

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Corporate Overview Committee held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 26 July 2007

Present:

Councillors:

D R A Key (Chairman)
R C Peachey (Vice Chairman)

R Bloxham
R Boote
G P Brown
P N Bowden
M Florey
C F A Gibbings
G S Godbeer

Mrs P A Graham
B O Ingham
Mrs P A Stott
Mrs B O Taylor
T J R Wood
S C Wragg

Also Present:

Councillors:

Miss V Ash
A E J Dinnis
P A Diviani
Mrs A E Liverton
G K Liverton
A T Moulding

Mrs F I Newth
K Potter
C T Tratt
Miss S M Randall Johnson
A W J Reed
P J Skinner

Apology

Councillors:

Miss J M Elson
S Hughes

The meeting started at 6.30 pm and ended at 7.55 pm

***7 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Overview Committee held on 28 June 2007, were confirmed and signed as a true record.

***8 Chairman's update on Post Offices**

The Chairman asked all members to check the Map of Post Offices in the members area. He reminded Members that the closures programme started in East Devon on 4 February 2008 and would be announced in April 2008. The first closures would be in July 2008. The Chairman asked that members speak with Postmasters in their wards to find out their plans for services after network change.

***9 Employment Land Provision in East Devon – The Atkins Study and Future LDF Core Strategy Work**

Members received a presentation from Matt Dickins, Principal Planning Officer regarding the study carried out by Atkins relating to employment land provision and future requirements in East Devon. The presentation complemented his written report which concerned the Atkins study and endorsed, in principle, the key findings of the report with some recommended amendments. It was noted that through the production of the East Devon Core Strategy and other Local Development Framework documents there would be future work requirements and issues that would need to be addressed. It was highlighted that the study made certain policy assumptions and would be a starting

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Employment Land Provision in East Devon – The Atkins Study and Future LDF Core Strategy Work(Cont)

point from which to develop strategies for employment land provision and economic development initiatives.

Councillor Graham Brown, Chairman of the East Devon Business Forum also addressed the committee regarding the Atkins study. It was noted that the Business Forum were concerned at some aspects of the report including the total amount of land available for employment land. Much of the land included in the study as employment land was not immediately available. The Forum's concerns were noted and Members highlighted areas of work for Officers to address regarding the Atkins study They also made a number of other points and raised issues relating to the study including:

- With East Devon being such a large area, the Council must be aware of the varying needs across the district for employment land. The demand in some areas will be much higher than others.
- The Council must look 'outside the box' and be more flexible when discussing schemes outside built up area boundaries. Many towns are full to capacity or unsuitable for employment land and will have to look outside such restrictive lines in order to provide such land.
- Although Skypark and Science Park will provide vital employment land, they will be suitable for particular types of business. The District also needed to provide basic accommodation for businesses starting out as well as low spec low rental accommodation.
- 85% of businesses in East Devon have 1-10 employees. The Council must cater for such smaller scale business to create targeted areas of employment land which are desirable to them.
- The Council needs to look at the district in more detail to develop the work further of Atkins and create a detailed strategy for employment within the district.
- The Provision of employment land in East Devon should be a top priority as there is a shortage of such sites. Any work on the strategy should have a timescale and proceed as a matter of urgency.

- RESOLVED** 1) that the Executive Board be recommended to authorise the following changes to the Atkins Study document:
- Deletion of reference to the following sites, where development would be likely to be contrary, in principle, to current Local Plan policy:
 - Land to the west of the current operational boundary of Moorview Industrial Estate.
 - Land to the east of the current operational boundary of Mill Park Industrial Estate.
 - Amendment of the area recorded for Harepath Road in Seaton (the Atkins report shows this as 5.44 hectares but the actual Local Plan allocation is 2.20 hectares).
 - Deletion of reference to Honiton Showground throughout the document as inclusion could be inferred to suggest a particular policy status on this land which does not currently exist.
 - Qualification in the references to the Honiton Community Plan to ensure that it is noted that views expressed (reported by Atkins) are those of the MCTI. Also it is seen as desirable for reference to be made to the MCTI plan that is being produced in Axminster and the report to note that there are other town and parish planning initiatives.

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Employment Land Provision in East Devon – The Atkins Study and Future LDF Core Strategy Work(Cont)

RESOLVED

**1)
(Cont)**

- Deletion of reference to possible areas of search for new development as there is no methodology set out to define areas of search and justified reasoning for inclusion or exclusion of areas. Inclusion could be inferred to suggest a policy status that does not currently exist.
- Also minor changes are required to correct inaccuracies and errors and clarify the meaning of text and summarise instance where new guidance/policy has been produced.

2) that the Atkins study is subject to further review by a Task and Finish Forum made up of Officers, the Portfolio Holder of Economy, the Portfolio Holder of Strategic Planning and Regeneration, the Business Champion, the Regeneration Champion, the Chairman of the East Devon Business Forum, a Liberal Democrat Member and a Independent Group Member. The TAFF is to identify inconsistencies and anomalies in the way the study methodology is put into practice in the report and other inaccuracies or anomalies identified. After proposed changes are made it is proposed that the report is considered by Council for approval and than 'signed-off' as complete and endorsed as a document to inform future policy development.

3) that a comprehensive review and analysis (going into more detail than the Atkins study), be undertaken in conjunction with the East Devon Business Forum, of the existing employment sites. This and other studies on supply and demand and need issues will inform future policy for employment land provision.

4) that a specific and timely assessment to be updated on at the October meeting of the Committee be undertaken of employment land supply and demand issues in the western section of the District closest to Exeter. This work will address potential shortfalls in provision prior to the strategic employment sites of Skypark, the Inter-Modal and the Science Park being developed. It will also assess the suitability and appropriateness of employment sites for differing forms of employment development and shortfalls/surpluses that may exist for differing types of uses. Ultimately assessment along these lines will be done on a District wide basis.

(Councillor C T Tratt declared a prejudicial interest in any part of the discussion relating to the Honiton Show as he was a Show Council Member and on the Executive of the show and indicated that he would leave the Chamber if the issue was debated. No such discussion on the Honiton Show was held)

Chairman

Date