

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held at
Knowle, Sidmouth, on Wednesday, 12 October 2011

Present:

Councillors:

Peter Halse (Chairman)

Frances Newth (Vice Chairman)

David Atkins

Ray Bloxham

Roger Boote

Graham Brown

Peter Burrows

Derek Button

Bob Buxton

Geoff Chamberlain

David Chapman

Maddy Chapman

Iain Chubb

Trevor Cope

David Cox

Deborah Custance Baker

Alan Dent

Paul Diviani

Christine Drew

Martin Gammell

Steve Gazzard

Roger Giles

Graham Godbeer

Pat Graham

Steve Hall

Mike Howe

Stuart Hughes

Douglas Hull

Ben Ingham

Stephanie Jones

Sheila Kerridge

David Key

Jim Knight

Andrew Moulding

John O'Leary

Helen Parr

Geoff Pook

Philip Skinner

Pauline Stott

Peter Sullivan

Brenda Taylor

Ian Thomas

Graham Troman

Phil Twiss

Chris Wale

Mark Williamson

Tim Wood

Eileen Wragg

Steve Wragg

Claire Wright

Tom Wright

Honorary Aldermen:

Ann and Graham Liverton

Officers:

Mark Williams, Chief Executive

Richard Cohen, Deputy Chief Executive

Denise Lyon, Deputy Chief Executive

Rachel Pocock, Corporate Legal & Democratic Services Manager

Diana Vernon, Democratic Services Manager

Apologies

Councillors:

Mike Allen

Peter Bowden

Vivien Duval Steer

Jill Elson

Tony Howard

John Humphreys

John Jeffery

Ken Potter

Honorary Aldermen:

Bernard Hughes

Bob Peachey

Margaret Rogers

Dr Waterworth

The meeting started at 6.30 pm and ended at 8.00 pm.

***33 Opening prayer**

The Chairman introduced Reverend Alastair McCollum who opened the meeting with readings from the scriptures and a prayer.

***34 Public question time**

The Chairman welcomed Honorary Aldermen and members of the public to the meeting. No questions were raised.

***35 Minutes**

The minutes of the Extra Ordinary and Ordinary meetings of the Council held on 27 July 2011 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

***36 Best Kept Village Competition**

The Chairman congratulated all of the Villages that had taken part in the 2011 Competition and acknowledged the significant community effort 'behind the scenes'. The Vice Chairman presented the awards to the villages who had achieved success in the Devon-wide Competition and within East Devon.

Baker Cup – awarded jointly to Dunkeswell and East Budleigh with Bicton as the villages in East Devon which scored the highest number of points in the Large Village Category;

Glanvill Cup – awarded to Hawkchurch as the village scoring the highest number of points in East Devon in the Small Village Category;

EDDC Certificate to Offwell as runner up to Hawkchurch within East Devon in the Small Village Category;

EDDC Certificate to Upottery which won the Devon-wide Past Winners' Section.

EDDC Certificate to Talaton which was runner up in the Devon-wide Past Winners' Category.

EDDC Certificate to Musbury which was runner up in the Devon-wide Large Village Category.

***37 Long Service Awards**

The Chairman acknowledged, with gratitude, the loyalty of long-serving staff. The Vice Chairman spoke of the careers and valued contribution to the Council of the East Devon District Council staff who were presented with Long Service Awards.

	Length of service	Section
Ben Chesters	10 years	Planning
Nick Wright	10 years	Planning
Tracey Morgan	10 years	Home Safeguard

***38 Questions (Procedure Rules 9.2 and 9.5)**

Printed answers to the two questions submitted for consideration had been circulated to Members at the meeting.

In answer to a supplementary question, the Portfolio Holder – Economy advised that he was disappointed that funding had not been available to provide the cycle hub for the Stop Line Cycle Way at Seaton. However he confirmed that the Council was seeking alternative funding streams to try to complete the project. He up-dated Members on the progress of the Cycle Way and commented on its value to the area.

In respect of the questions on use of consultants, the Portfolio Holder – Corporate Business added that the Council was committed to achieving best value for money. This intent was robustly monitored by the Council’s auditors (SWAP) and the Audit and Governance Committee. He asked Councillors to raise any individual cases of possible concern and believed that this would be more cost effective than a blanket review.

***39 Minutes of Cabinet and Committees**

RESOLVED (1) that the under-mentioned minutes be received and the recommendations approved

Cabinet	Minutes	44-56, 57-73, 74-100
Development Management	Minutes	6-9, 10-16, 17-21
Planning Inspections	Minutes	3-4, 5-6
Licensing & Enforcement	Minutes	5-6
Licensing & Enforcement Sub	Minutes	10-13, 14-15, 16-22

(2) that the under-mentioned minutes be received.

The Cabinet (minutes 50 and 80) had noted or accepted the following Overview/Scrutiny Committees’ recommendations with or without amendment.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Minutes	11-19, 20-25
Housing Review Board	Minutes	17-25

***40 Empty dwellings/second homes - motion**

The following motion (in the names of Councillors Claire Wright, Roger Giles, Trevor Cope, Ben Ingham and Douglas Hull) was proposed by Councillor Claire Wright and Seconded by Councillor Roger Giles:

“This Council is concerned about the large number of empty dwellings in East Devon, particularly because of the large number of local people seeking Council housing and calls on the Government to introduce measures to bring empty properties into use such as removing the Council Tax discount on second homes.”

***40 Empty dwellings/second homes – motion (cont)..**

Members had been given advice on declaration of interest under the Code of Conduct in advance of the meeting by the Corporate Legal and Democratic Services Manager. Members were recommended that they only needed to declare a personal interest in this agenda item if they owned or had a beneficial interest in an empty property in East Devon, including a second home, leaving them free to speak and vote. (No decision was being taken at the meeting which would directly impact Members' financial position but Members knew that it was their own responsibility to make the appropriate declaration based on their own personal circumstances.)

Councillors David Cox, Graham Godbeer, Mike Howe, Andrew Moulding and Ian Thomas declared personal interests as owners of second properties.

In proposing the motion, Councillor Claire Wright gave statistical information on empty homes and numbers of people on the district's housing registers. She said that the current situation in respect of empty dwellings/second homes did not benefit the local economy or communities.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Roger Giles spoke of the shortage of homes in the district and how this situation could be alleviated by removing the 10% discount afforded to second homes.

The Leader of the Council proposed that any debate on the motion be deferred, with a detailed report on the issue being referred to the Cabinet on 30 November 2011. The report would include relevant and up-to-date statistical detail, giving a clear differentiation between issues relevant to empty homes and those in respect of second homes. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Graham Godbeer.

RESOLVED that a full and detailed report on the issues of empty dwellings and Council Tax discount on second homes be referred to the Cabinet meeting of 30 November 2011.

***41 Changes to Constitution**

RESOLVED

- (1) that the Council's Constitution be amended to include provision for two EDDC Councillors as substitute EDDC Members of the Standards Committee to create a wider pool of elected Members who can be called on to serve on the Sub Committees' Assessment or Review meetings;
- (2) that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive in consultation with the three Group Leaders to appoint two substitute EDDC Members to the Standards Committee (as outlined in (1) above).

Note: Following the meeting, the Chief Executive contacted Group Leaders for nominations. This resulted in the appointment under delegated powers of Councillors Frances Newth and Derek Button as substitute EDDC Members of the Standards Committee.

***42 Office Accommodation Working Party**

RESOLVED that Membership of the Office Accommodation Working Party be increased from 6 (currently: Leader, Portfolio Holder – Economy, Portfolio Holder – Corporate Business, Design Champion, Councillors Vivien Duval Steer and Steve Wragg) to 12 Members to help progress this project; with the following elected Members being appointed:

- Portfolio Holder – Corporate Services (Ian Thomas)
- Portfolio Holder – Strategic Development and Partnerships (Andrew Moulding)
- Portfolio Holder – Finance (David Cox)
- Asset Management Member Champion (Bob Buxton)
- Peter Burrows (Liberal Democrat Group)
- Trevor Cope (Independents)

***43 Changes to Membership of Outside Bodies/Think Tanks**

RESOLVED (1) **Exeter Science Park** that the Portfolio Holder Finance be appointed as the Council’s shareholder representative.

(The Portfolio Holder – Economy is EDDC Director on the Exeter Science Park Board).

(2) **Corporate Business Think Tank** that Councillor Claire Wright be included in the membership of the Corporate Business Think Tank.

(3) **Local Development Framework Panel** that Membership be increased from 8 (currently: Portfolio Holder Strategic Development and Partnerships, Councillors Mike Allen, Ray Bloxham, Peter Bowden, Alan Dent, Helen Parr Geoff Pook, Steve Wragg) to 11 Members, with the following additional elected Members being appointed: David Atkins, David Key, Douglas Hull.

***44 Presentation – Exeter and East Devon Growth Point**

Members of the Growth Point Team, Drew Aspinwall and Lesley Crocker gave a presentation, including a short film, to up-date Members on major projects to the west of the district and on the evolving future work programme. They emphasised the economic and community benefits being achieved in a sustainable and innovative way.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for their interesting and informative presentation. The Portfolio Holder – Strategic Development and Partnerships added his praise for the work achieved to-date and the invaluable contribution of Officers and Councillors.

Chairman

Date.....