

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at Online via the Zoom app. on 17 March 2021

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.01 pm

351 Public speaking

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

352 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of Cabinet held on 3 March 2021 were confirmed as a true record.

353 Declarations of interest

Min 356. Electric Vehicle charging in public car parks.
Councillor Eleanor Rylance, Personal, owns an electric vehicle.

Min 356. Electric Vehicle charging in public car parks.
Councillor Tom Wright, Personal, owns an electric vehicle.

354 Matters of urgency

There were two late reports that members agreed should be dealt with in this way.

Impropriety in relation to three Cabinet decisions

The Monitoring Officer reported under S.5 of the Housing and Local Government Act 1989 that three decisions which had been taken in 2018, 2019 and 2021 were not in accordance with legal requirements and the Constitution. Of the three decisions two had not been actioned with money being found from alternative sources and one was being returned to Cabinet for it to appropriately recommend the matter to Council for decision. While acknowledging the errors it was stated that thankfully the impact had been minimal. The Monitoring Officer expressed; on behalf of officers, his sincere apologies for these errors. He stated that there were a number of remedial steps being put in place to ensure that there was not a repeat including that report writers were expected to understand whether what is proposed was in accordance with the budget or policy framework to establish whether their recommendations were either for Cabinet or for Council to make.

Discussions included the following:

- This was an unfortunate situation but it hadn't appeared to cause any major issues. Staffing issues were the problem, with the extra workload being put on staff over the last months
- We must look after our staff, they are the backbone of the council. The pressure on the Monitoring Officer was intolerable. Democratic Services had to manage and operate these extra meetings which must put them under constant workload pressure
- Need to look into getting on with the Senior Management review to look into areas of the council that need extra resources

- There should be no blame on any one individual, this just highlights the pressure the staff are under presently. We need to take this extra workload off all staff from the top to bottom
- We need to be the best council we can, a full investigation is required into this issue with independent advice and the use of the Scrutiny committee

The Portfolio Holders for Council and Corporate Co-ordination, and Strategic Planning thanked the Monitoring Officer for his apology but stated it was not needed. They thanked him for his work and said that it could not have been easy for him to have written this report as well as present it to members.

The Chair thanked Cllr Paul Millar for bringing this issue to the council's attention. He also thanked the Monitoring Officer for the report and admitted it could not have been easy to produce.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. accept the content of the report in relation to the issues identified and remedial actions being taken to prevent a reoccurrence
2. thank Councillor Millar for bringing the matter to the attention of the Council.

RECOMMENDED the following to Council:

3. that Resolutions 1 & 2 of Minute 328 (Hayne Lane Site, Honiton) of the Cabinet meeting of 3rd February 2021 be approved.
4. the recruitment of an additional lawyer (Grade 9) to support the work of the Monitoring Officer be agreed.

REASON:

So that members were appraised of three decisions that were ultra vires and to take steps to ensure that one of those decisions was rectified.

Council Plan 2021-2023

The Chief Executive provided details of the first draft of the new Council Plan for 2021-2023. He announced that there would be 3-4 cross party member workshops in April with the aim to have this completed by July.

Discussions included the following:

- This looked like it was at its first stage and just being started. There was a need for swift progress as decisions could not be taken without a Council Plan
- In response to the above comment, it was said that officers were working to full capacity with the challenges of a global pandemic, everyone was managing to the best that they could under exceptional circumstances
- The timeframe dovetails with the budget for the next financial year
- The cross party member workshop were important for consultation and views for the plan

RESOLVED:

That the preparation of the new Council Plan 2021-2023 should progress in accordance with the process and timeline identified in the report.

RECOMMENDED the following to Council:

that a budget of £5,000 is agreed to obtain external support to facilitate member workshops.

REASON:

To assist with the ongoing development of the new Council Plan.

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

None

356 **Electric Vehicle charging in public car parks**

The Service Lead, Environmental Health & Car Parks presented proposals for introducing electric vehicle charging infrastructure into this Council's public car parks this year. He explained the Council had an opportunity to participate in the Innovate UK funded Exeter Rapid Charge Project including a lease(s) with the contractor to install and operate up to 30 rapid charging units in public car parks within the District.

Discussions included the following:

- The was great news and urgently needed due to the climate change emergency
- Pleased a solution had been found especially with it being funded with no cost to the council
- Must be ambitious, we need rapid charges. We must explore ways of getting more vehicle charges so our tourists and visitors have confidence in travelling around the district
- Residents were keen to have these charging points in the district's car parks
- This was new technology and constantly evolving
- This was the start of something new and exceptional, need to continually reassess the usage required. Must keep looking for further available schemes to keep adding to this stock

Members wished to thank Andrew Ennis, Service Lead Environmental Health and Car Parks for his hard work in getting the council to this stage.

RECOMMENDED the following to Council:

to delegate authority to the Strategic Lead Housing & Environment, Housing, Health & Environment in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Property and Assets, to agree and enter into legal documents to facilitate participation in the Innovate UK funded Exeter Rapid Charge Project, including a lease(s) with the contractor to install and operate up to 30 rapid charging units in public car parks within the District.

REASON:

To introduce significant electric vehicle charging infrastructure via the Innovate UK funded Rapid Charge project.

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
G Jung	Portfolio Holder Coast, Country and Environment
D Ledger	Portfolio Holder Strategic Planning
M Rixson	Portfolio Holder Climate Action and Emergencies
J Loudoun	Portfolio Holder Council and Corporate Co-ordination
S Jackson	Portfolio Holder Democracy and Transparency
N Hookway	Portfolio Holder Culture, Tourism, Leisure and Sport

Cabinet apologies:

J Rowland Portfolio Holder Finance

Also present (for some or all the meeting)

Councillor Jess Bailey
Councillor Denise Bickley
Councillor Kevin Blakey
Councillor Susie Bond
Councillor Sarah Chamberlain
Councillor Maddy Chapman
Councillor Peter Faithfull
Councillor Cathy Gardner
Councillor Steve Gazzard
Councillor Ben Ingham
Councillor Paul Jarvis
Councillor Vicky Johns
Councillor Tony McCollum
Councillor Paul Millar
Councillor Andrew Moulding
Councillor Helen Parr
Councillor Geoff Pook
Councillor Eleanor Rylance
Councillor Joe Whibley
Councillor Eileen Wragg
Councillor Tom Wright
Councillor Brenda Taylor

Also present:

Officers:

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

Chair

Date: