

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of Council held Online via the Zoom App on 24 November 2020

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.40 pm

102 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.

Jill Anderson introduced herself as Chair of the Cranford Sports and Fitness Club. She commented on the positive impact of sport to the physical and mental health of communities. She explained that the Cranford complemented LED and were not a rival to it, but had exhausted financial support available so far, and wanted to apply for EDDC discretionary funds to assist them. She listed a number of groups who benefited from the work of the club, as well as pointing out that it employed 36 people and was governed by a voluntary Board of Directors, who were involved in collaborative work with LED. The Chair responded by saying that the Discretionary Fund was a topic to be discussed at a Cabinet meeting on 25th November.

Paul Spearing wanted to speak as a private individual but that he also served on the local Parish Council. He referred to problems in facing the Climate emergency and that his local Council had committed to planting 100 new trees each year for the next ten years. However, he wanted to stress the need to protect existing trees and the understorey beneath them when so many were pulled down across the district to assist agriculture. He stated that Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) were needed to preserve trees in the context of the natural balance of local wildlife and the environment, ecosystems and biodiversity, since all trees were vital in promoting life on earth. He wanted to ask what more the Council were going to do to conserve existing trees on agricultural, public or privately owned land.

The Chair responded by saying that this was a topic close to the heart of many people at the Council and so she was sure that councillors would take this into consideration on a local basis.

103 Declarations of interest

104. To consider the recommendations to Council from Cabinet at the meeting on 11 November in relation to the report 'Additional LED financial support as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and proposals for a new LED Monitoring Committee arrangement'. Councillor Alan Dent, Personal, Fully paid up member of LED.

104. To consider the recommendations to Council from Cabinet at the meeting on 11 November in relation to the report 'Additional LED financial support as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and proposals for a new LED Monitoring Committee arrangement'. Councillor Andrew Moulding, Personal, President of Cloakham Lawn Sports Centre which had been negotiating with LED on delivery of sport in Axminster.

104. To consider the recommendations to Council from Cabinet at the meeting on 11 November in relation to the report 'Additional LED financial support as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and proposals for a new LED Monitoring Committee arrangement'. Councillor Dean Barrow, Personal, Fully paid up member of LED.

104. To consider the recommendations to Council from Cabinet at the meeting on 11 November in relation to the report 'Additional LED financial support as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and proposals for a new LED Monitoring Committee arrangement'. Councillor Denise Bickley, Personal, Son is a fully paid up member of LED.

104. To consider the recommendations to Council from Cabinet at the meeting on 11 November in relation to the report 'Additional LED financial support as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and proposals for a new LED Monitoring Committee arrangement'. Councillor Paul Arnott, Personal, Fully paid up member of LED.

104. To consider the recommendations to Council from Cabinet at the meeting on 11 November in relation to the report 'Additional LED financial support as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and proposals for a new LED Monitoring Committee arrangement'. Councillor Paul Millar, Personal, Fully paid up member of LED.

104. To consider the recommendations to Council from Cabinet at the meeting on 11 November in relation to the report 'Additional LED financial support as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and proposals for a new LED Monitoring Committee arrangement'. Councillor Tony Woodward, Personal, Fully paid up member of LED.

104 **To consider the recommendations to Council from Cabinet at the meeting on 11 November in relation to the report 'Additional LED financial support as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and proposals for a new LED Monitoring Committee arrangement'**

The Chair introduced this item. She stated that on 11 November an urgent meeting of Cabinet was held to discuss various options to ensure that LED remained a viable leisure provider and were able to manage the financial impacts of the pandemic and continue to provide leisure activities which would serve local communities.

This Extraordinary meeting of Council had been convened for Members to consider the recommendations from Cabinet and which are attached to the agenda.

The Leader, Cllr Arnott, presented the Cabinet recommendations to Council.

The Chair then opened the meeting up for discussion and comment before moving to a vote.

Comments made during the debate included the following;

- It was clear that LED needed financial support and that EDDC should consider using the Discretionary Fund for other independent leisure and sports facilities across the district.

- Cabinet would be considering the arrangements related to use of the Discretionary Fund at its meeting on 25th November.
- There should be a level playing field for all leisure and sports facilities across the district in terms of access to funding, and that if EDDC supports LED it should also support other facilities or lobby MPs to do so via central government.
- This meeting is concerned specifically with supporting LED so the recommendations should be supported.
- LED had been unable to access discretionary funds from Government, whereas other independent facilities had been able to, demonstrating that a level playing field does not currently exist, and this should be brought to the attention of MPs. LED needs support and has had none from Government while others have, so the recommendations from Cabinet should be supported.
- LED is a specific case in not being able to access funds. It is hoped that financial assistance will be given on a one-off basis so that it can start to be fully operational again and its future performance monitored.

Cllr Arnott wanted to point out that this was part of a good news story. Leisure Centres would be re-opening again after lockdown in early December; a vaccine to prevent COVID is on the way; EDDC have thoroughly interrogated the finances of LED and has exercised extreme caution in how it moves forward and what monitoring needs to be put in place. He went on to say that Government has distinguished between different leisure and sports providers and facilities, and that he had huge sympathy for those who are currently excluded from receiving any government funding.

The Chair then moved the meeting to a vote on the recommendations as written in the Cabinet minutes on page 5 of the Council agenda.

The vote was carried by a majority of those present.

RESOLVED;

1. That the Council pays an additional subsidy to LED of £732,275 to reimburse their actual net losses incurred to September 2020 resulting from Covid-19 and that from October 2020 a monthly review and payment is then made until 31 March 2021 to cover further net losses incurred. Cumulatively the total of any additional subsidy payment in the current financial year shall not exceed £1,339,000. This approach follows LGA guidance. Additional subsidy was being paid to ensure the continued operation of LED enabling the continuation of Leisure facilities in the District. Details of individual site/facility costs to be considered by the LED Monitoring Forum to determine if changes to service provision should be introduced to reduce this sum with recommendations back to Cabinet and Council.
2. That the arrangements for the provision of revenue support funding was as detailed in paragraph 2.14 and that delegated authority was given to the Strategic Lead (Housing, Health and Environment) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder – Coast, Country & Environment and Strategic Lead (Governance and Licensing) to ensure appropriate documentation was put in place to formalise arrangements as detailed in paragraph 2.15.
3. That the Council and LED make a bid to Government for funding announced of £100m to support leisure centres to offset the sum being requested of the Council

from LED. If the bid proves not to cover the full costs then the Council with LED continues to lobby government for financial assistance to support our leisure provider to maintain essential health & wellbeing activities to assist them through the loss of income caused by an enforced lockdown for public health reasons.

4. That local district MPs as a matter of urgency, are all asked whether they are willing to lobby Ministers to ensure that Leisure Trusts, such as LED, receive COVID related support funding in an equitable way to non-Trust leisure providers to ensure a level financial playing field across the leisure sector.
Cabinet will also ask all the district's MPs to use their influence, as members of the governing party, to set up an urgent meeting with the relevant Minister or preferably Secretary of State, where they, alongside representatives of this Council and representatives of this Council's leisure provider LED, can explain the difficulties facing both organisations of government's failure to provide LED and other Leisure Trusts with COVID related support funding and to demand that such funding is immediately forthcoming.
5. Cabinet agrees that subject to the Council obtaining agreement from LED to the proposals, including EDDC ceasing to have any representatives on the LED Board, that the LED Monitoring Forum be established for the purposes set out in the report and the on basis of the membership detailed in paragraph 3.6, with the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes and Communities replaced with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services and COVID 19 Response and Recovery, and that delegated authority be given to the Monitoring Officer to agree the 4 non-administration members with relevant Group Leaders.

The Chair thanked all those who attended or watched online and declared the meeting closed at 6.40pm.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

M Armstrong	J Whibley	D Barrow
P Jarvis	L Jeffery	P Faithfull
S Jackson	V Johns	S Gazzard
S Chamberlain	D Ledger	G Jung
P Arnott	J Rowland	H Parr
K Blakey	J Loudoun	G Pratt
K Bloxham	D Bickley	M Rixson
F King	J Bailey	E Rylance
F Caygill	K McLauchlan	B De Saram
A Colman	P Hayward	B Taylor
P Millar	S Hawkins	I Thomas
T Woodward	A Moulding	P Twiss
N Hookway	C Gardner (Chair)	E Wragg
C Wright	M Chapman	
O Davey	A Dent	

Officers in attendance:

Mark Williams, Chief Executive
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment
Charles Plowden, Service Lead Countryside and Leisure
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing
Susan Howl, Democratic Services Manager
Sarah Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer

Councillor apologies:

V Ranger
S Bond
M Howe
T Wright
S Hughes

Chairman

Date: