



EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the East Devon Business Forum held at East Devon Business Centre, Honiton on Thursday 20 October 2005

Present:	<p>Councillor Ron Mudge Graham Brown Nigel Harrison</p> <p>Karime Hassan Donovan Galling Chris Taylor</p> <p>Councillor Paul Diviani Graham Godbeer Bob Buskin</p> <p>Tim Spores Bill Murray Derek Baxter Roy Stuart Clare James Les Christiansen Andrew Bailey Alf Allen</p>	<p>Chairman Vice-Chairman Hon Secretary and Economic Development Officer, EDDC Corporate Director, Environment, EDDC Martha Mockford Ltd Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce and Industry East Devon District Council Coombefield Veterinary Hospital Federation of East Devon Chambers of Commerce Fields of Sidmouth Skinner Construction Ottery St Mary Town Council A E Stuart & Sons Clinton Devon Estates Heart of Devon Enterprise Web Construction Concorde Copiers</p>
Apologies:	<p>Paul Hackett</p> <p>Councillor Sara Randall Johnson Geoff Myers Mark Shepherd Malcolm Sherry Angela Wright John Furze John Ward Nick Agg Manning</p>	<p>Ottery St Mary Chamber of Commerce and Industry East Devon District Council</p> <p>Exeter International Airport Waitrose Federation of Chambers Crealy Park ExmouthTown Council Cranford Nursing Home Land Rover Experience</p>

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 8.20pm

1 Presentation

The Business Forum received a short presentation on the recent Queen's Award for enterprise given to Clinton Devon Estates for sustainable development.

2 **Welcome**

Councillor R Mudge, Chairman of the East Devon Business Forum welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked members for their time.

3 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the East Devon Business Forum held on 21 September 2005, were confirmed and signed as a true record.

4 **Matters arising – 14 July 2005 meeting**

East Devon District Council – Economic Development Services

Members of the Forum noted that the two vacant posts in the Economic Development Unit had not yet been filled and that a decision on setting budgets would be made at the November meeting of the Executive Board. It was emphasised that more support was needed for the business community and the Forum's objections should be registered to these posts remaining unfilled.

RESOLVED that Graham Brown write a letter to the Chief Executive of East Devon District Council expressing East Devon Business Forum's strong concerns over the vacant staff posts in the Economic Development Unit.

5 **Regional spatial strategy**

The Business Forum considered the report from the Economic Development Manager summarising the views of the Forum at its meeting on 21 September 2005, on the Regional Spatial Strategy and the special meetings of the Council's Economy Overview Committee

Karime Hassan Corporate Director – Environment reported that changes had been made to the South West Regional Assembly's Regional Spatial Strategy draft document since the last meeting of the Business Forum. The document had recognised the importance of the market and coastal towns and also smaller rural communities, whilst continuing to acknowledge Exeter as the key economic driver within the area. Development should be diverted to areas with good transport links to Exeter. However, Members questioned whether the strategy to focus on the urban area of Exeter was the correct one. It was recognised that time should be spent considering the document, as it would determine development in the district for the next 20 years, with reviews every 5 years.

Members noted that 11850 housing units were allocated for east Devon in the next 20 years, 6550 new houses would be provided for in the new community by 2026, with an additional 400 allocated to an area to the east of Pinhoe. Concern was expressed that this would only allow 245 houses in the rest of the district and that the current windfall figure was in the region of 500 units per annum. There should be the ability to respond to local need.

The Business Forum were pleased with the recognition for the rural and coastal towns although there was concern about the amount of development and number of new houses in the new community. There was a need to allow development in rural communities in order to retain young people and ensure many villages did not become retirement and dormitory communities. The Forum acknowledged that the only way to do this was to breach existing protected landscapes. It was anticipated that the Local Plan would be adopted in Spring/Summer 2006, but that in future local development documents would decide on

5 **Regional spatial strategy** (Cont)

local need and the amount of development locally. The importance of the Business Forum working alongside the District Council in responding to the document was emphasised.

A request had been made for the East Devon Business Forum to nominate a representative to sit on the Exeter and Heart of Devon Economic Partnership and work through the Partnership to ensure that there is development outside Exeter.

RESOLVED

- 1) that the report as presented to the Business Forum be strengthened by Nigel Harrison, with the comments made at the meeting, and emailed to all Business Forum members and sent to the Regional Assembly as its response to the Regional Spatial Strategy.
- 2) that Graham Brown be nominated to serve as the East Devon Business Forum's representative as a member of the Exeter and Heart of Devon Economic Partnership.
- 3) that Karime Hassan be thanked for his updates on the Regional Spatial Strategy.

6 **Strategic development sites – update on Cranbrook & key employment sites.**

Consideration was given to the verbal report of Karime Hassan, Corporate Director – Environment giving an update on Cranbrook and key employment sites. The Forum was informed that progress on the key employment sites was as follows:

- (a) International Freight facility – a revised planning application would be submitted the following day.
- (b) Sky Park – a revised application for the business park at Exeter Airport was being worked upon. It was hoped that the planning application would be submitted in the New Year with a revised impact statement. The amount of accommodation would be significantly greater than originally envisaged..
- (c) Airport – the Monopolies Commission was presently considering the sale of the Airport and the planning application was put on hold awaiting the decision of the monopolies commission on the sale. It was hoped that the Monopolies Commission would decide in March 2006.
- (d) Science Park – East Devon District Council and Exeter City Council were working together on this project and had agreed a brief to go out to consultation for a supplementary planning document.

6 **Unlocking Exmouth**

Consideration was given to the report “Unlocking Exmouth – The Way Forward”. Karime Hassan gave a verbal update on progress made with parts of the scheme, although difficulties with progressing the scheme as a whole due to objections lodged by some residents of Exmouth was noted.

Queens Drive – there was potential to develop the site and appoint a preferred development partner to put together a proposal.

Maer Road car park – development of this site was not considered appropriate.

Orcombe Point –not sufficient market interest to develop at the current time.

Elizabeth Hall – site to be developed and alternative site to be considered for a community hall.

Mamhead Slipway – no improvements proposed.

6 **Unlocking Exmouth** (Cont)

Imperial Recreation Ground – preferred site for Exmouth Gateway visitors centre. Concerns over contaminated land.

London Inn car park – commercial interest had been expressed for a smaller scale development, subject to the parking issues being resolved.

Estuaryside – a number of different options were available, but most of them involved being funded by the provision of a supermarket.

Rolle College – if the University of Plymouth decided to move out of the site then a planning brief for its development would be needed.

The Forum noted, in response to a question from Bob Buskin, that the District Council had received a remarkable amount of commercial interest in the regeneration of Seaton for both retail and housing developments.

8 **Business matters – the future of the newsletter**

Donovan Galling reported that the sub-group set up to consider the future of the newsletter “Business Matters” had met and he circulated a report. The Forum unanimously agreed that it was worth continuing the “Business Matters” newsletter and that its role was to communicate with the business community. It was hoped that more of the content would be produced by the business community itself and Alf Allen from Concorde Copiers reported that his business had agreed to print the newsletter and looked forward to attending the next meeting of the sub-group.

RESOLVED that the “Business Matters” newsletter continue in its current format.

9 **Dates of future meetings**

26 January 2006 AGM	20 April 2006
13 July 2006	19 October 2006

Councillor Ron Mudge expressed a hope that a member of the business community would be able to take on the chairmanship of the Business Forum from the next AGM in January 2006.

Chairman Date.....