

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of a Meeting of the Corporate Overview Committee held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 30 March 2006**

**Present:** Councillors:  
  
G K Liverton (Chairman)  
R C Peachey (Vice-Chairman)  
  
A E J Dinnis  
J E D Falby  
K W George  
C Gibbings  
J P Halse  
  
J Knight  
A W J Reed  
T G Reeves  
C H Wale

**Also Present:** Councillors:  
Mrs C E Drew  
Miss J Elson  
Mrs F Newth  
Mrs L A Roden  
Mrs P A Stott

**Apologies:** Councillors:  
G P Chamberlain  
Mrs B O Taylor  
Mrs R E Burrow

**Apologies – non  
Overview  
Members:** Councillors:  
S Hughes  
A T Moulding

The meeting started at 6.30pm and ended at 8.25pm.

#### \*33 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Overview Committee held on 2 March 2006, were confirmed and signed as a true record.

At the previous meeting it had been resolved that a Task and Finish Forum be set up to consider the new Honiton Community Centre. Members were advised that the first meeting of the Forum would be held at 6.30pm on Thursday, 20 April 2006. It would have a core membership of 8 Members comprising of 5 Conservatives, 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Independent.

#### 34 **Sidford Car Park**

Members considered the report of the Corporate Director – Economy with regard to the introduction of pay and display charges at Sidford car park. Until the previous financial year pay and display charges had not applied to this car park. The car park incurred an annual rates bill of £1,350 and costs associated with lighting, cleansing and insurance, all paid for by this Council. Local traders and residents had complained that the introduction of charges had affected trade as there was very little on-street parking available.

34 **Sidford Car Park** (Cont.)

Consideration was given to two tables circulated at the meeting. The first showed usage numbers for Sidford car park for November 2005 when the car park was free and comparison figures for February and March 2006 when the car park operated on a pay and display basis in the afternoons. The second table showed cash box clearings for three other car parks in the District.

Members noted that the figures showed fairly consistent use regardless of whether or not charges were applied although usage did tend to increase slightly during the mornings following the introduction of afternoon charging.

Debate took place on whether local traders should be further consulted regarding the proposed new charges, whether charging for use of the car park was fair, whether there should be a 30 minute free period and whether an alternative means of obtaining income from the area should be introduced, for example an increase in the number of reserved spaces.

Members were advised that the recommended all day charge of 25p per hour or 15p for half an hour would be in line with similar charges at Colyton and Lymptone, and enable the Council to cover the cost of running the car park whilst generating no significant additional income.

- RECOMMENDED**
- 1) that the pay and display charges at Sidford car park between 8.00am and 6.00pm be set at the reduced rate tariff of 25p per hour for 2006/07,
  - 2) that the charges be reviewed in 12 months.

35 **District Transport Strategy**

Members considered the report of the Corporate Director – Communities with regard to the proposed District Transport Strategy. The Strategy encompassed the findings of the Travel and Transport Task and Finish Forum and had been previously approved by the Executive Board for further consultation.

The Corporate Director – Communities explained the purpose of the Strategy. Members were advised that 1 in 5 households in East Devon did not own a car. Research had shown that transport was one of the key concerns of East Devon residents. Although the Council had no mandatory role it could lobby transport providers and stakeholders, increase awareness of the options available and encourage developers to give consideration to different modes of transport when developing areas.

The Travel and Transport Task and Finish Forum had involved a diverse range of transport users and providers and had conducted transport surveys. One key finding was that there were frequently solutions available to address transport problems but there was a general lack of awareness.

Members were advised that the Strategic Health Authority was considering abolishing the Westcountry Voluntary Car Scheme. This could have a detrimental impact particularly on elderly people attending hospital appointments.

It was suggested that the Council could lobby Devon County Council to give bus passes to pupils eligible for transport to school or college. Bus passes would enable pupils to enjoy after-school activities that they would otherwise miss out on due to the need to catch arranged transport home.

### 35 **District Transport Strategy (Cont)**

Discussion took place on the Council's green travel plan. Efforts had been taken to reduce Officers dependence on their cars, however a lack of resources had curtailed this work. It was noted that according to Stagecoach the best performing company in Exeter in terms of bus use was the Met Office but even there only 10% of employees travelled by bus.

- RECOMMENDED**
- 1) that the final version of the District Transport Strategy, attached as appendix A to the report, be adopted subject to the bullet point on page 22 being changed to refer to passing loops instead of the dualling of the Exeter to Waterloo railway line;
  - 2) that Members of Parliament, County Councillors, Stagecoach and other interested parties be invited to a half day seminar to consider transport issues and problems, to include the possible provision of bus passes to pupils and the improvement of strategic transport routes between Exmouth and Exeter;
  - 3) that consideration be given to installing lockable cycle racks in East Devon District Council car parks.

### 36 **Thelma Hulbert Gallery Business Plan**

Members considered the report of the Corporate Director – Communities and attached business plan for the Thelma Hulbert Gallery. The Plan set out the operational reasons, context and direction of the Gallery.

Members were advised that the Gallery was well known both regionally and nationally and had been so full the previous Saturday that it had almost reached maximum capacity with regard to its fire certificate.

The budget prioritisation exercise had considered the use of the Gallery and reduced the finances available for it. The business plan sought to raise the income of the Gallery with a view to it becoming more financially sustainable in future years. Income could be raised through increased sales and the potential conversion of the area at the rear of the Gallery into studios.

- RECOMMENDED** that the Thelma Hulbert Gallery Business Plan, attached as appendices A and A1 to the report, be adopted and the financial position of the Gallery reviewed in three years against Members' ambition for it to eventually become self-funding.

### 37 **Items for future Corporate Overview business**

Members were encouraged to put forward ideas for consideration at future meetings. Any ideas should be emailed to either Councillor Liverton as Chairman ([gliverton@members.eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:gliverton@members.eastdevon.gov.uk)) or Karime Hassan, Corporate Director-Environment ([khassan@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:khassan@eastdevon.gov.uk)).

Matters discussed included:

- Affordable housing and exception sites,
- Review of the policy on the internment of ashes at East Devon District Council cemeteries, and
- The 2007/08 budget.

37 **Items for future Corporate Overview business (Cont.)**

Consideration was given to how the Committee system worked and the role of Think Tanks.

**RECOMMENDED** that when the Think Tanks reach conclusions their recommendations be reported in the first instance to the Corporate Overview Committee before being considered by the Executive Board.

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