

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held Online via the Zoom App on 9 June 2020

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 3.06 pm

164 Public speaking

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

165 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 March 2020

The minutes of Cabinet held on 4 March 2020 were confirmed as a true record.

166 Declarations of interest

Min 169. Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund.

Councillor Andrew Moulding, Personal, Been involved in past applications to such funding such as Cloakham Lawns Sports Centre Axminster, Axminster Heritage Ltd, Arc Axminster, Virtue & Honour Lodge No 494, a country market at the masonic hall and personal friend to the Lord of the Manor Jim Row who is a freemason as is Cllr Moulding.

Min 169. Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund.

Councillor Colin Brown, Personal, Has received previous grant scheme funding.

Min 169. Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund.

Councillor Dan Ledger, Personal, Potential applicants to grants may be known to him.

Min 169. Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund.

Councillor Eleanor Rylance, Personal, Has received previous grant scheme funding.

Min 169. Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund.

Councillor Geoff Jung, Personal, Potential applicants to grants may be known to him.

Min 169. Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund.

Councillor Ian Hall, Personal, Been involved in past applications to such funding such as Cloakham Lawns Sports Centre and Arc Axminster.

Min 169. Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund.

Councillor Jack Rowland, Personal, Seaton Town Councillor applicants may be tenants of the council.

Min 169. Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund.

Councillor Jess Bailey, Personal, Potential applicants to grants may be known to her.

Min 169. Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund.

Councillor Marcus Hartnell, Personal, Has received previous grant scheme funding.

Min 169. Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund.

Councillor Marianne Rixson, Personal, Potential applicants to grants may be known to her.

Min 169. Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund.
Councillor Mike Howe, Personal, Has received previous grant scheme funding.

Min 169. Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund.
Councillor Paul Arnott, Personal, Wife runs a Bed and Breakfast.

Min 169. Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund.
Councillor Paul Hayward, Personal, Potential applicants to grants may be known to him.

167 **Matters of urgency**

There was one item that was dealt with in this way which is recorded under minute 169.

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

There were no items that officers recommended should be dealt with in this way.

169 **Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund**

The Service Lead Growth, Development & Prosperity presented the report which sought approval for a proposed policy to manage the deployment of monies being made available through the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund. The report included associated recommendations relating to the timing of when the Fund went live and delegation for the approval of payments. He reminded members that the 2 Government schemes set up in March this year for funding to businesses had had strict guidance which meant many businesses were not eligible to apply for this support.

The Chairman read out recent correspondence he had received from East Devon's MP Simon Jupp on this matter which referred in part to the following:

- Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, EDDC had played a vital role in supporting the community from coordinating volunteering efforts to the delivery of the government's financial support to local businesses.
- The injection of £72m from central government funds had been crucial in the economic response to the pandemic but some businesses weren't eligible for financial support for a variety of reasons.
- Work to highlight businesses unable to benefit from the Businesses Support Grant resulted in BEIS providing additional, flexible funding for local authority distribution.
- By focussing solely on the retail, hospitality and leisure sector, EDDC could preclude many business in East Devon that employ large numbers of people and yet continue to have large overheads whilst being extremely limited in their ability to trade.

Committee discussions included the following:

- Recognition of local knowledge and the sense of wanting to support local businesses by all members

- Set up a cross-party group or panel to make decisions, allowing the group to work locally by covering a wide range of opinion across the whole district
- These were discretionary grants so must support the businesses that fell outside the criteria in the previous funding grant scheme
- We had plenty of resources, policies and discretion so the need now was to get on with it. If no further funding was going to be received then the application of some criteria would be necessary
- There was no flexibility in the criteria. This needed ward member involvement to look into local businesses
- The funding was welcomed, there was a need to look at smaller businesses
- It was difficult to cover all categories therefore discretion must be the big focus
- All members were elected so let then be part of the solution through good communications
- Without any criteria how can we show fairness and transparency to how the funding would be distributed
- A £2.4m fund needed criteria and a flexible approach
- Help as many businesses as possible by being pragmatic to what was being asked of the Council
- Language schools must be included
- Establish cross-party group to strike a balance of a broad consultation process
- The need for criteria and form application to allow officers to filter the applications. In the event of possible over subscribing reserve the right to vary the grant level
- Keep some grants back for businesses that showed good growth potential, were in the early stages of getting established and likely to help to improve the local economy
- Had to operate within national guidance therefore quite limited to how this could be manoeuvred
- Continue to lobby our MPs, they were there to work on the district's behalf to secure future funding

The committee thanked Andy Wood, Libby Jarrett and officers for their efforts in setting up this policy to manage the funds.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

- Considers the national guidance, Devon framework and data modelling documents,
- Approves the proposed EDDC Discretionary Business Grants Scheme 2020/21 including the eligibility criteria, local priorities, grant payment levels and its administration procedure but to be revised to include (i) language schools within Local Fund Priorities and (ii) within the Eligibility Criteria (Section 3) that businesses must be primarily trading from premises that are situated within the boundaries of East Devon District Council with delegated authority to the Strategic Lead (Finance) to amend the scheme accordingly,
- Agrees that prior to the Service Lead (Growth, Development and Prosperity) taking a decision under the scheme that there is consultation with a group of members comprising the Leader, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holders for Finance, Economy & Assets and Corporate Services & Covid-19 Response and Recovery and two Conservative members, one of The Independent members and one Cranbrook Voice member to be nominated by the respective Groups,

- Approves launching the scheme on the 10th June with a deadline for applications of the 24th June, and
- Delegates authority to the Strategic Lead (Finance) to make any required technical changes to the Scheme, all be agreed.

REASON:

To ensure that the funding scheme can be launched and that the funds can be deployed to qualifying businesses and organisations.

Attendance List

Present:

Portfolio Holders

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

Also present (for some or all the meeting)

Councillor Mike Allen
Councillor Denise Bickley
Councillor Kevin Blakey
Councillor Kim Bloxham
Councillor Susie Bond
Councillor Maddy Chapman
Councillor Olly Davey
Councillor Bruce De Saram
Councillor Alan Dent
Councillor Peter Faithfull
Councillor Cathy Gardner
Councillor Steve Gazzard
Councillor Ian Hall
Councillor Marcus Hartnell
Councillor Sam Hawkins
Councillor Mike Howe
Councillor Sarah Jackson
Councillor Vicky Johns
Councillor Fabian King
Councillor John Loudoun
Councillor Tony McCollum
Councillor Kathy McLauchlan

Councillor Andrew Moulding
Councillor Helen Parr
Councillor Geoff Pook
Councillor Geoff Pratt
Councillor Val Ranger
Councillor Eleanor Rylance
Councillor Brenda Taylor
Councillor Ian Thomas
Councillor Joe Whibley
Councillor Colin Brown

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
Susan Howl, Democratic Services Manager
Libby Jarrett, Service Lead Revenues and Benefits
Karen Simpkin, Strategic Lead Organisational Development and Transformation
Alison Stoneham, Communications and Public Affairs Manager
Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor (and Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Mark Williams, Chief Executive
Andrew Wood, Service Lead - Growth Development and Prosperity

Chairman

Date: