



## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of a Meeting of the East Devon Business Forum held at East Devon Business Centre, Honiton on Wednesday 21 September 2005**

**Present:**

Councillor Ron Mudge  
Graham Brown  
Nigel Harrison

Ian Page

Karime Hassan  
Donovan Galling  
Chris Taylor

Councillor Paul Diviani  
John Ward  
Graham Godbeer  
Bob Buskin

Tim Spores  
Nick Agg Manning  
John Wokersien  
Richard Eley  
Chris Bolton  
Noreen Hoskin  
Mike Tidmarsh  
Paul Hackett

Fred Wells

Fred McCaig  
John Carr

Chairman

Vice-Chairman

Hon Secretary and Economic Development  
Officer, EDDC

Head of of Economic Development &  
Property, EDDC

Corporate Director, Environment, EDDC

Martha Mockford Ltd

Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce and  
Industry

East Devon District Council

Cranford Nursing Home

Coombefield Veterinary Hospital

Federation of East Devon Chambers of  
Commerce

Fields of Sidmouth

Land Rover Experience

Exmouth Town Council

Peter Eley Estate Agents/Delderfields

Axminster Carpets

Parsons Nationwide Distribution Ltd

Bradford Building Supplies

Ottery St Mary Chamber of Commerce and  
Industry

Axminster Chamber of Commerce and  
Industry

Combe Estate, Gittisham#

<b>Apologies:</b>	Bill Murray	Skinner Construction
	Derek Baxter	Ottery St Mary Town Council
	Councillor Sara Randall	East Devon District Council
	Johnson	
	Geoff Myers	Exeter International Airport
	Jackie Pitcher	Exeter Airport Business Park Group
	Malcolm Randall	Taskland
	Roy Stuart	A E Stuart & Sons
	Clare James	Clinton Devon Estates
	Mark Shepherd	Waitrose
	Malcolm Sherry	Federation of Chambers
	Angela Wright	Crealy Park
	John Furze	Exmouth Town Council
	Ivor Bull	Express & Echo
	Richard Crouch	Friends Provident
	Paddy Fleming	Alder King
	John Bain	Clinton Devon Estates
	Stephen Bradford	
	Geoff Myers	Exeter International Airport
	Vicky Turner	Axminster Power Tools
Kath Marshall	Park Group, Honiton	
Andrew Palmer	Pinnacle Ltd	
Chris Deverenne		

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 7.50pm

1 **Welcome**

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

2 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the East Devon Business Forum held on 14 July 2005, were confirmed and signed as a true record.

3 **Regional spatial strategy**

The Business Forum considered the report from Devon County Council giving formal advice to the Regional Assembly in respect of proposals for the regional spatial strategy for the Exeter area and Newton Abbot.

It was noted that the strategy proposed that growth in the area would be steered towards Exeter and development concentrated in those towns which had a good level of local employment and facility provision and good transport links to Exeter. Coastal towns such as Exmouth and Seaton had lacked investment in recent years. In Exmouth in particular it was noted priority should be given to the creation of new employment opportunities and investment in retail facilities and other community structures. Axminster was a relatively self contained town and could accommodate balanced housing and employment provision to meet the needs of that part of East Devon.

Karime Hassan reported that 6500 new houses would be provided for in the new community by 2026, but that provision would also be made for development in the other towns in East Devon. Successful delivery of significant development to the east of Exeter, such as the new community at Cranbrook, Skypark, and the Science Park was an important element of the Regional Spatial Strategy. Improvement of Junction 29 was a major issue, as well as a bypass for Clyst Honiton and improving public transport.

### 3 **Regional spatial strategy** (Cont)

It was noted that there was a divergence of views between local businesses and local residents on development in the area. The challenge was to meet both needs through the local development framework. A number of members of the Forum raised the issue of providing affordable housing for young people in East Devon. The cost of housing meant the young workforce could not afford to reside in the area as it was generally a low wage economy with high property prices. However, members of the Business Forum accepted that wages in the district needed to rise if the area was to move forward economically.

Graham Brown emphasised the problems being experienced by the agriculture industry and the need for diversification. This process could be assisted by freeing up the planning process for redundant farm buildings to allow other activities to take place in them. There was a concern expressed that villages should not be allowed to become retirement settlements and that the planning system should not stop diversification. Again the need to provide a balance between allowing development and keeping East Devon's quality environment was essential.

The Forum welcomed the anticipated adoption of the Structure Plan in 2006. Once the enquiry in respect of the New Community was completed in October, staff resources could be diverted to work on other local development projects in the District.

Joint working would occur with Exeter City Council on projects of joint interest, such as the Science Park, new community, Sky Park and new terminal for Exeter Airport.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1) that it be noted that the East Devon Business Forum generally supported the contents of the Devon County Council response to the Regional Spatial Strategy, but felt it should be broadened so the Regional Assembly would be more sensitive to rural needs and local issues;
- 2) that members give their comments, in the form they consider most appropriate, to Nigel Harrison, for him to prepare a report to the October meeting of the Business Forum and to relay onwards to the Regional Assembly
- 3) that Karime Hassan be thanked for his explanation of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

### 4 **The new planning system – Local development framework: 'East Devon Local Development Scheme'.**

Consideration was given to the report Corporate Director – Environment on the new planning system and the introduction of the Local Development Frameworks. The Forum was informed that the Development Plan documents, included:

- The Core Strategy  
This would set out the key elements of the planning framework for the area. It would comprise a vision and strategic objectives for the area, a spatial strategy and the policies to achieve it, and a monitoring and implementation framework. The time horizon will be at least 10 years. This was the first DPD to be prepared and other DPD's must be in conformity with it.
- Site specific allocations and policies  
These would set out the allocation of land for particular uses, such as housing and employment, to meet the identified needs of the area.

4 **The new planning system – Local development framework: ‘East Devon Local Development Scheme’.**(Cont)

- Area Action Plans  
These would provide the framework for areas where significant change or conservation was needed.
- Core Development Control Policies  
A limited suite of policies that set out the criteria against which all planning applications would be assessed, to ensure that development and use of land accords with the vision and objectives set out in the Core Strategy.

It was noted that East Devon was one of the last local authorities in the country without and adopted local plan but it was anticipated that the structure plan could be adopted in 2006. Once the enquiry into the New Community was completed in October, staff resources could be diverted to work on other local development projects in the district. It was now essential to produce a Local Development Framework to inform the planning system.

Bob Buskin raised the issue of the District Council planners apparently not taking notice of what Parish Council's had to say when consulted on a planning application. Karime stated that EDDC always took into account the views of the Parish Council's and the public more than many other local authorities, but accepted that there was room to improve its communication. He emphasised that all the planning officers in the Development control section were very busy dealing with record numbers of applications and did a good job under difficult circumstances. Changes to the delegation process were also debated.

Members of the Business Forum welcomed the new more flexible approach being given to the planning process by senior management in the Environment Directorate.

**RESOLVED** that Karime Hassan be thanked for his presentation and regular reports be made to future meetings on strategic employment sites, local development framework, Sky Park and the Science Park.

5 **The closure of the A303 – Highways Agency decision to close the A303 at Knightshayne Bends near Marsh from 5 September until 19 December 2005**

Consideration was given to the decision of the Highways Agency to close the A303 at Knightshayne Bends near Marsh from 5 September until 19 December 2005. This was having an adverse effect on the movement of both goods and people in the east of the area. Nick Ag-Manning informed members of the Forum that he had already lost business due to the Highways Agency decision.

**RESOLVED** that Nigel Harrison send a letter to Alastair Darling, Secretary of State for Transport expressing East Devon Business Forum's concern over the Highways Agency's decision to close the A303 at Knightshayne Bends near Marsh from 5 September until 19 December 2005, particularly as the timing of the decision had given no opportunity to object.

7 **Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 20 October 2005 at 6.00pm - East Devon Business Centre. Amongst the possible topics for discussion were:

- Recycling for business;
- Business & Arts working together;
- Licensing Act 2003.

Chairman ..... Date.....