercialisation informed Members that he would provide a verbal update to Cabinet, summarising the Forum's discussion this evening.

In discussion, Members considered the financial implications should the proposal be agreed, and the plans for ensuring funds would be in place by way of a sinking fund to maintain the facilities at a point in the future when the all-weather pitch surface and floodlighting need replacing again.

Members expressed support for the proposal, recognising the considerable benefits to the East Devon community in achieving increased access and value.

In a vote following the discussion, the Forum agreed the following recommendations:

**RECOMMENDED to Cabinet:**

1. To delegate authority to the Service Lead – Place, Assets & Commercialisation in consultation with the Strategic Lead – Finance and the Portfolio Holder for Economy & Assets to agree heads of terms for a new lease and management agreement to achieve the outcomes within this report and to enter new agreements with Colyton Grammar School.
2. That Cabinet recommend to Council to provide a capital budget of up to £140,000 to contribute to the School's capital investment works to the all-weather pitch and by doing so securing improved future community use.

The Forum expressed gratitude to officers and the LED CEO for their work in these complex negotiations.

**Attendance List**

**Councillors present:**

P Arnott  
D Bickley  
A Dent  
S Hawkins (Chair)  
N Hookway (Vice-Chair)  
J Rowland

**LED Community Leisure representatives:**

Peter Gilpin, CEO

Jamie Bryant, Director of Delivery  
Richard Purchase, Chairman of LED Board

**Strategic Leisure representatives:**

Rachel Fowler  
Liz Taylor

**Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)**

K Bloxham  
S Gazzard  
H Parr

**Officers in attendance:**

Sarah James, Democratic Services Officer  
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer  
Tim Child, Service Lead - Place, Assets & Commercialisation  
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance  
Jorge Pineda-Langford, Principal Building Surveyor, Property & FM  
Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor (and Deputy Monitoring Officer)  
Charles Plowden, Service Lead Countryside and Leisure  
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment

**Councillor apologies:**

B De Saram  
G Jung  
P Millar

Chair .....

Date: .....