

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of Council held at Online via the Zoom App on 28 April 2021**

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

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.43 pm

#### **134 Public speaking**

The Chair welcomed members of the public and Councillors to the meeting and explained that all participants were taking part remotely and the meeting was also being viewed online and recorded.

The Chair then started the meeting by doing a roll call of those present, and confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

During the meeting the public would be able to participate if they had pre-registered to speak. Two members of the public had pre-registered to speak, but one was unable to join the meeting.

Janine Gardner wanted to address the Council on behalf of Cranbrook Town Council, in relation to the recommendation of Cabinet to undertake a Community Governance Review of the current Cranbrook Town Council area, with a view to establishing whether expansion of the current town boundary is considered to be appropriate and to agree terms of reference and arrangements for consultation. The decision was not whether the parish boundary of Cranbrook be changed which will come later in the light of the review and further reports which will be brought to Cabinet. The Town Council requested the review to provide clarity on the way forward for both the Town Council and its neighbours.

The Town Council has demonstrated that it is able to undertake responsibility for the ownership, management and maintenance of public open space and going forward, both East Devon and Devon Councils are likely to restrict their activities in the town to those which are required by statute. In this situation, it would be expected that the local administration will need to pick up the same roles and responsibilities which have hitherto been picked up by the Town Council.

It is the view of the Town Council that an expanded Cranbrook would be best administered by a single local council rather than several. However, should East Devon consider that a review is not needed or that the existing boundary should not be changed, the result will be that the surrounding parishes will have to take responsibility for open spaces within the respective parishes or allow estate rent charges to exist for their residents.

It has been suggested that the town boundary remains unchanged and that any expansion of Cranbrook to circa 8 000 homes be within the existing town boundary. We know that is not realistic nor feasible.

It is for East Devon as the planning authority to determine the eventual size and scale of the Town and to allocate land for strategic development through the Local Plan and emerging Cranbrook Development Plan Document or DPD.

It has been suggested that the review is premature and should await the outcome of the DPD but both can run in parallel. The key point being that there is nothing which has emerged from the DPD to date which gives any indication that the Inspector would be minded to reject the proposed development plans. Discussions about issues like land values do not impact on the proposed scope, scale and layout of the town.

The Town Council has been consistent in its view that it supports the surrounding settlements in their desire to maintain their independence and separation. That remains the case today despite the boundary issue being raised again. None of the proposed boundary changes lead to the town joining up with the surrounding settlements and the Town Council wants to ensure that remains the case.

The development of Cranbrook to around 8,000 homes is a key element in East Devon's Local Plan delivery with over half of the District's housing delivery being provided in Cranbrook. That has been the case for many years and the proposals in the DPD are not new. The only question is whether the expansion areas will be situated within a revised boundary of the town or remain within the existing boundary of each surrounding parish and the purpose of the review is to explore those options.

In response, Cllr Arnott confirmed that this matter would be picked up under item 9a on the agenda.

### 135 **Minutes of the previous meeting**

Following a vote by those present the minutes of the previous meeting of the Council held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021 were confirmed and agreed as a true record.

Before moving to the next item, the Chair stated that apologies had been received from Cllr Allen, and it is understood that he is experiencing a difficult time at present personally. Our thoughts are with him and his family during this time.

### 136 **Declarations of interest**

140. To answer questions asked by Members of the Council pursuant to Procedure Rules No. 9.2 and 9.5.

Councillor Kevin Blakey, Personal, Questions 3-5. Member of Cranbrook Town Council.

140. To answer questions asked by Members of the Council pursuant to Procedure Rules No. 9.2 and 9.5.

Councillor Kim Bloxham, Personal, Questions 3-5. Member of Cranbrook Town Council.

140. To answer questions asked by Members of the Council pursuant to Procedure Rules No. 9.2 and 9.5.

Councillor Sam Hawkins, Personal, Questions 3-5. Member of Cranbrook Town Council.

140. To answer questions asked by Members of the Council pursuant to Procedure Rules No. 9.2 and 9.5.

Councillor Sarah Chamberlain, Personal, Questions 3-5. Member of Broadclyst Parish Council.

141. Reports from the Cabinet and the Council's Committees and questions on those reports.

Councillor Kevin Blakey, Personal, Cabinet minutes of 3 March. Member of Cranbrook Town Council.

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### 137 **Matters of urgency**

There were no matters of urgency.

### 138 **Announcements from the Chairman and Leader**

The Chair invited the Monitoring Officer to address the meeting on the matter of how meetings will be held in future.

The Monitoring Officer outlined that the recent High Court case brought by Hertfordshire County Council (and LLG / ADSO) seeking a declaration that virtual meetings can continue was dismissed today (28 April). The full Judgement is included here - [Hertfordshire County Council & Ors v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities And Local Government \[2021\] EWHC 1093 \(Admin\) \(28 April 2021\)](#).

The court concluded that:

*“... the Secretary of State was correct in November 2016 and July 2019 to say that primary legislation would be required to allow local authority “meetings” under the 1972 Act to take place remotely. In our view, once the Flexibility Regulations cease to apply, such meetings must take place at a single, specified geographical location; attending a meeting at such a location means physically going to it; and being “present” at such a meeting involves physical presence at that location. We recognise that there are powerful arguments in favour of permitting remote meetings. But, as the consultation documents show, there are also arguments against doing so. The decision whether to permit some or all local authority meetings to be conducted remotely, and if so, how, and subject to what safeguards, involves difficult policy choices on which there is likely to be a range of competing views. These choices have been made legislatively for Scotland by the Scottish Parliament and for Wales by the Senedd. In England, they are for Parliament, not the courts”.*

The outcome means that the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 and Public Bodies (Admissions to meetings) Act 1960, together with other related legislation, apply from 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021 as they did prior to the flexible meeting regulations coming into force. The Judgment did not address the issue of the public attending meetings and the Court have agreed to consider this further and decide the matter. So there are further implications that will need to be worked through.

EDDC officers are investigating proceeding so that the decision making body is physically present in a room to meet the legal requirements but otherwise the public, non-committee members and those reporting / advising are able to continue to participate remotely.

The Chair confirmed that this recent news had caused consternation from some members about having to attend meetings in confined spaces.

In response to requests to re-schedule Annual Council, the Monitoring Officer confirmed that current Local Government legislation required them to be held in March, April or May, so other options were being explored, for example, to hold Annual Council at Westpoint, since the Council Chamber would not be COVID compliant. He went on to explain that the Chamber could hold 16 people safely, which covered all committees. Planning Committee was the largest with 16 members, so that all Committee members would be able to attend, with minimal public access, specifically three people who could be seated in the public gallery.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that he would be contacting all Town and Parish Councils the following day to inform them of the decision by the High Court and its implications. Local Councils had previously been advised by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) on the need to prepare for the eventuality of the court case being lost.

Cllr Arnott stated that this was a legal decision but one which demonstrated how little central government understood local government. He also expressed his view that this was dangerous in terms of putting people at risk by virtue of being in a vulnerable category as well as many younger people who had not yet received COVID vaccines. He proposed that Devon Leaders and Chief Executives should be in contact with each other as soon as possible and lobby Government strongly on this issue.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that there had been no suggestion of further legislation before the summer recess.

The Chair then announced the resignation of Cllr Luke Jeffery as an EDDC Cllr and Ward Cllr for Honiton St Michaels, recently. He was elected in May 2019 and made a valuable contribution to the work of the Council in his role and she thanked him for the service he gave whilst serving for EDDC. She also expressed her view that it was a great pity to lose another young Councillor so soon, which indicated how difficult it was for people to consider taking on the role alongside employment and other commitments.

In her role as Liberal Democrat Group Leader, Cllr Wragg confirmed that he had been a valuable member of the Group, with a wealth of knowledge on environmental issues. In July 2019, shortly after being elected, he had proposed and been supported in presenting a Motion to Council which had resulted in agreement to endorsing the state of climate emergency and for EDDC to work to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040.

139 **Confidential/exempt item(s)**

There were no confidential or exempt items.

140 **To answer questions asked by Members of the Council pursuant to Procedure Rules No. 9.2 and 9.5**

Nine questions had been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 9.2. The questions and answers had been circulated with the agenda and published on the website. Councillors submitting questions are entitled to put a related supplementary question (Procedure Rule 9.5). A summary of the supplementary questions asked and the responses is set out below.

Q3: Cllr Hawkins asked why it cost so much more for emptying bins in Cranbrook compared to Axminster or other local towns.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Coast, Country and Environment stated that a comprehensive response had been provided in writing and that services provided in different areas could not be compared on a like by like basis.

Q4: Cllr Blakey stated that the written response had not answer his question and asked for further clarification on services and costs.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Coast, Country and Environment stated that he was unable to provide the information at the meeting but would provide a further detailed response after consulting with the relevant officers.

Q5: Cllr Bloxham said the answer provided was factually incorrect in that litter picking and street cleansing around the bins was charged separately, rather than included in one charge as suggested, and that she would welcome more engagement with the Town Council and Ward Members in reviewing these matters.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Coast, Country and Environment stated that services across the District were not uniform for various reasons, and had originated in a wide range of complicated arrangements including developers and management agents in the past. A specific contract had been agreed with the Town Council some time ago, which would be approached differently if it were to be done now.

Q7: Cllr De Saram asked how the Council could justify taking money from General Reserves in a crisis, in order to grass over an asset which could generate income in future.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Finance stated that it was the view of the Queens Drive Delivery Group that the space should be returned to community open space. The temporary car park agreement had expired, and the costs of extending it to make it a permanent car park would far outweigh what will be spent to return it to open space. It is also likely that as a result of covering such costs, the public would seek other car parks nearby.

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## **Reports from the Cabinet and the Council's Committees and questions on those reports**

**(a) Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 3 March 2021. Minute numbers 332 - 350**

Cllr Arnott presented the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021. Following a vote by those present the minutes and recommendations contained therein, were agreed.

**(b) Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 17 March 2021. Minute numbers 351 - 356**

Cllr Arnott presented the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Following a vote by those present the minutes and recommendations contained therein, were agreed.

**(c) Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 31 March 2021. Minute numbers 357 - 381**

Cllr Arnott presented the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

Arising from consideration of the minutes the following minutes were called by Councillor Moulding:-

**1) Cabinet of 31 March, minute number 365 – Minutes of the Arts & Culture Forum held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021, with specific reference to item 28, ‘Resilience, Adaptation & Innovation Fund for East Devon Businesses’.**

Cllr Moulding wanted to point out that the existence of this fund had been announced at Cabinet, to members of the Arts & Culture Forum and the public, but had subsequently seemed in doubt which had been confirmed by the Portfolio Holder for Economy & Assets.

Cllr Rowland stated that the setting up of the fund had been done in good faith but government advice had changed due to the need for ARG funds to be fully spent by 30 June. He understood that the fund had, therefore been delayed but was not off the agenda altogether, and an update for those who wished to bid for it would be made available in due course.

Following this debate and a vote by those present, the minutes of Cabinet on 31<sup>st</sup> March and recommendations contained therein, were agreed.

**(d) Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 4 March 2021. Minute numbers 131 - 139**

Cllr Brown presented the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021. He also wanted to point out that the recommendations from the committee were not the result of impartial scrutiny debate, but the recommendations sent by private email to certain members of the committee by a member of Cabinet, proposing recommendations that the committee should make, thus exerting undue influence and undermining the process.

Cllr Ranger stated that at the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> April, an amendment had been agreed to the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March. Due to the timing of the publication of the Council agenda, the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> April were unavailable to be included. The relevant extract from the minutes and amendments are included as follows;

“141. Cllr Val Ranger proposed that the minutes of the previous meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021 be amended to include the following at Minute 137, ‘Comments and questions raised by Committee members and responses from the Chief Executive and Mark Everden including:’

- Early informal verbal intervention in the event of any suggestion of bullying should be considered
- Restorative justice as a form of mediation should be considered

The amendments were agreed and the minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021 were agreed as a correct record.”

Arising from consideration of the minutes the following minutes were called by Councillor Bond, and also by Councillor Parr:-

**1) Scrutiny Committee of 4 March, minute number 137 – Report on**

## Staff Morale

Cllr Bond wanted to express concerns about the meeting. She stated that during eight years of being a Cllr, she had never known a member of the leading group attempting to influence the outcome of the Scrutiny Committee debate. The Cabinet member stated that they had acted solely on their own behalf, but she wanted to request through the Chair that the Cabinet member respects process and allows non-Cabinet members to scrutinise without interference.

Cllr Parr asked the relevant Portfolio Holder to update members on the number of meetings that have been held to discuss the information and survey data in line with resolution 4 of the Scrutiny Committee, since this matter is vital and urgent. At the following Scrutiny Committee in April the Performance Monitoring Report was received which showed that staff sickness was of major concern. This report should have been addressed at the March meeting but the meeting went on so long that it had to be deferred. It is urgent that members hear there is some progress and that meetings are being held to come up with actions to resolve this situation about staff sickness, low morale and bullying.

Cllr Loudoun stated that he was happy to provide answers for Cllr Bond and Cllr Parr. He said that he made clear to all cllrs when he responded to what he felt was a biased email from the Chair of Scrutiny Committee regarding the matter, that he had referred himself to the Monitoring Officer under the Code of Conduct procedures. He had invited the Chair of Scrutiny Committee to do so if he felt it was appropriate. Since he had not done so, he referred himself.

On the matter of meetings to discuss the issues raised, most work was being done by the Chief Executive and members of SMT, but that he had met with the Chief Executive on two or three occasions to date, since the Committee meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March.

Following this debate and a vote by those present, the minutes of Scrutiny Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> March and recommendations contained therein, were agreed.

- (e) **Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee meeting held on 23 February 2021. Minute numbers 103 - 113**  
Cllr Ledger presented the minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February. Following a vote by those present the minutes were agreed.
- (f) **Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee meeting held on 30 March 2021. Minute numbers 114 - 123**  
Cllr Ledger presented the minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> March. Following a vote by those present the minutes were agreed.
- (g) **Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 15 February 2021. Minute numbers 213 - 221**  
Cllr Wragg presented the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held

on 15<sup>th</sup> February. Following a vote by those present the minutes were agreed.

**(h) Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 10 March 2021. Minute numbers 222 - 232**

Cllr Wragg presented the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March. Following a vote by those present the minutes were agreed.

**(i) Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 17 March 2021. Minute numbers 233 - 242**

Cllr Wragg presented the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March. Following a vote by those present the minutes were agreed

**(j) Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 7 April 2021. Minute numbers 243 - 254**

Cllr Wragg presented the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> April. Following a vote by those present the minutes were agreed

**(k) Minutes of the Audit & Governance Committee meeting held on 18 March 2021. Minute numbers 75 - 86**

Cllr Hawkins presented the minutes of the Audit & Governance Committee meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> March. Following a vote by those present the minutes were agreed

**(l) Minutes of the Licensing & Enforcement Committee meeting held on 17 February 2021. Minute numbers 60 - 67**

Cllr Whibley presented the minutes of the Licensing & Enforcement Committee meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> February. Following a vote by those present the minutes were agreed.

**(m) Minutes of the Licensing & Enforcement Sub-Committee meeting held on 24 February 2021. Minute numbers 32 - 36**

Cllr Whibley presented the minutes of the Licensing & Enforcement Sub-Committee meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> February. Following a vote by those present the minutes were agreed.

142 **Learning Review - Report from the Monitoring Officer**

The Monitoring Officer outlined that this was a short report to request that Council approve a budget of £18,150 (exc VAT) and an exemption to contract standing orders, to enable the East of England Local Government Association to be appointed to assist in carrying out the learning review.

Cllr Bond asked for more information and background to this report.

Cllr Loudoun explained that he had had meetings with the Monitoring Officer to identify who would be most appropriate person to look into the matter, given that so many people had been involved internally. They had agreed that an external body would be the most appropriate to consider the information, provide an analysis and come up with recommendations in a report, if Council agree.

The Monitoring Officer asked members through the Chair to vote on the recommendation as written. Following a vote by those present, the recommendation was agreed.

**RESOLVED:**

**That Council approve a budget of £18,150 (exc VAT) and an exemption to contract standing orders, to enable the East of England Local Government Association to be appointed to assist in carrying out the learning review.**



## 143 **Standards Complaints Procedure**

The Monitoring Officer explained that this report was to seek Council's approval to a revised complaint process for dealing with complaints that Members have breached the Member's Code of Conduct together with related revisions to the Constitution. The urgency was with a view to addressing this prior to Annual Council, since it impacts upon the numbers of Committee Members required as part of the nomination process from different Groups.

He explained that the intention had been for minutes of the Standards Committee to be added to the agenda, so that it was clear that the recommendations were based on the view of the Committee after considerable work over recent months, however, due to recent events which included the cancellation of meetings following the passing of HRH Prince Philip and the subsequent short notice of the Committee meeting, the meeting was inquorate and the minutes could not be presented, hence the presentation of this report.

Debate on the issues raised included the following comments and points;

- Given that 3 out of 5 members were unable to attend the Committee meeting, the Council should agree to enlarge the Committee and then ask the enlarged committee to discuss the procedure at the first meeting in the new Council year
- Since the meeting was inquorate the Council would be open to challenge, so agreement should be deferred until the first meeting of the Committee after Annual Council
- The Monitoring Officer clarified that the issue of quoracy was dealt with by the fact that a report (rather than minutes) had been produced by himself. This dealt with the legality issues, and the report was based on the work undertaken by the Standards Committee over several months.
- Several members expressed the view that if the meeting was not quorate the process has not been followed properly
- Several members expressed the view that the issue of being quorate is irrelevant given that there is a report from the Monitoring Officer
- The fact is that there is an increasing number of complaints to deal with and it is an appropriate time to put something else in place to bolster what currently exists

Cllr Arnott proposed that Council should vote on the report of the Monitoring Officer and the recommendations included as written.

Cllr Rylance seconded that proposal.

Cllr Thomas proposed and Cllr Wragg seconded holding a recorded vote. This was carried by a vote of those present.

The Chair then moved to a vote on the proposal, which was not carried.

### **Recorded vote:**

Councillors Paul Arnott, Denise Bickley, Andrew Colman, Olly Davey, Cathy Gardner, Nick Hookway, Sarah Jackson, Vicky Johns, Geoff Jung, Fabian King, John Loudoun, Dawn Manley, Val Ranger, Marianne Rixson, Jack Rowland, Eleanor Rylance, Brenda Taylor, Joe Whibley, Tony Woodward, Eileen Wragg, - voted in favour – 20.

Councillor Kevin Blakey, Kim Bloxham, Susie Bond, Colin Brown, Maddy Chapman, Iain Chubb, Bruce De Saram, Alan Dent, Peter Faithfull, Ian Hall,

Marcus Hartnell, Sam Hawkins, Stuart Hughes, Ben Ingham, David Key, Andrew Moulding, Helen Parr, Geoff Pook, Philip Skinner, Ian Thomas, Phil Twiss, Tom Wright – voted against – 22.

Councillor Megan Armstrong, Steve Gazzard – voted to abstain – 2.

Cllr Thomas then proposed a recommendation to increase the number of EDDC members on the Standards Committee to 7, with further discussion on membership at the next Standards Committee meeting.  
Cllr Bond seconded the recommendation.

The Chair invited those present to vote on the recommendation which was carried.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the number of EDDC members on the Standards Committee be increased to 7, with further discussion on the revised complaint process at the next meeting of the Standards Committee.**

144 **Motion: To Support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill**

The Chair invited Cllr Davey to speak as the proposer.

Cllr Davey stated that the time for action to address climate change was now. The COVID pandemic had shown that the Government was capable of taking swift action in an emergency. The Bill is needed because although the Government is already taking action and some progress is being made, there are also a lot of failings and it is not on track to achieve its stated goals.

The Climate Change Committee 2020 report shows how little we have progressed in reality and provides many examples of this. We have all the technology we need to effect change now. The Bill requires the UK to play its role fully and to be responsible for the supply chains it uses.

As seconder, Cllr Woodward reiterated that whilst the motion was long, its four recommendations were concise and straightforward.

Debate included the following comments;

- That the Government reverting to making all Local Authority meetings physical in buildings was a retrogressive step for a green agenda with all of the practical implications of the requirement to travel
- That according to experts conducting research and reporting in the press, the three biggest issues to resolve related to travel by planes, carbon emitting food and how to effectively insulate millions of homes satisfactorily
- The UK should be tackling everything it can and there is a lot it can afford to do compared to many other countries. This is a very non onerous Bill to support
- We have a moral responsibility to our children to correct what has gone wrong in our time
- How many Cllrs have read the Bill? Aiming criticism at middle-England is not appropriate compared to other countries, but there is a debate to be had about what this Council can do in East Devon.
- Some members expressed shock at the failure to take the emergency seriously, and urged others to support the Bill and add the Council's voice to it
- This Council has already declared a Climate Emergency and it is shocking to see more floods and fires on our doorstep

- The motion is to support or not support the Bill, and support for it will not distract the Council from continuing to both take local action and support national action

Following debate Cllr Arnott proposed and Cllr Thomas seconded holding a recorded vote. This was carried by a vote of those present.

The Chair then moved to a vote on the Motion, which was carried.

**Recorded vote:**

Councillors Megan Armstrong, Paul Arnott, Denise Bickley, Kevin Blakey, Kim Bloxham, Susie Bond, Colin Brown, Andrew Colman, Olly Davey, Alan Dent, Peter Faithfull, Cathy Gardner, Steve Gazzard, Ian Hall, Marcus Hartnell, Sam Hawkins, Nick Hookway, Stuart Hughes, Ben Ingham, Sarah Jackson, Vicky Johns, Geoff Jung, David Key, Fabian King, John Loudoun, Dawn Manley, Andrew Moulding, Geoff Pratt, Val Ranger, Marianne Rixson, Jack Rowland, Eleanor Rylance, Brenda Taylor, Ian Thomas, Phil Twiss, Joe Whibley, Tony Woodward, Eileen Wragg, Tom Wright - voted in favour – 39.

Councillor Bruce De Saram, Philip Skinner – voted against – 2.

Councillor Helen Parr – voted to abstain – 1.

**RESOLVED;**

**That this Council:**

- (i) **Support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill**
- (ii) **Inform the local media of this decision;**
- (iii) **Write to local MPs, asking them to support the Bill; and**
- (iv) **Write to the CEE Bill Alliance, the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, expressing its support**

145 **Motion: Role of the Chair of Council**

The Chair stated that at the request of the proposer and with the agreement of the seconder, this Motion has been postponed to the next Full Council meeting which should be in July.

146 **Motion: Future of our High Streets**

The Chair stated that her understanding was that the proposer had a suggestion for changing the Motion and making an amendment. She then invited Cllr De Saram to propose the amendment and for someone to second it.

Cllr De Saram read out his amendment as follows following discussion with colleagues;

In the light of the positive response from Simon Jupp MP to the recent letter we sent to him about the future of High Streets in East Devon, Council requests that the Cabinet, working cross-party with all council members, prepare and submit a strong bid benefitting both Exmouth and the Axe Valley to the government's multi-billion-pound Levelling Up Fund and Community Renewal Funds. We are aware that The Levelling Up Fund is currently open for applications of up to £20 million per Parliamentary constituency to regenerate and improve High Streets in places like Exmouth and elsewhere in the district. We strongly maintain that the funding provided by government

should be utilised to work up appropriate bids which are supported by our local MPs and submitted for the benefit and wellbeing of our residents at this time of great need.

Cllr Moulding seconded the amended Motion.

Cllr De Saram went on to say that Government funding for Exmouth had been discussed on many occasions in the past and that it was now time to apply for Levelling Up Funds, following a meeting recently between local MPs and members of the Cabinet. The Three themes of Smaller Transport Projects, Town Centre and High Street Regeneration, and support for maintaining world leading heritage and assets, gave a variety of options from which to develop a strong bid.

As seconder, Cllr Moulding stated that in terms of the Axe Valley, the North-South relief road was much anticipated and was included in the local plan. The plan is ready to go and he looked forward to working together and with MPs to develop a bid which could be supported.

Cllr Rowland reported that the meeting on 14 April with two local MPs was very helpful, and involved other Cabinet members and officers, in trying to establish what would be acceptable to gain the support of MPs by way of a bid, which was a requirement. He confirmed that work had already been started on a bid by officers since that meeting. Exmouth was discussed, but due to the fact that the constituency of Neil Parrish MP covered more than one District Council, any discussion relating to a bid involving the Axe Valley was currently confidential. The deadline for officers to submit a detailed bids and gain the written support of MPs was 18 June.

Debate included the following comments;

- Clarification was given that this Council has already been working with MPs, and will always be willing to do so
- The issues arising from the Motion put to the last Council meeting in relation to the Future High Streets Fund had still not been responded to, but in the spirit of moving forward, it was hoped that the future would herald more positive working together
- There will be a lot of competition for the funds with other local Councils who will be bidding alongside EDDC

Cllr Gazzard put forward the proposal that the Motion be now put.

After a vote by those present which was carried, the Chair then invited members to vote for the substantive motion.

The Motion was carried following a vote by those present.

#### **RESOLVED that;**

**In the light of the positive response from Simon Jupp MP to the recent letter we sent to him about the future of High Streets in East Devon, Council requests that the Cabinet, working cross-party with all council members, prepare and submit a strong bid benefitting both Exmouth and the Axe Valley to the government's multi-billion-pound Levelling Up Fund and Community Renewal Funds. We are aware that The Levelling Up Fund is currently open for applications of up to £20 million per Parliamentary constituency to regenerate and improve High Streets in places like Exmouth and elsewhere in the district. We strongly maintain that the funding**

**provided by government should be utilised to work up appropriate bids which are supported by our local MPs and submitted for the benefit and wellbeing of our residents at this time of great need.**

The Chair thanked everyone who participated in the meeting or watched online, and declared the meeting closed at 8.43pm.

### **Attendance List**

#### **Councillors present:**

V Ranger (Vice-Chair)	J Loudoun	B Ingham
M Armstrong	D Bickley	G Pook
S Jackson	S Hawkins	G Jung
S Chamberlain	A Moulding	H Parr
P Arnott	D Key	G Pratt
K Blakey	C Gardner (Chair)	M Rixson
K Bloxham	S Bond	E Rylance
F King	D Manley	B De Saram
A Colman	C Brown	P Skinner
T Woodward	M Chapman	B Taylor
N Hookway	I Chubb	I Thomas
O Davey	A Dent	P Twiss
J Whibley	P Faithfull	E Wragg
V Johns	S Gazzard	T Wright
D Ledger	I Hall	S Hughes
J Rowland	M Hartnell	

#### **Officers in attendance:**

Mark Williams, Chief Executive  
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment  
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance  
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing (and Monitoring Officer)  
Susan Howl, Democratic Services Manager  
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

#### **Councillor apologies:**

P Jarvis  
F Caygill  
P Millar  
T McCollum  
J Bailey  
P Hayward  
M Allen  
M Howe

Chairman .....

Date: .....