

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Asset Management Forum held at online via zoom on 9 March 2021

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 9.30 am and ended at 11.06 am

47 Public speaking

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

48 Minutes from the previous meetings

The minutes of the 1 December 2020 and the 16 February 2021 (special meeting) were agreed.

49 Declarations of interest

Cllr P Arnott; Minutes 52 to 54: Personal interest: Parish Councillor for Colyton.

Cllr P Hayward; Minutes 51 - 54: Personal interest: Parish Clerk to All Saints, Chardstock and Newton Poppleford and Harpford Parish Councils who may in future have to make decisions on assets.

Cllr D Ledger; Minute 52: Personal interest: Family members own land adjacent to units at Fosseyway Park.

50 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

51 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There were no confidential/exempt items.

52 Property Matters Newsletter

The Forum considered the March edition of the Property Matters newsletter, highlighting recent work by the Place Assets and Commercialisation team; including:

- HRA Acquisitions
- EV Charging points
- New staff in the Team
- New letting at Manstone workshops
- Fire damage works nearing completion at the café in Manor Garden, Exmouth.

Questions and comments arising from the newsletter included:

- Frustration with some local areas on the rate of progress on providing EV charging points. A report was being presented to the next Cabinet on options for delivery of such points, in particular on contractor delivery and the need to ensure that using an outside company to deliver, and effectively enter into a rental or revenue agreement needed to be assessed on viability. Clarity was sought on the timescale for delivery, but this was expected to be set out in the report to Cabinet.

Members were keen to see a swift delivery, if viable, before the expected influx of tourists in the summer months;

- Still no further update in the newsletter on progress on the site at Colyford Road; a brief update was delivered on how progress had stalled due to the pandemic but also the continuing issue of viability. Other members were keen to see progress on this site.

RESOLVED that the newsletter be noted, and that thanks were given to the team for the production of the newsletter.

53 **Community Asset Transfer Procedure update**

The Service Lead for Place, Assets and Commercialisation updated the Forum on the consultation on the Draft Community Asset Transfer Procedure:

- The Procedure had been updated to reflect the changes in personnel and relevant Council policies;
- The prepared questionnaire and covering communication had been agreed by the Portfolio Holder;
- Consultation commenced on the 25 February 2021, with a copy to Forum members for information;
- Closing date for response to the consultation is 25 April 2021;
- The Forum will be updated with a further report in June before a recommendation is made to Cabinet for adoption.

Comments included:

- Learning from past asset transfers would be useful to include, when deciding the final format of the procedure – examples given included the transfer of land and toilet block at Woodbury.

RESOLVED to note the update and await a further report to the Forum.

54 **Place and Prosperity Investment Framework**

The Forum were refreshed on the key points on the revision of the Investment Framework, following the special meeting held on 16 February 2021:

- The framework must cover Public Works Loan Board borrowing costs, and where possible, whilst retaining viability, a small risk premium, but not to generate a commercial yield;
- To finance the framework, a Fund agreed by Council to deliver the framework;
- The framework includes
 - How it will be utilised
 - Types of investment
 - High level investment criteria
 - Risks
 - Process and governance arrangements
 - Assessment against an agreed weighted scoring matrix
 - Process from Outline business case through to Detailed business case.

The revised framework was currently with the S151 officer and others for comment; however the Forum were asked for direction in the following areas:

- What outcomes do these investments need to deliver; and
- What is the priority of these outcomes and therefore the relative weighting.

Members of the Forum and other Members at the meeting offered their views on the desired outcomes and how those could be prioritised to deliver a matrix for assessment. Of the suggestions put forward, these included:

- Adapting the “doughnut model” and the United Nations Sustainability Development model as good reference models;
- Priority areas of climate change and local economic benefit;
- Other areas included
 - Use and benefits for local businesses
 - Better use of Council owned land/assets
 - Income opportunities
 - Promotion of tourism
 - Promotion of health and wellbeing
- Key to understand how market place has changed in the wake of the pandemic, in understanding what the current and emerging demand is for serviced office space, and retail;
- Care over consideration of climate change solutions – concerns were made that carbon capture options should be the last resort if a carbon neutral solution was not possible;
- Link to existing agreed policies and strategies, including the work under the Team Devon economic recovery umbrella and the strategy to tackle poverty in the District;
- Investing in long term infrastructure would pump prime further investment in the region;
- Work with the NHS and Devon County Council on assets that help deliver health and wellbeing, as well as helping reduce travel to other locations for healthcare;
- Look at the infrastructure delivery plan for the District and see if any opportunities present from that which could be delivered through the framework and give some income potential (such as peer to peer lending);

The Strategic Lead Finance outlined to the Forum that the nature of the revision of the framework and the fund itself, being a shift away from the originally agreed commercial yield benefit, would require agreement by Council.

RESOLVED That the report be noted, and following debate by the Forum, the Service Lead for Place, Assets and Commercialisation brings a further report on the revised Investment Framework to the Forum, taking account of the debate.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

P Arnott
P Hayward (Chair)
D Ledger
J Rowland
F King
G Pratt

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

O Davey
P Faithfull
S Gazzard

G Jung
A Moulding

Officers in attendance:

Tim Child, Service Lead - Place, Assets & Commercialisation

Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance

Wendy Harris, Democratic Services Officer

Rob Harrison, Senior Estates Surveyor

Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

Steve Pratten, Interim Principal Surveyor

Andrew Wood, Service Lead - Growth Development and Prosperity