

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the East Devon Business Forum held at East Devon Business Centre, Honiton on Thursday 29 November 2007

Present:	Graham Brown	Chairman/NFU
	Donovan Galling	Vice-Chairman/Martha Mockford Ltd
	Alec Carter	F W S Carter & Sons Ltd
	Tim Ford	Fords of Sidmouth
	Nigel Harrison	Economic Development Manager, EDDC
	Roy Stuart	A E Stuart & Sons
	Chris Down	Crealy Park
	Angela Wright	Crealy Park
	Chris Taylor	C & C Electrical & C of C, East Devon
	Peter Halse	Halse of Honiton
	Noreen Hoskin	Parsons Nationwide Dist Ltd
	Janine Banks	FWS Carter & Sons
	Richard Harris	Honiton Garage
	Graham Sindle	Thomas Westcott
	Louise Mayor	Skinner Construction
Sue Hawkins	Woodbury Park	
Mark Shepherd	Waitrose	
David Wright	Crealy Park	
Chris Lane	EDDC	
Apologies:	William Casely	Oter Nurseries
	Tony Collins	Exmouth Town Council
	John Ward	Cranford Nursing Home
	Richard Crouch	Friends Provident
	Ivor Bull	Express & Echo
	Councillor Mrs P A Graham	EDDC
	Malcolm Sherry	East Devon Chamber of Commerce
	Malcolm & Marilyn White	Otter Nurseries

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.10 pm

32 **Welcome**

Graham Brown, Chairman of the East Devon Business Forum welcomed everyone to the meeting and hoped Members had enjoyed the informal reception before hand.

33 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the East Devon Business Forum held on Thursday, 27 September 2007, were confirmed and signed as a true record.

34 **Matters Arising**

Exeter and East Devon Growth Area (Minute 27)

Members noted that no further progress had been made on the problems of Junction 29 of the M5 at the Steering Group meeting held on 4 October 2007. A further meeting would be held in December 2007. The possible delays in developing Sky Park and the Science Park were noted. Roy Stuart reported that the water main for Cranbrook would be put through his land but that no agreements had been signed with developers to agree this as yet. This signaled that further delays were likely.

35 **Developments at East Devon District Council**

Karime Hassan reported that there had been a number of recent developments at East Devon District Council. The Executive Board had recently agreed the new Corporate Strategy with new priorities for the Council, one of which was 'a thriving economy'.

Responsibilities for the Corporate Directors had also changed with Peter Jeffs taking on the Planning and Countryside Service. This would allow Karime Hassan to be removed from line management responsibilities and given the time to develop projects, the economy and encourage development. He reported that previously he was not able to be as vocal in support of development as he would have liked due to his responsibilities for Development Control. He could now drive forward the needs of business and the economy.

The Business Forum noted that in the past the District Council had not been as customers focussed as Members of the Council had wished to see. It was now the direct responsibility of one of the Corporate Directors to improve customer focus. Production of the Local Development Framework had now started, with an issue and options paper to be produced in February. The Forum noted that the policy framework was the responsibility of Karime Hassan.

Graham Brown thanked Karime Hassan for his work during the past year. He confirmed that it was the responsibility of Councillors to change Council policy. The importance of the Business Forum in supporting business in East Devon and providing the District Council for a sounding board for ideas was emphasised.

36 **Update on Employment Land supply issues**

Graham Brown, Chairman of the East Devon Business Forum advised that the Employment Land Issues Task and Finish Forum (TaFF) had reported its findings to the District Council's Corporate Overview Committee during the last week. The Overview Committee had been very supportive with regard to the TaFF's findings on the lack of employment land in East Devon. The Executive board had accepted the recommendations of support made by the Overview Committee.

The report had highlighted key issues and themes that had been addressed and examined. It was noted that the TaFF would help set an agenda to inform future employment land provision in respect to future planning policy and development decisions (particularly in respect to meeting land supply shortfalls).

The TaFF had found that there were actually 6.05 hectares of employment land in the district compared with the 88 hectares claimed in the Atkins Report.

Graham Brown wished to thank the Officers and Members for their work in preparing the report for the Employment Land Issues TaFF, particularly Matt Dickins and Nigel Harrison.

37 **Reports on the activities of constituent business organisations**

Donovan Galling reported that the idea of membership of the East Devon Business Forum was to encourage business people with a wide range of experience from within East Devon to become members. The Business Forum was now seen by East Devon District Council as an advisory body and focus group for business. It was important that the Business Forum continued to take up this role and respond to important issues in the District.

The Business Forum needed to continue to look for more new members. The criteria for membership were as per the constitution, which was as an employer of 8 – 10 people or representing an organisation. Existing members were asked to bring a friend to the next meeting. Donovan Galling welcomed the new faces that were at the meeting and reiterated that it was important that there were a network of business people who could represent the views of business in East Devon. It was particularly important that there were business people who could be available to speak to the media on behalf of business in East Devon. This could be a role that the East Devon Business Forum could take on. It was felt that such publicity would also help increase membership of the Business Forum.

Karime Hassan reported that the Government expected East Devon to produced 11,000 new jobs in the next 10 year, which equated to the number of jobs involved with the Met Office every year. The East Devon Business Forum could have an influence on these developments and help lead it. Members referred to the problem with training and the lack of skilled staff in East Devon. It was noted that there was proposal to install a 16 – 19 training centre in part of the Rolle College, Exmouth, which could help with training for young people in the area. This proposal was supported by Members.

Angela Wright stated that she felt the Business Forum was now fulfilling its potential and filling the vacuum for a voice for business in East Devon that existed before. She suggested that the District Council’s Communication’s Officer could prepare a report to the press after each meeting.

RESOLVED

1. that consideration be given to the District Council’s Communication’s Officer preparing a report to the press after each meeting;
2. that an item on education and training be prepared for the next meeting of the Business Forum.

37 **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting would be the Annual General Meeting to be held on Thursday 31 January 2008 at 6.00pm in the East Devon Business Centre.

Chairman Date.....