

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a Joint Meeting of the Scrutiny and Corporate Overview Committees held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 12 September 2007

Present:

Councillors:

D R Key (Chairman)
A R Giles (Vice-Chairman)

R W Boote
P Bowden
G R Brown
Mrs C E Drew
Ms V Duval Steer
M Florey
C Gibbings
G S Godbeer
Mrs P A Graham
B O Ingham
J A Knight

S C Luxton
Mrs F I Newth
B Nicholson
R C Peachey
P J Skinner
Mrs B O Taylor
T J R Wood
G M Troman
Mrs E E Wragg
S C Wragg

Also Present:

Councillors:

Miss V Ash
T A Cope
D J Cox
P A Diviani
Miss J M Elson
M J L Green

J P Halse
S Hughes
A T Moulding
K Potter
A W J Reed
C T Tratt

Apologies:

Councillors:

R Bloxham
D Chapman
M Florey
R G Franklin
S Hall
D R H Hull
H J Jeffery
Mrs A E Liverton
G K Liverton
K D Nicholas
Mrs M A Rogers
Mrs P A Stott
M Williamson

The meeting started at 6.30pm and ended at 9.00pm

*1 **Election of Chairman**

Councillor D R Key was proposed and seconded as Chairman of the meeting.

RESOLVED that Councillor D R Key be elected Chairman of the meeting.

*2 **Election of Vice Chairman**

Councillor A R Giles was proposed and seconded as Vice Chairman of the meeting.

RESOLVED that Councillor A R Giles be elected Vice Chairman of the meeting.

3 **Outcome of the Vision Panel's work**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director – Central Services on the final report and recommendations arising from the Vision Panel. This followed an extensive period of consultation with the public, our partners and officers. It also gave alternatives for a vision, values and strapline for members to debate.

The draft new Corporate Strategy updated by the final visioning meeting on 6 September was circulated to members. It was a key corporate document which would pave the way for the Council to set out its ambitions and priorities for the next four years. It would align capacity and manage performance so that its aspirations were achieved effectively and on time. The updated draft new Corporate Strategy focused on being much more ambitious in intent but was still very much a work in progress.

Members were also provided with a report from the Head of Finance updating the Financial Strategy. This indicated that there would be a financial deficit of £902,000 in 2008/09. This was mainly due to improvements to the recycling and refuse contract. The District Council's aim was always to provide a balanced budget so it was essential for value for money to be achieved in all areas of the Council's work.

During discussions and questions the following points were noted:

Affordable homes

- The possibility of the inclusion of a reference to cross subsidy;
- Addition of the words "developers and land owners" to point 4;
- Working with Town and Parish Councils to identify available sites for affordable homes and asking the communities themselves if they want expansion;
- Possibility of developing redundant farm buildings;
- The need to change planning policies to facilitate development;
- That local authorities should have a greater say on the density of house building on land;
- Add reference to sustainable construction and high energy conservation standards in point 6;
- Reinvestigate the scheme to let flats above shops to provide more accommodation;
- Guarding against the danger of Affordable Housing being built to a lower specification;
- The additional cost to the purchaser of building houses with high energy conservation standards;
- The need to work with land owners to identify available land for the development of affordable homes;
- Identifying employment land in the Exmouth area in order to reduce the number of people commuting to Exeter;
- The problem of the ageing population in East Devon and the need to reduce the imbalance and do something for young people;
- The government target for affordable homes for the rest of the District was 100 per annum;
- The need to introduce increased Affordable Homes targets for parts of the District other than Cranbrook;

3 **Outcome of the Vision Panel's work** (Cont.)

Affordable homes (Cont)

- Improving the flexibility of how the Development Control Committee operates and makes its decisions.

Thriving Communities

- The need for a more flexible approach to policies for the AONB to encourage economic well being and development;
- Concern that a reference to Local Democracy was not included;
- Improve references to inland towns in the text;
- The importance of looking after the AONB and striking the right balance between environment, economic and social needs;
- Changing the title to 'Thriving Economy';
- Creating the environment to make it possible for farmers to make a reasonable living;
- Addressing the decay in a number of town centres, particularly Exmouth ;
- Changing wording in text section to include reference to 'improving economic growth throughout the District';
- Adding reference to 'integration' of other communities into the section;
- The need to look at AONB policies in the Local Development Framework and to look at the economic growth in the entire District;
- Changing point 3 to 'Liaise with Exmouth Management to address the future needs of the Town centre';
- Add reference to Seaton in point 5.
- Work with the MCTI initiative teams from Honiton and to agree a delivery plan for taking forward their proposals;
- Supporting delivery of the Honiton Community Centre;
- Reviewing the current local plan policy for the AONB and rural areas in the preparation of the new Local Development Framework.

Green Environment

- Change the title to Safe, Clean and Green Environment;
- Congratulating Streetscene Services on their litter campaign in Exmouth;
- Add a reference to other cycle ways in East Devon in point 3;
- The need to better identify what we need to do and when we do it in a better way.

Recycling

- Concern was expressed that achieving zero landfill was not a realistic target;
- The production of packaging was a problem and the possibility of introducing a local tax on packaging and carrier bags should be considered. Packaging was often a Health & Safety requirement;
- The expectation that when all phases of the recycling contract were rolled out that we should expect to be a top 20 recycling authority;
- Addition of a reference to the reduction of the production of rubbish;
- The introduction of the requirement for business to recycle was important;
- Secondary schools were keen and eager to be involved in recycling. However, it was the requirement of Devon County Council to collect waste from schools not East Devon District Council;
- That it should be the District Council's policy to only collect items that can be recycled in this country, that is certain plastics;
- Better recycling facilities in the East Devon District Council's town halls and other buildings.

Young People

- The need to improve the links with schools;
- Including references to Local Democracy Week and political speed dating in the text;
- Addition of statement about supporting young people through the countryside service, Thelma Hulbert Gallery and Arts Development;
- Add reference to working in partnership with Leisure East Devon for young people to become more active;
- The need to better communicate with the more disenfranchised elements of young people in East Devon.

Our Customers

- Improving the Council's response time to letters and phone calls from its customers;
- Communicating with customers in the most appropriate manner for their needs;
- Keeping Members better informed about what is going on in their ward;
- Improving communication with our housing tenants;
- Provision of more funding for Town and Parish Councils and the Third Sector if they are to be more involved in service delivery.

Inspirational Council

- That Councillors were leaders of the community and should take a greater interest in all of the activities taking place in the District;
- The need for a balanced budget and to seek value for money;
- Possibility of appointment of a dedicated Scrutiny Officer to assist the Scrutiny function.

Straplines

The Chief Executive advised Members that the Vision Panel had recommended that different straplines should be agreed for different occasions.

RECOMMENDED that the detailed changes to the draft Corporate Strategy at the meeting be noted and incorporated into an updated document to be considered by the Executive Board.

Chairman

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