

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Corporate Overview Committee held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 2 March 2006

Present:	Councillors: G K Liverton (Chairman) R C Peachey (Vice-Chairman) G P Chamberlain A E J Dinnis J E D Falby K W George C Gibbings	B O Ingham J A Knight T G Reeves Mrs B O Taylor C H Wale
Also Present:	Councillors: Miss V Ash Mrs K J Bamsey T A Cope P A Diviani Miss J M Elson R G Franklin A R Giles D R H Hull Mrs A E Liverton Ms S M Merritt A T Moulding	R Mudge Mrs F Newth Mrs L A Roden Mrs M Rogers Mrs P A Stott A J Toye B J Toye A J Wilkinson Mrs E E Wragg S C Wragg
Apologies	Councillors: Mrs R E Burrow J P Halse A W J Reed	
Apologies: Non-Overview Members	Councillors: Mrs P A Graham B C J Hughes	

The meeting started at 6.30 pm and ended at 9.00 pm.

29 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Overview Committee held on 2 February 2006, were confirmed and signed as a true record.

The Chairman welcomed all the Members, guests and members of the public present.

The Chairman informed those present that the report on Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver licensing conditions had been withdrawn from the agenda as the matter was most appropriately dealt with by the Licensing and Enforcement Committee which had endorsed the proposals.

30 **East Devon Local Development Framework**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Planning and Countryside Services in respect of the East Devon Local Development Framework agenda for action. This agenda for action set out the work programme for the Policy and Conservation team of the Planning and Countryside Service to deliver in accordance with its Local Development Scheme, the various base line reviews necessary to inform the later stages such as the core strategy document. Consideration was also given to Appendix 1 to the report which contained the work programme itself.

It was reported that the Council were at the final stages of the Local Plan. There was a tight timetable for the Local Plan which would have to be adopted by 21 July 2006. This would then become the first fully adopted Local Plan.

The Government had moved on from Local Plans to Local Development Frameworks (LDF). This planning spatial document was a rolling programme of plans based on outcomes. The LDF would be in continual evolution and had major resource implications. The timetable for action was noted and the Head of Planning and Countryside Services welcomed any written views within the next few months to help with the vision process. The earliest document to be produced would be the Statement of Community Involvement. This would detail how the Council would consult and was currently being drafted. A key piece of work would be the Employment Needs Assessment, which would commence this year. Hard technical evidence was required by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and with a tight timetable and there was a need to outsource work.

- RECOMMENDED**
- (1) that the Executive Board endorse the draft work programme for the Planning and Countryside Service to deliver the Local Development Framework document,
 - (2) that the Executive Board commission (from existing funds available within the Economic Development budget) an independent review of employment land (an Employment Needs Assessment) to provide the Council with the evidence necessary to ensure an appropriate balance between housing and employment land in developing policies for the Local Development Framework.

31 **Unlocking Exmouth results**

The Chairman introduced and welcomed Captain David Conway, Chairman of the Exmouth Project Promotion Group, Graham Lobb of Locum Consulting, and Sam Rose from the World Heritage Coast Team to the meeting. He also invited all Exmouth District Councillors to speak.

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director – Environment on the results of the public consultation exercise on the Estuary Side site and the Imperial Recreation Ground. The second public consultation exercise on Unlocking Exmouth commenced on 24 October 2006 and ended on 24 January 2006. 2,173 responses had been received. The largest response representing 62% was opposed to any change on the estuary side site. It was noted that the consultation exercise produced an alternative solution for a supermarket between the Strand and the swimming pool that would involve highway authority land and would require resolution of transport requirements to assemble a site. This would fall to other agencies to promote and it was suggested that Devon County Council may wish to explore with key stakeholders how such a proposal could be taken forward.

31 **Unlocking Exmouth results** (Cont'd)

The second part of the consultation exercise related to the development of the Exmouth Gateway Visitor Centre on the Imperial Recreation Ground. 36% of the respondents were in favour of the proposal with 58% against. Given the strength of objection to the proposed development on this site Members were asked to consider whether it was still appropriate for the Council to safeguard the site for the Exmouth Gateway Visitor Centre. Members could continue to support this project but explore with the partners of the Interim Project Management Group an alternative location along the sea front.

David Conway gave a brief presentation to those present on the Exmouth Gateway Visitor Centre, which he regarded as a world class project badly needed by Exmouth. It was felt that the Imperial Recreation Ground was the ideal site due to its stunning location, close proximity to the town and transport interchange, the close link to the Geoneedle and the remediation works required on the contaminated land. Alternative sites did not work on all levels as well as the Imperial Recreation Ground site. Mr Conway was thanked for his presentation.

Another presentation was received by Graham Lobb, of Locum Consulting. He explained that his primary role was to be dispassionate when assessing locations in both Exmouth and Seaton. He was a sub consultant with expertise in evaluating sites. The brief had been to prove the feasibility of the project to get funding in place. He had looked at a wider area than the original brief and challenged the locations in order to understand the characteristics of the town. It was important that the Exmouth Gateway Visitor Centre had a sustainable site with community benefits. It would need to be visible and accessible, with good linkages to the town centre. Despite analysing various locations he had not been able to find another suitable site for the Centre. The Chairman thanked Mr Lobb for his presentation.

Despite public opposition Exmouth Members expressed strong support for the Council to safeguard the Imperial Recreation Ground site for the Exmouth Gateway Visitor Centre. The building would need to be suitable and sensitive to integrate itself onto the site and would only take up part of the site, leaving sufficient room for the present activities. It was felt that the site was needed for the economic welfare of the town, as well as being crucial to gain lottery funding for both the Seaton and Exmouth Gateway Visitor Centres. It was noted that the project had support of the town, district and county councils as well as the South West Regional Development Agency.

The Committee fully supported the project as a vision for the future and the Corporate Director – Environment and his team were thanked for their huge efforts, as well as the other bodies involved.

The Corporate Director – Environment then went on to explain the results of the Unlocking Exmouth property disposal consultation exercise. It was noted that if a supermarket on Marine Way was the preferred option it would be for Devon County Council to drive this forward as East Devon District Council did not own the land. It was felt that this should be pursued with a sense of urgency and a strong partnership approach involving all three councils. It was reported that Devon County Council were seriously looking at the redevelopment of Exmouth.

The Corporate Director – Environment confirmed that the London Inn car park was a development site in the Local Plan therefore it was open for any developer to make a retail planning application. He also confirmed that the Estuary site was a brownfield site. It was suggested that the London Inn car park be identified as a retail site to attract larger shops which were badly needed in Exmouth.

31 **Unlocking Exmouth results** (Cont'd)

On behalf of the Committee the Chairman thanked the Exmouth members and the public for attending the meeting and the Corporate Director – Environment and his team for all their hard work.

- RECOMMENDED**
- (1) East Devon District Council, as landowner, does not promote the provision of a major supermarket development on the Estuary side site identified by the East Devon Local Plan Policy LEX6,
 - (2) East Devon District Council note the support from Exmouth Town Council and other stakeholders, such as: Exmouth Residents Association and Exmouth Civic Society for a supermarket development between the Strand and the swimming pool on highway land at Marine Way, land not in the ownership of EDDC. In view of Devon County Council's response that "no change" is not an option, Devon County Council, as land owner, be urged to engage directly with the key stakeholders to assess their proposals and pursue a strong partnership approach.
 - (3) in light of the views expressed by the Exmouth members the Council continue to safeguard the Imperial Recreation Ground as the preferred site for the Exmouth Gateway Visitor Centre.

*32 **Items for future Corporate Overview business**

Members discussed items for future Corporate Overview business. It was suggested that Task and Finish Forums be established to discuss the proposed Dowell Street Community centre, Honiton, and the Exmouth Gateway Visitor Centre and the Seaton Gateway Visitor Centres.

- RESOLVED**
- (1) that subject to it being in accordance with the constitution, Task and Finish Forums be established for the Honiton community centre, the Exmouth Gateway Visitor Centre and the Seaton Gateway Visitor Centre ,
 - (2) that, subject to the constitution, the terms of reference for the above Task and Finish Forums be 'to examine the property issues surrounding the intended leasing or disposal of the Council's property for the purpose of delivering the intended facility; and to examine the adequacy of control measures in place to minimise the risk to the Council of the projects not being completed, including advising on any on going review mechanisms that may be appropriate'.

Chairman

Date