

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 20 January 2021

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.02 pm and ended at 8.16 pm

303 Public speaking

Jill Anderson spoke at minute 308, Business Support Grant measures.

304 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of Cabinet held on 6 January 2021 were confirmed as a true record with one amendment to the **REASON** in minute 295. This now reads;

‘It has been accepted that Cranbrook Town Council are best placed to deliver the project and that they have appropriate resources to enable them to do so.’

305 Declarations of interest

Min 308. Business Support Grant measures.

Councillor Ian Hall, Personal, Chair of Cloakham Lawn Sports Club.

Min 308. Business Support Grant measures.

Councillor Paul Arnott, Personal, Had a B&B that had been in receipt of a previous grant.

Min 308. Business Support Grant measures.

Councillor Paul Hayward, Personal, Represents a charity that has claimed twice for funding and has been approached by businesses regarding ARG and LRSG applications.

Min 309. Mental Health Challenge for local authorities.

Councillor Ian Hall, Personal, Mental Health Champion for DCC and Vice-Chair for ARC a mental health charity in Axminster.

306 Matters of urgency

There were two late items dealt with under minutes 308 and 309.

307 Councillor password data breach

The Monitoring Officer presented the report that updated members and the public following the discovery and subsequent reporting of Councillor passwords being visible in November 2020. There was immediate action taken by Strata to correct the breach as well as reporting the breach to the ICO; who had recently closed the case. He stated that due to its sensitivity and technical matters that could not be discussed in public, all members had had the opportunity to attend an officer briefing earlier in the day to discuss this in more detail where lots of information had been covered. He told members that shortly after the briefing he had received confirmation that updates to the software would allow members to reset their own passwords in Issue Manager.

Discussions included the following:

- The report concentrated on fixing the breach and making good procedures

- Strata provided an excellent service
- This was a wakeup, call for more regular reviews of security procedures
- To have occasional independent audits
- Recommend multiple factor authentication

Through the Chair Cabinet wished to thank Cllr Paul Millar for bringing this crucial matter to the attention of the council.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

note the content of the report and invite Strata to approach Devon Audit Partnership to maintain a regular review of internal data processes, and that EDDC approaches SWAP for a similar assessment.

REASON:

It was considered that the Strata Investigation Report and commentary in the report should reassure members around the concerns that had been raised.

308 **Business Support Grant measures**

Jill Anderson spoke as Chairman of Cranford Sports and Fitness Club, Exmouth. She stated the club had made an application under the ARG scheme for a grant under the special cases section back in December, just after the second lockdown and asked for consideration to be given to this application. She was acutely aware of the impact that the pandemic and resulting lockdowns had had on the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of individuals and communities. The Club contributed an important and cost-effective role in supporting the local communities, the NHS and many other local organisations and individuals to recover from this immensely challenging pandemic.

Cranford Sports and Fitness Club was a true independent community amateur sports and fitness club that provided extensive support and facilities to worthwhile community groups and activities such as Help for Heroes, Parkinson's support groups and disabled sport to name but a few. They provided jobs in the local community having 16 employees and 20 fitness instructors. They use all local companies for all its maintenance and business support and had over 1200 members (pre pandemic) ranging in age from 6 months to nearly 90 years of age. Governance and leadership were provided by an expert volunteer pro bono Board of Directors.

Cranford Sports and Fitness Club had exhausted the support available so far. They were asking for help us to survive this period through to completion of the vaccination programme.

The Service Lead for Revenues, Benefits, Customer Services and the Service Lead for Growth, Development and Prosperity presented the report which sought approval to launch further grant schemes as well as to make changes to the existing Additional Restrictions Grant policy. These were needed as a result of further period of national and local restrictions from 2 December 2020. There was an update on the various schemes the council had been running since going into national restrictions from 5 November 2020 including the grant schemes available whilst in Tier 2 and Tier 3.

Discussions included the following:

- The need for clarity on the role of the Councillor Panel in relation to the ARG scheme, for example to determine special case applications

- Local businesses cannot prosper until the whole supply chain is up and running
- Leisure facilities need to be given due weight in consideration to these grants
- Acknowledgment to how tough things were for businesses at the moment therefore it was urgent to move ahead with the East Devon Leisure Strategy
- Armed Forces personnel need the support offered by the Cranford Sports Club as well as young people with mental health issues

The Chair and Vice-Chair wished to thank Libby Jarrett, Andy Wood and their teams for dealing with and understanding all the government guidance with its complexities, and doing this additional work over the last year on behalf of the council which was very much appreciated.

RESOLVED:

1. To approve the LRSB (Closed) Addendum & the CBLP Scheme policies.
2. To delegate authority to the Service Lead for Revenues, Benefits, Customer Services & Corporate Fraud & Compliance to make any technical changes to the LRSB (C) Addendum and the CBLP policies.
3. To approve changes to the operation of the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) scheme as outlined in the report.
4. To delegate authority to the Service Lead for Growth, Development & Prosperity in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader, Portfolio Holder for Finance and the S151 officer to make consequential changes to the ARG discretionary policy, in order to keep the scheme aligned with subsequent changes in government restrictions.
5. To allocate a further £925,680 under the ARG scheme to provide support to businesses impacted by local and national restrictions.
6. To delegate authority to Service Lead for Revenues, Benefits, Customer Services and Corporate Fraud & Compliance in consultation with Leader, Deputy Leader, Portfolio Holder for Finance and the S151 Officer to approve subsequent grant policies should we move back into local restrictions.
7. To encourage the constituency MPs to strenuously and vigorously lobby the Chancellor of the Exchequer to provide meaningful and urgent support for those in the “excluded” group who are unable to make applications under our current grant policies; due to Central Government constraints.

REASON:

To ensure that a quick response to a continuously changing landscape and the government funded grant schemes were deployed in a timely manner.

309 **Mental Health Challenge for local authorities**

The Strategic Lead Housing, Health & Environment presented the report that explored the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge and considered the implications of signing up to the commitments as a way of promoting mental health awareness and maintaining good mental health for elected members, staff and communities.

The Council already had a number of programmes designed to maintain good mental health and the challenge builds on existing commitments in our Public Health Strategic Plan and our Happy, Healthy, Here programme.

Cllr Steve Gazzard wished to thank John Golding and Cllr Paul Millar for their valuable input into the report. He reminded members that as councillors they were all responsible

for the health and well-being of staff as without them the council could not function. He stated that larger workloads were also putting pressure on councillors themselves.

Cllr Tony Woodward as Member Champion for Mental Health thanked John Golding and supported the recommendations in the report.

Further discussions included the following:

- Councillors must be supportive of staff who were continuing to deliver council services, from the CEO to frontline staff
- From councillors to staff everyone was having to deal with working as well as their own personal issues brought about through the pandemic making life very difficult for many at the present time
- The issue of mental health needed to be embraced across all parties to make the best of the new officer post, Member Champion and other initiatives available
- Welfare of officers should be on the forefront of everyone's mind. Hope this initiative would help towards a mutual understanding between officers and members
- Huge stress from increased workloads and especially remote working. Recommendations need thorough risk analysis
- Councillors need to consider their wording in group emails to each other so as not to come across as insulting

RESOLVED:

1. that the Council adopt and sign up to the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge;
2. that the appointed Mental Health Member Champion have regard to the guidelines contained in the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge in carrying out their role;
3. a Lead Officer is identified and additional officer capacity is approved to further support staff and facilitate positive mental health for elected members;
4. the commitment is captured in the updated Council Plan and in our Public Health Strategic Plan, and
5. that the new officer act as a liaison between the council and other authorities and outside bodies concerned with mental health, as well as the new mental health officer within EDDC housing team and the Mental Health Member Champion. This is to ensure that they have the most current and up to date advice to assist members and officers with signposting should members of the public approach them for assistance.

RECOMMENDED to Council:

6. To approve the Lead Officer role on the basis of a 1 year fixed term post and the necessary budget of circa £50k be taken from the £700k funding provided by Government in relation to COVID.

REASON:

To take forward the Cabinet's request to further explore the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge and assess the implications of adopting the actions set out in the challenge.

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
J Loudoun	Portfolio Holder Policy Co-ordination and Regional Engagement
S Jackson	Portfolio Holder Democracy and Transparency

Cabinet apologies:

Also present (for some or all the meeting)

Councillor Mike Allen
Councillor Denise Bickley
Councillor Kevin Blakey
Councillor Susie Bond
Councillor Colin Brown
Councillor Fred Caygill
Councillor Sarah Chamberlain
Councillor Maddy Chapman
Councillor Bruce De Saram
Councillor Peter Faithfull
Councillor Steve Gazzard
Councillor Ian Hall
Councillor Marcus Hartnell
Councillor Nick Hookway
Councillor Ben Ingham
Councillor Vicky Johns
Councillor Paul Millar
Councillor Andrew Moulding
Councillor Helen Parr
Councillor Val Ranger
Councillor Eleanor Rylance
Councillor Philip Skinner
Councillor Brenda Taylor
Councillor Joe Whibley
Councillor Tony Woodward
Councillor Eileen Wragg
Councillor Tom Wright
Councillor Fabian King

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
Libby Jarrett, Service Lead Revenues and Benefits
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

Robert Murray, Economic Development Manager
Laurence Whitlock, Strata IT Director
Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor (and Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Mark Williams, Chief Executive
Andrew Wood, Service Lead - Growth Development and Prosperity
Robin Barlow, Compliance and Security Manager - Strata

Chair

Date: