

NORTH DEVON COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the EXECUTIVE held at the Brynsworthy Environment Centre, Barnstaple on Tuesday 8th May 2018 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Members:

Councillor Brailey (Leader)

Councillors Barker, R. Cann, Edgell, Jones, Lane, Luggar, Meadlarkin, Moores and Yabsley.

Officers:

Chief Executive, Head of Resources, Head of Environmental Health and Housing, Senior Solicitor (TB), Contracts Delivery Manager, Project and Procurement Officer (LW), Parks Leisure and Culture Officer (RS) and Senior Corporate and Community Services Officer (BT).

Also Present:

Councillors Biederman, Edmunds, Greenslade, Moore and Tucker.

10 ONE MINUTE SILENCE – FORMER COUNCILLOR TONY WOOD

The Executive stood in silence for one minute in memory of Councillor Tony Wood who had recently passed away.

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

12 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Local Government Boundary Commission Final recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for North Devon District Council

The Leader advised that an email had been sent to all Councillors advising them of the Local Government Boundary Commission's final recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for the Council.

13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest announced.

14 HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION POLICY

The Executive considered a report by the Housing Services Manager (circulated previously), the options and/or alternatives and other relevant facts set out in the report regarding the adoption of a Homelessness Prevention Policy which had been revised to reflect the requirements of the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which came into force on 3rd April 2018.

During the debate and in response to questions, the Head of Environmental Health and Housing advised the Executive of the following:

- A report regarding the forecasting of resources was presented to the Executive in January 2018 based on the anticipated increase in service demand of 20-30%. This forecast was proving to be accurate as the Council was receiving between 8-10 new cases on a daily basis. There was an increase in the number of single households presenting themselves to the Council with multiple and complex needs. The four posts approved by the Executive in January 2018 were for temporary positions, however the Chief Executive had approved two posts on a full time and permanent basis to deal with the critical issues following the implementation of the legislation. It was critical for both the Council's financial control and the wellbeing of people that everyone was provided with support promptly.
- The homelessness prevention intervention work undertaken by the Council assisted people access private sector accommodation by providing funds for rent in advance and deposits. The Council only recovered approximately 50% of costs allocated due to individuals' circumstances. It was suggested that the Council should implement a more sustainable method through a bond scheme and a report would be presented to the Executive in due course.
- For those accommodated in NDC accommodation, some were in receipt of housing benefit and where appropriate levy top ups paid and therefore cost neutral to the Council.
- A report would be presented to a future Executive meeting regarding the types of cases presented to the Council.
- The provision of housing support was recognised within the new officer structure. There was a dedicated officer who provided housing support for people to access the private sector. This proved to be challenging due to landlords not favouring tenants referred by the Council. As part of the Devon County Council's housing support contract, support was provided to people in sheltered housing accommodation and people at risk of losing their tenancy.
- The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 required the Council to provide universal support to all households including single tenants. The Council developed a personal housing plan for all types of household for the 56 day required period.
- There was a high demand for the provision of temporary accommodation in North Devon due to the level of imbalance of the housing market. The Council performed well in terms of its prevention

work and prevented 700 households from becoming homeless in 2017. The Flexible Homelessness Support Grant from the Government was based on the Council's performance in relation to preventing people from becoming homeless. If the Council became less effective, the grant would be reduced. There was a level of inward migration from within the North Devon Council area and moving away from the North Devon area. The migration of people from within the area tended to be to areas which had cheaper and poorer quality accommodation and therefore required a higher level of support from officers.

In response to questions, the Head of Resources advised that officers from the Housing and Property teams were in the process of looking at a number of properties for the Council to acquire to provide temporary housing accommodation. The properties had been assessed in accordance with agreed criteria. The Council needed to ensure that the properties were fit for purpose and viable for the future. A business case would be prepared for the acquisition of each property and it was anticipated that this would be produced shortly. A progress update would be presented to the next meeting of the cross party working group. An update on the progress made by the Council of acquiring properties for the provision of temporary housing accommodation would be presented to the Executive as part of the quarterly performance and financial management reports. A bi-annual report could also be presented to the Executive detailing the capital costs, progress of acquiring properties and financial savings achieved by the Council for using Council accommodation.

DECISION

- (a) That the revised Homelessness Prevention Policy as detailed in Appendix A be approved;
- (b) That a bi-annual report be presented to the Executive on the Council's commissioning of accommodation for temporary homelessness households detailing the capital costs, progress of acquiring properties and financial savings achieved by the Council for using Council accommodation.

REASONS FOR DECISION

- (a) Provide clear and transparent service delivery expectations for our customers and NDC officers.
- (b) Allow NDC officers to make decisions in accordance with the policy.
- (c) To keep the Executive informed of progress made on the Council's commissioning of accommodation for temporary homelessness households.

15 TARKA TENNIS CENTRE ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH

The Executive considered a report by the Parks, Leisure and Culture Officer (circulated previously), the options and/or alternatives and other relevant facts set out in the report regarding the allocation of funding for the provision of an artificial grass pitch at the Tarka Tennis Centre.

The Parks, Leisure and Culture Officer advised the Executive of an amendment to recommendation 2.4 of the report to remove the wording “That subject to Football Foundation funding being secured” at the beginning. He advised that this was to enable £7,000 to be available to complete a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan and a Contamination Strategy to enable the remaining planning conditions to be signed off before works could start. The remaining £13,000 for the employment of the services of the Football Foundation pre-approved project managers to manage the project through to completion would be subject to the Football Foundation funding being secured.

Councillor Greenslade advised that he, Councillors Biederman and Mathews had made a contribution to the project from their Devon County Council locality budget.

Councillor Tucker (as Ward Member) addressed the Executive. He advised that meetings had been held between Pilton West Parish Council and officers. The Parish Council were now in agreement for the section 106 funds secured for the Westaway Plain Pilton development to be allocated for the provision of the artificial grass pitch and had recommended approval. The Parish Council had submitted a letter addressed to the Leader and Chief Executive which required a response.

DECISIONS

- (a) That £122,000 of capital funding be allocated from receipts banked for land sales in Rock Park for use on this project;
- (b) That £163,962.47 of Section 106 public open space capital funding be allocated, as detailed in paragraph 5.3 of the report;
- (c) That a revenue budget of £20,000 be approved, for the purposes outlined in paragraphs 4.13 – 4.14 of the report, to be funded from the Tarka Tennis Surface Replacement Reserve.
- (d) That the Head of Corporate and Community be given delegated powers to enter into the funding agreement with the Football Foundation, subject to successful application.

RECOMMENDATION

- (e) That subject to obtaining the remaining budget required from external sources, that Council be recommended to vary the capital programme by £850,000 as detailed in paragraphs 5.1 – 5.5 of the report and release this funding for the project when all other external funding is confirmed.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS/RECOMMENDATION

- (a) This is a priority project within the Northern Devon Playing Pitch Strategy 2017 – 2031.
- (b) The project helps achieve the aims of the NDC Leisure and Health Strategy.
- (c) The addition of the Artificial Grass Pitch will improve the operational viability of North Devon Council's leisure facilities.

16 APPOINTMENT OF PROJECT MANAGER

The Executive considered a report by the Head of Corporate and Community Services (circulated previously), the options and/or alternatives and other relevant facts set out in the report regarding the appointment of a specialist Project Manager to assist in the progression of the contract to replace the Leisure Centre.

The Leader thanked the Parks, Leisure and Culture team for their work on the Leisure Centre and Artificial Grass pitch projects.

During the debate and in response to questions, the Contracts Delivery Manager advised the Executive of the following:

- Officers had managed the project so far, however as the project progressed it was likely that much more time would need to be spent on overseeing and progressing matters. Those officers currently involved were also involved in other corporate projects.
- That the contractor awarded the DBOM (Design Build Operate and Manage) contract would be responsible for building and operating the new Leisure Centre for a 20 year period. This would be in the form of a consortium consisting of the leisure operator, architectural team and, engineering team. The appointment of a project manager by the Council would oversee the project on behalf of the Council and ensure that the consortium delivers the project in accordance with the contract.
- The appointment would be on the basis of paying for the services delivered through day rates as it was hoped that the officers within the team would still be able to carry out much of the role, but some

flexibility was required so that resource could be acquired as and when required.

- The request for £35,000 funding had been based on the appointment of project managers for other similar projects.

In response to a question, the Head of Resources advised that the anticipated life span of the new Leisure Centre building would be 40 years and that capital funding required for the new build would aim to be recovered over the first 20 year period. He also stated that following the receipt of tenders for the project, a full financial analysis would be undertaken. A report would then be presented to the Executive and on to Full Council regarding the allocation of capital funding for the project.

DECISIONS

- (a) That the Council proceed with the appointment of a Project Manager to assist with the Leisure centre project.
- (b) That the appointment be funded by £15,000 from existing revenue staffing budgets and £20,000 from Executive Contingency reserve.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS

To ensure that there is specialist support for the project as it progresses to appointment of the contractor and subsequently to assist in overseeing the construction of the facility.

17 COMMUNITIES TOGETHER FUND (CTF) (FORMERLY TOWN AND PARISH FUND)

The Executive considered a report by the Senior Corporate and Community Services Officer (circulated previously), the options and/or alternatives and other relevant facts set out in the report regarding the establishment of the Communities Together Fund (formerly Town and Parish Fund) for 2018/19.

During the debate, the following issues were discussed by the Executive:

- That as Devon County Council (DCC) had advised of its intention of offsetting any underspend from the fund in 2018/19 against the money paid to the Council by DCC to fund the DCC contribution to the 2019/20 scheme, concern was expressed regarding the need for the funds to be fully allocated.
- That the application process to the fund be split into two stages and that Parish and Town Councils should be given the opportunity to apply for funding first for the first five months and that the scheme then be opened up to Voluntary and Community Groups, not for profit organisations and registered charities in North Devon to apply for the remaining period.

DECISIONS

- (a) That the County Council be supported in establishing the fund for 2018/19, agree the 10p per elector (£7,509.90) and that it be allocated to the Communities Together Fund from the Executive Contingency Fund.
- (b) That the underspent funds from 2017/18 of £16339.59 be ring-fenced for Strategic Voluntary Community Social Enterprise (VCSE) applications in 2018/19 from Voluntary and Community Groups, Registered Charities and Social Enterprises providing services to two or more Devon County Council Locality areas and that the deadline for applications from the Strategic CTF fund is 31.10.18..
- (c) That CTF Applications can be submitted at any time up to the deadline of 28.02.19, but earlier applications be encouraged by a first-come first-served system subject to applications to the fund being ring-fenced to applications from Parish and Town Councils for the first five months and then be opened up to Voluntary and Community Groups, not for profit organisations and registered charities in North Devon to apply for the remaining period.
- (d) That subject to meeting eligibility criteria, offers of funding be agreed by County and District Councillors within each Locality area and that this be administered via email (as currently) by giving Councillors a two week period (14 days) to confirm their support in writing. If no response is received during that period it will be assumed that the Councillor had no objections to the award being made.
- (e) That the process for applying and determining applications set out in the guidelines as detailed in Appendix 1 to this report be agreed.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS

- (a) The combined District and County Funds of £82608.90 for the Communities Together Fund along with the additional Strategic fund of £16339.59 will provide an opportunity for Town, Parish Councils, voluntary and community groups to work together to tackle local community issues.
- (b) To enable those voluntary and community groups who work across the district to access vital funding otherwise unavailable to them.
- (c) To enable as many groups as possible to access the fund whilst keeping the administration as efficient as possible.

- (d) That due to the size of some Parish Councils and length of time taken to apply for funding for projects, Parish and Town Councils be given the first opportunity to apply for funding from the CTF.

Chairman

The meeting ended at 11.14 a.m.

NOTE: The above decisions shall not take effect until the five clear working days have elapsed from the date of publication: 10th May 2018.