

# **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **Minutes of a Meeting of the Corporate Overview Committee held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 29 March 2007**

**Present:** Councillors:  
  
G K Liverton (Chairman)  
R C Peachey (Vice-Chairman)  
  
G P Chamberlain  
JED Falby  
C F A Gibbings  
J P Halse  
B O Ingham  
J A Knight  
Ms S M Merritt  
A W J Reed  
T G Reeves  
C H Wale  
S C Wragg

**Also Present:** Councillors:  
Miss V Ash  
T A Cope  
P A Diviani  
Miss J M Elson  
S Hughes  
A T Moulding  
R Mudge  
B Nicholson  
Mrs HE Parr  
Mrs P A Stott  
Dr H W Waterworth

**Apologies:** Councillor:  
Mrs K J Bamsey  
K W George  
Mrs P A Stott

The meeting started at 6.30pm and ended at 8.45pm

\*36 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Overview Committee held on 1 February 2007, were confirmed and signed as a true record.

37 **Items considered as a matter of urgency**

Cancellation of meeting

Members noted that the next meeting of the Overview Committee scheduled for 26 April 2007 had been cancelled.

37 **Items considered as a matter of urgency** (Cont.)Member Involvement in the Political, Advisory and Decision Making Arrangements of the Council Task and Finish Forum – Interim report

Consideration was given to the interim report of the Task and Finish Forum together with the minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2007. Members were advised of the process used by the Forum to reach its conclusions and then discussed each of the recommendations made.

Members considered that the Corporate Overview Committee had worked effectively over the last two years and had discussed a wide range of subjects in depth. They favoured continuing with the existing system of Overview and Scrutiny Committees and developing the work of the Overview Committee further. There were also concerns over cost and resource issues with the system proposed by the Task and Finish Forum

**RECOMMENDED** that the recommendations of the Member Involvement in the Political, Advisory and Decision Making Arrangements of the Council Task and Finish Forum be agreed subject to the recommendations 5.1, 5.5 and recommendation 2 g) of the meeting held on 20 March 2007 being amended to read as follows:

- a) 5.1 and 5.5 that the existing system of Overview and Scrutiny Committees be retained;
- b) 2 g) Planning training to be mandatory for all members of the Development Control Committees and timetabled to accommodate the needs of all Councillors.

\*38 **Exmouth & Seaton Visitors Gateway Centre**

The Committee welcomed Lynne Del-Greco, Operations Manager (Enterprise) – Devon Area Team, SWRDA (South West Regional Development Agency) to the meeting. Ms Del-Greco had been invited to attend the meeting by the Exmouth & Seaton Visitors Gateway Centre TaFF, to answer a number of questions that Members had concerning the nature and terms of SWRDA's involvement with these projects. It was noted that members of the Exmouth & Seaton Visitors Gateway Centre TaFF had been invited to attend the meeting.

During the discussions the following points were made:

- That the Board of the Regional Development Agency (RDA) had approved a framework of funding of up to £7.2 million for projects along the Jurassic Coast. Seaton and Exmouth were identified as two of the indicative projects within this framework, with notionally identified funding of £1.5 million for Exmouth and £1.25 million for Seaton;
- That Land Value had been included by consultants as part of the overall project cost as indicated above and would be considered as part of the match funding package by the RDA;
- That before SWRDA would allocate funding the individual projects would need to complete the full application and appraisal process. This would need to demonstrate real economic benefit to the locality, sub-region and region. Current economic output measures which the RDA are required to report on were: Jobs created or safeguarded, numbers of people assisted to get a job, numbers of businesses created and demonstrating growth after 12 months, public and private regeneration infrastructure investment levered – brownfield land reclaimed or redeveloped;
- Evidence that would be required before funding would be allocated would include: a robust business plan for the operation of the centres, full design details, a robust funding structure for the capital build element, marketing and refreshing the offer as

**\*38 Exmouth & Seaton Visitors Gateway Centre**(Cont)

appropriate, robust delivery structure, accountable body arrangements, governance structure, business engagement and community engagement;

- RDA funding for these projects would be restricted to capital and no funding would be available once they had been constructed;
- That the RDA saws the Locum work as broad top-level feasibility and appreciated that considerable further work needed to be undertaken before the final size of either centre could be determined. The ultimate decision on size should be based on a number of factors including what is appropriate to deliver the required activity, projected visitor numbers, funding available for the capital build and identification of the required revenue stream to sustain the centres in the long term. It was anticipated that this would be clarified through further feasibility/market testing. A further factor that should be considered was the potential to co-locate other activities which may bring with them additional revenue funding streams to help to ensure the long term viability of the centre;
- Any potential RDA funding was not predicated on size of building but on economic outputs as indicated above and the broader economic outcomes delivered for the region. This would be determined through the standard RDA application and appraisal process;
- The definition of 'World class' the RDA based on that set out in the earlier Locum work and was about quality of the offering – not size. Any development should incorporate first class facilities which would 'inspire people to celebrate and enjoy the World Heritage Coast'. Any interpretation should be first class, producing a high quality experience, demonstrate strong partnership working and support the principles of sustainability in environmental and social terms;
- The main strategic risks that SWRDA considered Members should assess were: Long term sustainability of the projects was the key strategic risk therefore particular attention needed to be paid to the robustness of the business plans and assessment of commercial content. Deliverability on time and within budget would also be key, therefore strong project management governance and management structures were essential;
- Concerns were expressed that at present there were no overall management and governance structures in place;
- The concerns from SWRDA over the projects were: Demonstration of economic benefit, the long term sustainability of the projects and the management/governance structures to enable successful delivery. Hugely over optimistic visitor number estimates were often a problem in determining overall viability of this type of project and detailed evidence in support of those estimates would be required;
- It was confirmed there was no time constraint for SWRDA's involvement in the projects, subject to sufficient Government funding be available;
- The Corporate Director – Environment confirmed that work was proceeding to recruit a project manager who could drive the project forward.

Lynne Del-Greco was thanked for her presentation and answering Members questions.

**\*39 Review of the work of the Overview Committee 2006/07**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director – Environment which set out the work that had been done this year by the Overview Committee and provided an updated plan since the individual items had been considered. The progress report was intended to provide Members with guidance as to how the work of the Overview Committee was to be progressed. The key issues in respect of affordable housing and climate change were to be taken forward in 2007/08 and would be reported to Committee in the form of policy options in the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and a draft Climate Change Strategy.

\*39 **Review of the work of the Overview Committee 2006/07**(Cont)

**RESOLVED** that the review of the work of the Overview Committee be noted with affordable housing and climate change issues being included in the 2007/08 Forward Plan for further consideration.

\*40 **Forward Plan 2007/08**

Members received a copy of the draft Forward Plan for the work of the Corporate Overview Committee for the 2007/08 financial year. The Corporate Director – Environment confirmed that a presentation would be made to the Overview Committee on flood defence by Mike Baker, Principal Engineer. This would include discussion on a revised shoreline management plan. It was also intended to establish a Task and Finish Forum on sustainability issues in the new Council year.

The following items were put forward to be added to the Forward Plan:

22 November 2007 Beach Management.

13 December 2007 Relationships between Officers and Ward Members.

**RESOLVED** that the draft Forward Plan for the work of the Corporate Overview Committee for the 2007/08 be noted and the additional items raised at the meeting be added.

\*41 **Coastal Towns**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director – Environment on the recently published report of the Select Committee on Coastal Towns. It was noted that some Members were directly involved with the Select Committee and had attended meetings of the committee Exmouth. The summary, conclusions and notes of the Exmouth visit were attached for Members' information.

Members noted a number of errors of fact contained in the Annex A of the report of the Select Committee on Coastal Towns on the visit to Exmouth, to which an apology had been received.

**RESOLVED**

1. that the report of the House of Commons Committee and Local Government Committee on Coastal Towns be welcomed;
2. that the errors of fact made in Annex A of the report of the Select Committee on Coastal Towns on the visit to Exmouth be noted.

\*42 **Request from the Audit & Governance Committee**

The Committee considered a request from the Audit & Governance Committee (Min \*23 of 15 March 2007 refers), that the Corporate Overview Committee sets up a Task & Finish Forum to consider Beach Concessions.

**RESOLVED**

that a Task and Finish Forum be established to consider Beach Concessions in three broad areas, namely:

- 1) Office practices and procedures associated with the granting of beach concessions.
- 2) Their terms and conditions attached to beach concessions, including the level of fees charged.
- 3) The arrangements for monitoring adherence to the terms and conditions of beach concession granted.

Chairman .....

Date.....