

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at Online via the Zoom app. on 2 December 2020

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.34 pm

267 Public speaking

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

268 Declarations of interest

None

269 Matters of urgency

None

270 Confidential/exempt item(s)

None

271 Statement of Intent

The Leader of the Council Cllr Paul Arnott made the following statement:

‘This administration has now been in office for six of the most turbulent months in the history of local government. Our officers have risen to the occasion splendidly and may yet have to do so for some time to come. I would like to thank both them and members of all allegiances who have gone above and beyond this year.

Despite this challenge, the administration has already executed significant moves both to build on its legacy and to re-direct the approach of the council. In order to take back control of our planning processes, we have withdrawn from the GESP and replaced that with a full engagement with other district and county partners in a non-statutory joint infrastructure plan.

In Exmouth, where the history of the seafront development has been troubled, we are encouraging a more public, participatory approach to the extraordinary natural resource of the town’s coast. We are also determined to help the people and members from Cranbrook to get their community moving forward to completion, and together with Exmouth and drafting the new Local Plan this will be a central plank of our work.

Throughout these and other priorities we will seek to improve our environmental standards and the transparency of democratic involvement as core priorities.

Economic regeneration to a green and local agenda will be critical with widespread unemployment on the horizon, and towns such as Axminster will also become the focus of efforts to build growth fit for the 2020s. As we move out of this first extraordinary six months, we will be able to work more closely with members outside of our partnership group and all ideas will be heard. I am especially interested in how we might boost our

tourism offer and economy here in the Jurassic Coast hinterland, and how we roll out truly attainable homes, both drawing down on resources from the government's promised green growth funds.

All this said, it is important to remember just how much of the council's work for the people of East Devon ticks over via the daily hard graft of its employees. Above all we wish the council to be a good-humoured and empathetic environment for both the staff and elected members, all of whom give so much of their lives to the common good.

As we bridge between the past and the future, we are now issuing this interim Statement of Intent, which will inform the next six months of developing a full Council Plan 2021-23, and we look forward to many discussions in the coming months.

One bit of housekeeping; with the next phase of COVID-19 restrictions now upon us, it is important to ensure that EDDC continues to provide the very best services to its residents and that our staff are protected and supported. We also need to ensure that members of this Council are able to offer assurances of future support and an economic recovery response as well as deliver the ambitions in the Statement of Intent and then the next Council Plan. It is therefore our intention to undertake a management review, and I am asking the Chief Executive to bring a report to the 6th January Cabinet meeting with a view to this being carried out and giving more detail on timings, the scope of the review and potential budget requirements to do so. This will help ensure that the Council enters 2021 in the best shape to meet the challenges ahead, reflecting the ambitions of the Council as laid out in this Statement of Intent and onwards.'

The Chief Executive highlighted the report's timetable emphasizing that January/February were naturally extremely busy months due to the production of service plans and the 2021/22 draft budget. Additionally there could be implications around Brexit depending on whether there was a deal or no deal. It was important to consider the setting up of member workshops and public engagement particularly, he suggested an extensive period of workshops with all members and a degree of public engagement would be important for the Council Plan. This would then go through the usual committees' structure for final approval with the hope that the plan would be ready to be published by July 2021.

During discussions the issue of poverty within the district was highlighted with many members suggesting this deserved to be the number one priority within the Council Plan, alongside and just as important as climate change issues. Fuel poverty and the use of food banks were on the rise with poverty issues taking up a lot of the work across the council.

It was agreed that an extra statement be added to the Statement of Intent under 'Vision' (page 2):

(2) Better Homes and Communities for all with a priority on the importance of good quality, affordable housing suitable in size and location. *Poverty caused by the loss of employment, illness or disability is an increasing issue and will be a high priority for EDDC to tackle through all means available to us.*

The Portfolio Holder Corporate Services and Covid-19 Response and Recovery thanked officers for contributing to the start of these discussions. She stated the new Council Plan would be a refresh and a shift in emphasis and was an exciting project. She stated there would be workshops next year in order to engage members.

RESOLVED:

that the amended Statement of Intent and the timetable of a Council Plan for the period Summer 2021 to Spring 2023 be approved.

REASON:

To progress the development of the Council Plan.

Attendance List

Present:

Portfolio Holders

M Armstrong	Portfolio Holder Sustainable Homes and Communities
P Arnott	Leader
P Hayward	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder Economy and Assets
J Bailey	Portfolio Holder Corporate Services and COVID-19 Response and Recovery
G Jung	Portfolio Holder Coast, Country and Environment
D Ledger	Portfolio Holder Strategic Planning
M Rixson	Portfolio Holder Climate Action
J Rowland	Portfolio Holder Finance
S Jackson	Portfolio Holder Democracy and Transparency

Cabinet apologies:

J Loudoun	Portfolio Holder Policy Co-ordination and Regional Engagement
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Also present (for some or all the meeting)

Councillor Denise Bickley
Councillor Kevin Blakey
Councillor Colin Brown
Councillor Olly Davey
Councillor Peter Faithfull
Councillor Steve Gazzard
Councillor Nick Hookway
Councillor Paul Jarvis
Councillor Vicky Johns
Councillor Paul Millar
Councillor Helen Parr
Councillor Eleanor Rylance
Councillor Brenda Taylor
Councillor Eileen Wragg

Also present:

Officers:

Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer
Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor (and Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Mark Williams, Chief Executive

Chairman

Date: