

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of LED Monitoring Forum held at Blackdown House, EDDC and online on 6 July 2021**

#### **Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 6.03 pm and ended at 8.20 pm

#### **55 Public Speaking**

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

#### **56 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 April 2021**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 27 April 2021 were confirmed as a true record of the meeting.

#### **57 Declaration of interest**

Cllr P Arnott: Minutes 60 – 62; 64 – 67 ;Personal Interest: Membership of LED Leisure.

Cllr G Jung; Minutes 60 – 62; 64 – 67; Personal Interest: Family members have membership of LED Leisure.

Cllr A Moulding: Minute 66; Personal Interest: President of Cloakham Lawns Sports Association and Trustee of Axminster Skate Park.

Cllr P Millar: Minute 66; Personal Interest: Member of LED Leisure.

#### **58 Matters of urgency**

There were no matters of urgency.

#### **59 Confidential/exempt item(s)**

There were three items agreed to be considered in private session.

#### **60 LED update on operational matters: Community Wellbeing Report**

The Forum received a report from the CEO of LED Community Leisure that set out updates in the areas of:

- LED In Club
- Social Prescribing
- Health Referrals
- Community Engagement.

Work on delivery of these aspects was increasing, but the Forum were reminded that some sectors of the community were still reluctant to return to the activities because of concerns over Covid; this was also the case for those volunteers who assisted in the delivery of activities. Participation was increasing, but slowly, and will take longer to return to pre-Covid levels.

The Chair echoed the thanks voiced over the breadth of activities offered by LED that aligned with the health and wellbeing ambitions of the Council.

**RESOLVED** that the Community Wellbeing Report be noted.

## 61 **SOPG Diagnostic highlights**

Strategic Leisure Consultants gave a presentation to the Forum which outlined the main highlights of their findings, following their commission to undertake a Strategic Outcomes Planning Guidance (SPOG) Diagnostic, following the Sports England model.

Observations from the SPOG included:

- No Leisure Strategy with clear vision and priorities
- Outreach work not formalised in contract
- Opportunities to introduce formal KPIs into contract that are aligned with the Council's priorities
- Cost of dual use facilities
- No Playing Pitch Strategy.

The consultants had considered the key factors for the District, including age demographics and how that varied between towns and rural areas; and pockets of deprivation.

A detailed review of the existing contract had been made, and the difficulties in delivering to that contract were highlighted, including

- Aging stock of facilities
- Limitations of dual-use sites – such as age of facilities and dated agreements
- Serving relatively small town populations
- Cost of providing a community reach officer to deliver programmes linked to the Council's Public Health Strategy.

Whilst the detailed report behind the findings was yet to be finalised and circulated, the recommendations from Strategic Leisure on what was required were provided to the Forum:

- A Leisure Strategy with vision and key objectives for the Council;
- An up to date evidence based assessment of individual sports facility needs to inform the emerging Local Plan;
- Community Survey to provide comprehensive insight and inform the Leisure Strategy;
- Further consultation with key stakeholders;
- Provision of bespoke Facility Planning Models to inform the Leisure Strategy;
- AN updated Playing Pitch Strategy;
- Review of all dual use arrangements;
- Undertake market testing exercise to determine if the leisure contract continues to represent value for money for the Council;
- Review the Service Fee arrangement with LED and consider introduction of an annual management fee, index linked for the remaining period of the contract.

Discussion on the findings included:

- Timeframe for delivering a Leisure Strategy by the consultants was expected to take 6 to 7 months, subject to their appointment;
- There were difficulties in benchmarking against other authorities, because of the variances in population, built facilities and offer; however further work suggested in the recommendations would allow a review of what the District did for leisure,

across various sectors, that would then provide a clear picture to the Council of what the current market for leisure is;

- Consultation would be managed carefully to manage expectation;
- The consultants would work closely with the Council to engage with as many local groups as possible;
- The Council would need to consider a combination of facilities to provide the level of service that the Council had decided was required and could afford;
- Other local authorities were moving to some main facilities, with smaller satellite services dispersed in key areas;
- The Council needed to be clear on what services they wanted to deliver against the budget available, but that would need to be based on the evidence of the demand, which will have changed considerably but also impacted by the pandemic;
- The contract was deemed unusual by the consultants, because the risk element of inflation and other changeable costs was covered by LED and built into a 5 year payment agreement and the majority of building costs were met directly by the Council;
- A holistic approach to all forms of leisure was required in order for the Council to decide what offer it should make in future, and what elements were better served by the private sector.

The Forum thanked Strategic Leisure for their clear and concise recommendations.

**RESOLVED** that the SOPG diagnostic highlights be noted.

## 62 **Leisure Strategy**

The Forum considered the report of the Service Lead – Countryside and Leisure, seeking approval to appoint consultants to develop the next stage to produce a Leisure Strategy. The report outlined elements already identified that needed to be included in the Strategy, as well as incorporating the recommendations from the diagnostic already undertaken.

There was confidence that an element of funding this work could be drawn down from Sport England.

**RECOMMENDED to Cabinet** that a recommendation be made to Council for the approval of a maximum budget of £25,000 towards the production of a Leisure Strategy for the Council which may be part funded from a Sports England Grant with the balance met from the Transformation Fund.

**Reason for Recommendation:** To enable the Council, following the production of the SPOG Diagnostic assessment, to move in line with Sport England guidance and begin the work for the production of a Leisure Strategy in this financial year.

## 63 **Exclusion of the press and public**

That under section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Meetings and access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012, the public (including the press) were excluded from the meeting as exempt and private information was likely to be disclosed and on balance the public interest is in disclosing the items in private session.

64 **LED update on operational matters: Key performance indicator dashboard**

The Forum received the dashboard for May 2021 and welcomed the format for the ease of interpretation of performance. The dashboard would be improved over the coming months and be regularly reported to the Forum.

**RESOLVED** that the Key Performance indicator dashboard be noted.

65 **LED Operational Update: Facilities and Activities report**

The update report provided by the Director of Delivery of LED Community Leisure outlined steps taken in re-opening facilities and activity programmes.

Innovative alternatives, such as gym pods and outdoor exercise offers, were welcomed by the Forum.

**RESOLVED** that the Facilities and Activities report be noted.

66 **Cloakham Lawns update**

The CEO LED Community Leisure provided a report to the Forum following discussion on the wish of LED to relocate health and fitness to the Cloakham Lawns Club from the school site.

The LED Board of Trustees had not yet agreed to a business case, but had agreed that the proposal was supported in principle, subject to engagement with key partners to establish a solution to the need to relocate the school site offer that was suffering from diminished membership. Further consultation had taken place with local sports clubs to make clear the proposal related to health and fitness offer. The Forum were asked if progression on the proposal could continue with the engagement of stakeholders.

The Forum were keen to stress that any proposals must be in line with the Leisure Strategy which as yet was not complete; and that any further discussion by stakeholders must be held confidentially to protect commercial sensitivities, and press embargoed to avoid any mixed messages reaching the public.

Cllr Andrew Moulding, as President of the Cloakham Lawns Association, stated that as President, he would not make any press statement whilst confidential discussions were taking place; and that he would discuss with the Chairman of the Cloakham Lawns Association to ask that he made no public announcements while discussions were taking place.

The CEO of LED Community Leisure also confirmed that he would not make any press statement while discussions were taking place.

**RECOMMENDED to Cabinet** that a confidential consultation meeting on the proposal to move health and leisure offer to Cloakham Lawns Sports Club be set up, with the stakeholder membership agreed by the Chair of the LED Monitoring Forum; and that no press statements are released by the Council until such discussions are complete.

**REASON** to enable progress on the proposal concurrent to the work of developing a Leisure Strategy and manage expectation of delivery.

67 **Ongoing financial support**

The Strategic Lead Finance discussed with the Forum his concerns for the 2022/23 budget preparation, with a view to going forward with a change to the service fee agreement instead of agreeing to a 5 year period now that a one year period for 2022/23 was agreed whilst a Leisure Strategy was being developed. Details would be discussed with LED and proposals brought back to the Forum for consideration.

**RESOLVED** that the update on ongoing financial support be noted.

**Attendance List**

**Councillors present:**

P Arnott (virtually)  
B De Saram (at Blackdown House)  
S Hawkins (Chair) (at Blackdown House)  
N Hookway (at Blackdown House)  
G Jung (at Blackdown House)  
J Rowland (at Blackdown House)

**Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)**

D Bickley  
M Chapman  
S Gazzard  
S Jackson  
P Millar  
A Moulding  
M Rixson

**LED Community Leisure:**

Peter Gilpin, CEO  
Bridgette Jones, Director of Finance  
Jamie Bryant, Director of Delivery  
Nigel Halford, Chairman of LED Board

**Strategic Leisure:**

Liz Taylor  
Rachel Sutcliffe

**Officers in attendance:**

Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance  
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer  
Charles Plowden, Service Lead Countryside and Leisure  
Tim Child, Service Lead - Place, Assets & Commercialisation  
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment

**Councillor apologies:**

A Dent  
P Hayward

J Loudoun  
V Johns