

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 31 October 2018

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 5.30pm and ended at 7.15pm

The Chairman led a minute's silence for our dear friend and colleague Councillor Bill Nash who sadly passed away during the last week.

***77 Public Speaking**

Cllr Kevin Blakely, Chairman of Cranbrook Town Council submitted a question regarding financial support for a Deputy Town Clerk for Cranbrook. This was to provide temporary financial support to fund the employment of a Deputy Town Clerk until there was sufficient development and consequently sufficient income from the parish precept for the Town Council to be independent and sustainable. In answer to the question, the Chairman suggested that the request to be considered again at the point of debating the 2019/20 draft budget in January/February 2019 so it could be considered alongside other competing demands and in the context of the Council needing to approve a balanced budget, rather than making a decision in isolation. Members and Cllr Blakely agreed to this suggestion.

Mr Conrad Libischer spoke on Minute 92, Axminster Relief Road. He was concerned to the issues of the Waycroft Bridge and A35 junctions at the ends of the new road, as costs indicated did not include the two junctions. The 650 houses being built at the Waycroft Bridge end would increase traffic, which at times already caused this to bottleneck. Mr Libischer claimed the A35 end was unsafe and more needed to be invested to make this a safer junction especially when turning right.

***78 Minutes**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 3 October 2018 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

***79 Declarations**

Cllr Philip Skinner, Minute 80; personal interest – Exeter Science Park Board of Directors and Chairman of Exmouth Regeneration Board

Cllr Pauline Stott, Minute 80; personal interest – Director of Water Sports Centre

Cllr Paul Diviani, Minute 92; personal interest – Chairman of Axminster Regeneration Board

Cllr Paul Diviani, Minute 80; personal interest – Member of Exmouth Regeneration Board

Cllr Ian Hall, Minute 92; personal interest – County Councillor representative for Axminster

Cllr Iain Chubb, Minute 92; personal interest – County Councillor lives in Axminster

***80 Matters of urgency**

Queen's Drive Regeneration Project

The purpose of this report was to seek approval to commence the Queen's Drive road and car park works in November 2018.

Discussions included the following:

- Had audit advice regarding the risks involved be given?
- Was there a written agreement from Grenadier before Cabinet made a decision?

- Concern that not all agreements were in place
- Verbal assurances were not enough when making major financial decisions
- There was a urgent need for a better car park and this work needed to be started soon to be ready for the busy summer season
- The Phase 1 car park was smaller than the present car park, how could this be shown as a benefit to the Town?
- How could it be demonstrated that there would be better all year round usage of the car park as well a planned revenue stream?

The Deputy Chief Executive responded by reminding Members that November 2016 report on Queen's Drive regeneration included cost scenarios and that the report included up to date independent property valuation for the site. The recent verbal assurances from Grenadier would be required to be confirmed in writing.

RESOLVED:

1. that the commencement of works to the realignment of Queen's Drive and the replacement car park to take place in November 2018; and
2. that delegated approval was given to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, Portfolio Holder Finance and Chairman of Exmouth Regeneration Board to instruct the contractor to proceed with this work without further delay, be agreed.

REASON:

To ensure that work can commence on the road and car park so that;

1. Delivery commences before the winter to minimise the possibility of delay owing to bad weather;
2. create the best opportunity to complete the road and car park by spring 2019 thereby avoiding disruption to Exmouth seafront in the busy summer months;
3. cost increases due to any delay were minimised, and
4. it would not be necessary to undertake a re-procurement exercise for the contractor which could result in a further delay and cost increase.

***81 Matters referred to the Cabinet**

There were no matters referred to the Cabinet by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

***82 Exclusion of the public**

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

***83 Forward Plan**

Members agreed the contents of the forward plan for key decisions for the period 1 December 2018 to 31 March 2019.

***84 Minutes of the Asset Management Forum held on 6 September 2018**

Members received the Minutes of the Asset Management Forum held on 6 September 2018.

***85 Minutes of the Housing Review Board held on 20 September 2018**

Members received the Minutes of the Housing Review Board held on 20 September 2018.

RESOLVED (1) that the following recommendations be agreed:

Minute 22 Installation of defibrillators across East Devon

that lifesaving defibrillators be installed and maintained at housing community centres across the district.

Minute 23 Housing Green Paper – a new deal for social landlords

the contents of the social housing Green Paper, and agree the Strategic Lead – Housing, Health and Environment's response on the key issues being proposed for the social housing sector, be considered.

Minute 24 Consultation on the use of receipts from Right to Buy sales

the response to the consultation on the use of Right to Buy receipts contained in appendix 1 to the report.

Minute 27 Lift replacement at Poplar Mount, Axminster

the urgent replacement of three lifts at Poplar Mount, Axminster, with delegated responsibility given to the Senior Technical Officer for Asset Management and Compliance to determine the most effective and suitable scheme for replacement.

Minute 28 Roof replacement, various sites

the request for additional funding from the HRA (£334, 492.06) for the re-roofing programme.

Minute 30 Legionella policy

the revised legionella policy

Minute 31 House of multiple occupation purchase, Exmouth

1. that this type of accommodation would be a beneficial addition to the Council's property portfolio, in doing so helping to reduce the need to source and pay for emergency accommodation within the private sector.
2. that the Housing Service ensures that adequate provision is put in place to effectively manage the house of multiple occupation and support tenants, as necessary.
3. that a budget be agreed of up to £500,000 from the Housing Revenue Account to include funding from Right to Buy receipts.

Minute 33 Draft of the Annual Report to Tenants 2017/18

1. the content of the annual report to tenants, subject to the information being graphically designed for reproduction in the December Housing Matters magazine.
2. that every district councillor receive a copy of the annual report to tenants 2017/18 in their pigeon holes.

***86 Minutes of the Exmouth Regeneration Board held on 20 September 2018**

Members received the Minutes of the Exmouth Regeneration Board held on 20 September 2018.

***87 Minutes of the STRATA Joint Scrutiny Committee held on 24 September 2018**

Members received the Minutes of the STRATA Joint Scrutiny Committee held on 24 September 2018.

***88 Minutes of the STRATA Joint Executive Committee held on 25 September 2018**

Members received the Minutes of the STRATA Joint Executive Committee held on 25 September 2018.

***89 Minutes of the Capital Strategy and Allocation Group held on 26 September 2018**

Members received the Minutes of the Capital Strategy and Allocation Group held on 26 September 2018.

***90 Minutes of the Overview Committee held on 27 September**

Members received the Minutes of the Overview Committee held on 27 September.

The Chairman of the Overview Committee thanked Tim Child, Property and Estates Manager for his thorough work into the Commercial Property Investment Framework.

***91 Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 4 October 2018**

Members received the Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 4 October 2018.

RESOLVED (1) that the following recommendation be agreed:

Minute 26 Review of Economy & Regeneration Services and the Growth Point Team service plans 2018/19

1. that the committee acknowledges the risk identified in the Growth Point Service Plan that housing and employment development should not be out of kilter and will be monitored closely by the Growth point Team.

RESOLVED (2) that the following recommendation be referred back to the Scrutiny Committee for further explanation:

Minute 26 Review of Economy & Regeneration Services and the Growth Point Team service plans 2018/19

2. that the Council should aim to boost resilience of the local economy and develop a self-sufficient economy as much as possible, whilst maintaining an international focus.

***92 Delivery of Axminster Relief Road**

The Service Lead, Planning Strategy and Development Management updated Members on progress with work on the delivery of the Axminster Relief Road and associated master planning of the urban extension allocated in the Local Plan. The report also considered the implications of the successful Housing Infrastructure Fund funding bid for £10 million towards the delivery of the road and options for securing the delivery of the road in full.

In response to the concerns of Mr Libischer, the Service Lead, Planning Strategy and Development Management confirmed DCC and Highways England were looking into the issues concerning Waycroft Bridge and the A35 junctions.

Discussions included the following:

- the North – South relief was a key item on infrastructure

- traffic was getting worse in the town centre due to more HGVs
- this was imperative for delivery to reduce air pollution and unlock the town centre for pedestrianisation
- turning right at the A35 junction was a precarious situation
- the 650 new homes needed jobs therefore it was important for the relief road to go ahead as well as appropriate infrastructure
- agreement that the employment element to the scheme was just as important

RESOLVED:

1. that progress that was being made towards the delivery of the Axminster Relief Road and urban extension,
2. agree in principle to borrowing the shortfall in funding for the relief road (currently estimated at £6.7 million) on the basis that this would be repaid through developer contributions,
3. that detailed arrangements with Devon County Council for EDDC to work in partnership with DCC on the future tender of a contract for the construction of the road, oversight of the construction works etc. be agreed, and
4. a detailed proposal be compiled with a programme for the borrowing and repayment of funds and presented to Members at a future meeting, be agreed.

REASON:

The recommendation was considered to be both the best and the only viable way of delivering the Axminster Relief Road, unlocking the Axminster eastern expansion site and securing the spend of the previously committed £10 million of Housing Infrastructure Funds.

93 **Transformation Strategy and Financial Plan (2019-2029)**

The Strategic Lead Finance presented the update of two key documents for approval, the Transformation Strategy and Financial Plan 2019 – 2029. Details of the documents were debated by the Budget Working Party on 17 October 2018 who agreed in principle with the proposed direction being outlined.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the Transformation Strategy and Financial Plan (2019 -2029) be approved, and
2. £200,000 be allocated from the Transformation Fund to meet one off costs associated with the “fit for purpose” strategic theme in the Transformation Strategy.

REASON:

It was good practice in managing the finances of the Council to produce a Financial Plan looking at the future direction of the Council’s budgets. To consider the implications of spending plans and the level of resources likely to be available. It was only by looking at the Council’s budget over a longer period, that action could be taken that would influence the direction and shape of future service delivery within a balanced budget.

The Transformation Strategy identified key strategic themes that underpin the Council’s transformational activity to help achieve savings/efficiencies and to help continue to protect front line services

*94 **Budget Monitoring Report for Month 6**

The report gave a summary of the Council's overall financial position for 2018/19 at the end of month six (30 September 2018).

Current monitoring indicated that:

- The General Fund Balance was being maintained at or above the adopted level.
- The Housing Revenue Account Balance was being maintained at or above the adopted level.

RESOLVED:

that the variances identified as part of the Revenue and Capital Monitoring process up to Month 6 be acknowledged.

REASON:

The report updated Members on the overall financial position of the Authority at set periods and included recommendations where corrective action was required for the remainder of the financial year.

*95 **Viewpoint Survey 2018.**

The Portfolio Holder Corporate Services and the Strategic Lead Organisational Development and Transformation reported the findings of the Viewpoint Survey for 2018. A new media presentation was shown to highlight the key findings.

The Chairman wished to pass on his thanks to Karen Jenkins and her team for the in-house and more engaging presentation.

RESOLVED:

1. That Members welcome the findings of the survey and work with officers to ensure that these results were taken into consideration during the Service Planning process for 2019/20, and
2. that the Council's Overview Committee consider the report and its findings with a view to making further recommendations.

REASON:

That the survey findings assist in the pursuit of continuous improvement.

*96 **Monthly Performance reports – September 2018**

The report set out performance information for the 2017/18 financial year for September 2018 was supplied to allow Cabinet to monitor progress with selected performance measures and identify any service areas where improvement was necessary.

There were two indicators showing excellent performance:

1. Days taken to process changes to Housing Benefit claims
2. Percentage of planning appeal decisions allowed against the authority's decision to refuse

There were two performance indicators showing as concern for the month of September:

1. Days taken to process new Housing Benefit claims – the team was currently working through a transition period to Universal Credit which was impacting on performance.

2. Working days lost due to sickness absence - there had been a significant increase this year in employees who have been absent for two months or more as a result of surgery and serious health issues for 2 or months. These cases were being proactively managed through HR and referenced to Occupational Health advice to facilitate a return to work as soon as possible. The Council continued to train its managers in this difficult area and worked closely with them to facilitate return to work.

RESOLVED:

that the progress and proposed improvement action for performance measures for the 2017/18 financial year for September 2018 be noted.

REASON:

the performance reports highlighted progress using a monthly snapshot report; SPAR report on monthly performance indicators and system thinking measures in key service areas including Development Management, Housing and Revenues and Benefits.

Attendance list

Present:

Portfolio Holders:

Ian Thomas	Leader
Phil Skinner	Deputy Leader / Economy
Dean Barrow	Finance
Iain Chubb	Transformation
Alan Dent	Corporate Services
Paul Diviani	Strategic Development
Jill Elson	Sustainable Homes and Communities
Marcus Hartnell	Deputy Portfolio Holder Environment
Tom Wright	Environment

Cabinet apologies:

Geoff Pook Asset Management

Non-Cabinet apologies:

Mark Williamson
Tim Dumper
Eileen Wragg
Simon Grundy
Matt Booth
John O'Leary
Eleanor Rylance
Brenda Taylor
Brian Bailey
Peter Burrows
Douglas Hull

Also present (for some or all of the meeting)

Councillors:

Bruce de Saram
Pauline Stott

Ian Hall
David Barratt
Mike Allen
Paul Carter
Rob Longhurst
Cathy Gardner
Roger Giles
Cherry Nicholas
Peter Faithfull
Ben Ingham
Megan Armstrong
Andrew Moulding
Graham Godbeer
Maddy Chapman
Marianne Rixson
Steve Gazzard
Geoff Jung
Mike Howe
Steve Hall

Also present:

Officers:

Mark Williams, Chief Executive
Richard Cohen, Deputy Chief Executive
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing
Karen Jenkins, Strategic Lead Organisational Development and Transformation
Ed Freeman, Service Lead Planning Strategy and Development Management
Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Amy Gilbert-Jeans, Acting Service Lead Housing
Alison Hayward, Senior Manager, Regeneration and Economic Development
Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer

Chairman Date.....