

NORTH DEVON COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Strategy and Resources Committee held at Barum Room - Brynsworthy on Monday, 7th April, 2025 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Members:

Councillor Clayton (Chair)

Councillors Bell, D Knight, R Knight, P Leaver and Prowse

Officers:

Chief Executive, Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Customer Focus, Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer and Parks, Leisure and Public Open Space Officer

Also Present in person:

Councillors Norman, L. Spear and Walker

117. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Leaver, Milton, and Wilkinson, and it was noted that Councillor Hunt took part virtually and would not take part in voting.

Apologies were received by email from Cllr Maskell but these were not received in time to be noted at the meeting.

118. TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 MARCH 2025

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2025 (circulated previously) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

119. ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE MEETING AS A MATTER OF URGENCY.

The Committee noted the recent success of the Barnstaple Rugby Club and their contribution to the community.

120. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS.

There were no declarations of interest announced.

121. APPROVAL AND RELEASE OF S106 PUBLIC OPEN SPACE FUNDS - CHULMLEIGH

The Committee considered a report by the Parks, Leisure and Public Open Space Officer (circulated previously) regarding Approval and Release of S106 Public Open Space Funds – Chulmleigh.

In response to a question from the committee, the Parks, Leisure and Public Open Space Officer advised that the land at Red Lion Corner was public space and was not owned by the public house. This area was one of very few public spaces in Chulmleigh.

RESOLVED:

(a) to allocate £36,935.60 to Chulmleigh Parish Council towards the cost of delivering improvements at Red Lion Corner.

(b) that the outcomes of the Equality Impact Assessment as summarised in paragraph 6 of the report be noted.

RECOMMENDED: that the Council vary the capital programme by £36,935.60 and the funds be released subject to a funding agreement upon such terms and conditions as may be agreed by the Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer for external projects.

122. HOUSEHOLD FUND UPDATE

The Committee considered an update by the Head of Customer Focus on the Household Support Fund (HSF) (circulated previously).

The Head of Customer confirmed that:

- The £12,000 was the residual balance from the Household Support Fund (HSF) created from the unredeemed vouchers across the scheme.
- During 2024-25 NDC had awarded over £380,000 across approximately 2000 households.
- The recommendation was to approve the use of the £12,000 residual balance to be awarded to the Northern Devon Foodbank (NDF) to facilitate gas and electric emergency top ups.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Head of Customer Focus advised that:

- There was an annual 5-10% underspend on the HSFs in other authorities.
- Reasons for the HSF awards being unused/unredeemed were varied; as the council had recipients return vouchers in the past stating their circumstances had changed and wanted those in more need to benefit instead.

- HSF vouchers were dated so that the value of expired awards had contributed to the total underspend.
- Any vouchers which had expired whilst the HSF fund was operating would have been redistributed. The £12,000 was the value of the underspend once the HSF had closed.
- Further discussions with stakeholders could take place to see if those organisations who dealt directly with the households might be able to provide further insight as to why the awards were unused.
- The £12,000 to the foodbank was not a payment to the foodbank for themselves, but that it was for the foodbank to distribute to those in need in the form of assistance with fuel card top-ups.

RESOLVED:

(a) that the latest position of the Household Support Fund be noted, and

(b) that a grant of £12,000 to the Northern Devon Foodbank (NDF) to facilitate gas and electric emergency top ups be approved, and the funds be released subject to a funding agreement upon such terms and conditions as may be agreed by the Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer for external projects.

**123. NORTH DEVON COUNCIL OFF-STREET (PARKING PLACES)
ORDER 2025 - AMENDMENT**

The Committee considered a report by the Parking Manager, (circulated previously), regarding an Amendment to the North Devon Council (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2025.

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive advised:

- The amendment to the pricing for Seven Brethren Long Stay Car Park was that the facility to pay for a permit quarterly, or monthly, had originally been omitted in error. This had now been added, with the relevant quarterly and monthly charges shown as an option.
- The charges for Lynton and Lynmouth Manor Foreshore had been presented on a supplementary document.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive advised:

- At present the car parking charges in Lynton and Lynmouth Car Parks were payable from 10am, whereas others across the district were from 8am. This may be reassessed in future.
- The new daily rates for Lynton and Lynmouth were comparable in price with the others daily parking rates across the district.

- The agency arrangements for Lynton and Lynmouth were reviewed every three years. The next review was due shortly. The current arrangements in place with Lynton and Lynmouth Town Council was working well.

RESOLVED that the amendments for North Devon Council (NDC) Car Parks be approved as follows:

(a) Lynton & Lynmouth Town Council - charges and regulations for Bottom Meadow, Cross Street, Esplanade, Lower Lyndale, Upper Lyndale, Upper Valley of Rocks, Valley of Rocks, Watersmeet car parks and the Manor Foreshore (as set out in the supplementary document) and include the amendments into the Off-Street Parking as described in the report and shown in Appendix A, and

(b) Seven Brethren Long Stay - adopt the monthly and quarterly permit options for the Seven Brethren Long Stay permit as set out in section 4 of the report and Appendix B.

124. URGENT DECISION TAKEN BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ATTACHED)

The Committee noted the urgent decision that had been made by the Chief Executive (circulated previously) regarding the continuation of the top-up payments to hosts of Ukrainian families.

The Chief Executive advised the Committee:

- The decision to top-up the payment had been taken following the Government's reduction of the payments to host families.
- This top up would be for the next 12 months.
- It was hoped that the payments could ensure that hosts could continue to provide homes for the Ukrainian families and prevent any hosts withdrawing from the scheme. A reduction in host families could result in those Ukrainian families being made homeless, and additional pressures being put onto the Council to find suitable placements for them.

Councillor Walker praised the decision, as a host herself, in that this would help those hosts, and the Ukrainian families.

Councillor P Leaver noted that he felt most of those families who had hosted had probably not expect to still be hosting at this moment in time and echoed the sentiment from the Committee in his thanks to the Chief Executive for this decision.

The Chair reconfirmed his thanks that the Authority was able to continue to provide support to the Ukrainian families.

Chair

The meeting ended at 10.31 am

NOTE: These minutes will be confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting of the Committee.