

Eden District Council Full Council Meeting 25.11.21.

Report by Michael Hanley.

1. John Lynch (JL): Why are we having the meeting (North Lakes Hotel) and how much does it cost?

Lisa Tremble (Monitoring Officer): This was the only venue available and I don't know how much it cost.

JL: Why not at the town hall?

Andy Connell (chairman): It's just spacing and social distancing.

## 2. Chairman's Announcements

Andy Connell (AC): We have Ian Frost here, the new chief executive. AC discussed Living Well Coaches. There are now "happy to chat" benches around Penrith. There will be free parking in Penrith during the Christmas period. About 25k homes will be eligible for Green Homes grants. The council supports the work on the A66 to convert it to dual carriageway but the benefits to local people along its route need to be maximised. There has been success in a lot of the council's activities including tackling homelessness. There has been audits on businesses to advise how to reduce emissions. Jenkinsons Wood Products have donated a Christmas tree to Penrith and Urbaser will put up and dress the tree. The COP 26 community fund has been released which will give up to £1000 grants to reduce carbon. Parish Councils are invited to make enquiries. A new economic framework has started, to encourage development in Eden.

## 3. Questions from the public.

(a) Neil Hughes (NH) (county councillor): Asked why hadn't ED Councillor Raine been removed from office after multiple breaches of the code of conduct.

Answer: The council has not taken any steps to remove Councillor Raine as it does not have any authority to do so.

NH: Government ministers are resigning in ever growing numbers.

(b) Gary Tunstall: The petition (against Omega Proteins) has 1300 signatures: has the petition been validated? There may be false names enhancing the numbers.

Virginia Taylor (VT, Leader): We are satisfied with this petition.

(c) Mr R Kenyon: I am concerned about the sale of the car park to the rear of Mansion House (a council building in Penrith, due for sale). This car park should be retained for public parking, especially for charging electric cars.

AC: The council will consider what you have said.

## 4. Questions from Members

Sandy Lancaster: We have read statements (about local government reorganisation (LGR) in the Herald before we have heard them from the council, why?

VT: We had a two week deadline for comments on LGR. Any press articles have not been initiated by the executive.

Margaret Clark (MC): There have been numerous complaints about Castle Park (Penrith's public park). What funds are being set aside to rectify this?

Lissie Sharp (LS): There are scheduled maintenance and improvement activities for 2021-22. It's very important that the park retains its Green Flag status.

MC: Will EDC reconsider its plan to fell the Weymouth pine at Voreda House (new council

building)?

VT: It is unfortunate that we have to do this. VT listed the reasons. The carbon storage of the pine is about 753 Kg per annum and the move to Voreda House will save 8100 Kg of carbon. The pine is a native of North America and planting native species to replace it will be more beneficial to biodiversity.

5. Petition: presented by Mr Thompson representing “Penrith Pong”.

I think its quite poor that neither the chair nor vice chair of the Planning Committee are here tonight. Permission was given in 2017 to build a thermal oxidiser plant. There is a big difference between what Omega Proteins applied for and what it plans to build, which is a waste burning facility. EDC must enforce the planning and tell the Environment Authority it does not have planning permission to burn waste material. The competence of this council is under question.

VT: We recognise Mr Thompson’s campaigning. Many people would like to see an end to the odours from this plant. All planning applications go through the planning department. We cannot act outside the law. Each planning application is judged under the rules we have. This petition is asking us to act outside the law, which we cannot do. We recognise the frustration that many local people have. The Environment Agency is the only body which can take action against Omega Proteins regarding the odour.

Henry Sawrey-Cookson: I have smelled the pong. Nothing has happened. We could have stopped their rates (nearby residents) or given them a payment for putting up with it.

6. Gambling Act. Review of Policy.

There have been two minor amendments as advised by Gosschalk Solicitors.

Phil Dew (PD): The solicitor’s letter says that gambling is integral to the survival of sport. Gambling is a huge problem in this country. It puts £100 million into charities that support gamblers, tobacco used to be one of the main supporters of sport. Its like the tobacco industry is buying coffins for dead smokers. This was passed.

7. Green Homes Grant

Judith Derbyshire (JD): Phase 1a is finished. Phase 2 is a continuation of phase 1b: retrofitting of houses. 14% of green house gases are emitted by our homes. If homes are warm and less damp then there will be less pressure on the NHS. Structure and insulation is first looked at, then the installation of the best heating system (heat pump). Eden has led Cumbria with this process.

Darrell Smith: It would be good to have more information as to how much fuel poverty was reduced by the scheme.

JD: The savings are very variable. It depends where the house is.

PD: Did you competitively tender for this? There is a lot of debate about air source heat pumps. What feedback have you had?

AC: There will be a written answer.

Ali Ross: I endorse the report. 217 properties were considered but only 39 had installations. There is a very limited number of installers.

Elaine Martin: The maximum grant was £10k, was that enough to lower the costs for each householder?

Sandy Lancaster: What are the criteria for applying for these grants?

JD: There was nobody but Eon who could do it. As for air source heatpumps, we will get feedback. Due to Covid there were some problems with people coming into homes. We targeted certain wards, such as Alston. The availability of installers was a problem. The criteria were less than £30k income and below F thermal rating.

The motion was passed.

#### 8. Report from Independent Remuneration Panel for Members Allowance.

This looked at what councillors are paid. The report looked at what they are paid in other areas. The current basic rate for an ED councillor is £3714 per annum. This rate is in the middle compared to other Cumbrian district councils. The range in similar authorities is between £3000 and £4887. Members with more responsible roles (leader, chair, member of executive) get higher allowances. The report recommended an increase of £258 to £3972. The council voted against an increase in their allowance due to local financial hardship.

#### 9. EDC Code of Conduct.

This is the Local Government Association's Code of Conduct. This was approved.

#### 10. EDC Constitution.

The constitution has recently been revised. This includes the rules and procedures governing the various committees. The constitution was approved and the motion passed.

#### 11. Local Government Reorganisation, Implementation Reserve.

This is to do with Eden's financial contribution to the implementation of LGR. The estimated total for the whole of Cumbria is £19 million. The county will receive 50% and the remaining money will be from local reserves. Eden's contribution will be £1.6 million. All six district councils will cease to exist on the 31st of March 2023.

PD: These are guesstimates. We don't know how much this will cost.

Mike Eyles: It will be a long time before any savings are seen.

Doug Lawson: We have to remember that it will be the people of Eden who are funding this. The motion was passed (to approve of the contribution).

#### 12. Quarter Two, Revised Budget.

Karen Greenwood: Covid has altered the financial horizons of the council's budget.

Some interesting facts from the report: An electric vehicle charging point at Appleby will cost £113k,

due to the need to contribute to the electricity company having to build a power substation at the site. There has been increased funding to parish and town councils to implement zero carbon, increasing from £49k to £160k. A machine is to be purchased to collect dog faeces at a cost of £37.5k (presumably for Penrith). As stated before, £1.6 million is to go to fund LGR. £980k to Voreda House.

PD: Is it a corporate priority to purchase a vehicle to collect dog waste seems strange? Parish footway lighting has reduced from £400k to £50k in 20-21. Why are we having charging points put in Appleby, costing over £100k? It's not the centre of the universe.

KG: Why Appleby? That decision was taken a long time ago. It is planned to have EV charging points right across the district. This has not happened due to a contract that was not followed through. In order to install a charger, they need to install an electricity substation. Electricity Northwest does not have the money to put up a substation. The scheme should start in February. If you are coming from Scotch Corner, Appleby relies on tourism and by offering an EV charger it

will attract more visitors.

There the meeting ended.

Next Full Council Meeting: Thursday 27 January 2022.