

## Annual Report of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committees 2006

(Article 7.03 (d) requires the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committees to report annually to full Council on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate).

### **Background:**

The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committees were established at the Annual Meeting of the Council 2005 replacing the four Overview Committees that had existed previously.

The two Committees have functions specific to them (as detailed in pages 35 – 36 of the Constitution) and principally these are:

**Corporate Overview Committee:** its principle role is to develop policy and evaluate its implementation.

**Scrutiny Committee:** principally takes the lead and owns the post decision scrutiny process on behalf of the public with a view to making an impact on the delivery of public services.

Both Committees have the power to establish specific Task and Finish Forum comprising members of the Committee, the relevant Think Tank and where appropriate, members of the public.

### **Corporate Overview Committee – annual report**

**Key areas** considered by the Committee since June 2005:

Employment land supply issues	9 June 2005	To finalise the work being carried out by the Economy Overview Committee
Western Power repair work	7 July 2005	This matter was referred to the Overview Committee by the Executive Board. The Committee was asked to fully investigate the action taken by Western Power when undertaking underground power supply repairs at High Meadow, Sidford. Kevin Williams from WP was invited to the meeting together with Ward Members and EDDC's Tree Officer. Each person was invited to put forward their case and to answer questions from the Committee. This resulted in an apology from WP and assurance that the necessary remedial work would be done. WP also advised that lessons had been learned particularly in respect of the need for improved communications with land owners and the public.

**Corporate Overview Committee – annual report – key areas (cont)..**

East Devon Citizens Advice Bureau – Service Level Agreement	7 July 2005	This matter was referred to the Overview Committee by the Executive Board. The Committee was asked to review the services provided by the CABs and proposed changes, where and to whom these services were provided and the funding arrangements. The CAB Area and SW Regional Managers were invited to the meeting to assist with the review process by stating their case and answering questions. The Executive Board took note of the Committee's recommendation and agreed to commit to the East Devon CAB through signing the Service Level Agreement based on existing levels and that Devon County Council be asked to match fund the service.
Exe Estuary Partnership Memorandum of Agreement	7 July 2005	This matter was referred to the Overview Committee by the Executive Board. The Committee was asked to consider the Partnership arrangements and the benefits of the partnership to East Devon. A representative from Devon County Council was invited to put the County case and to answer questions. The Executive Board took note of the Committee's recommendation and agreed to undertake further negotiations with all agencies including the remit, funding and location of the Exe Estuary Partnership and its officers before the Memorandum of Agreement was signed. At its meeting on 12 April 2006, the Executive Board agreed the Memorandum of Agreement, its funding commitment and the revised job description for and recruitment of the Estuary Officer.
Refuse and Recycling Contract	Special meeting 18 August 2005	Presentation by Mark Reilly, Head of Streetscene giving the background of the changes to the refuse and recycling provision, the tendering process, preferred supplier and future service. The recommendations of the Committee were taken into account by the Executive Board when it discussed the issue.
	1 Dec 2005	Further analysis of contract and preferred option.  At the meeting of the Executive Board on 14 December 2005, the contract details were agreed after taking into account the recommendations of the Corporate Overview Committee.
Unlocking Exmouth – Part 2: The Way Forward	6 October 2005	The Committee analysed and discussed in depth the proposals for the regeneration of Exmouth and the responses to the consultation and other key factors.  The Executive Board approved the recommendations of the Committee with the four options for the development of the Estuary Side and the protection of the Imperial Recreation Ground being referred for public consultation.

**Corporate Overview Committee – annual report – key areas (cont)..**

Unlocking Exmouth – Part 2: The Way Forward (cont)..	2 March 2006	The Committee considered the results of the public consultation and recommended that the Council, as landlord, did not promote the provision of a major supermarket development on the estuary side but supported a supermarket development between the Strand and the swimming pool. The Committee also recommended that the Imperial Recreation Ground as the preferred site for the Exmouth Gateway Visitor Centre be safeguarded.
		The Executive Board considered and supported the Committee's recommendations at its meeting on 15 March 2006.
Honiton Sport proposals	3 November 2005	The Committee gave detailed consideration to the proposals given by Honiton Sport as part of the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative. Representatives of Honiton Sport put forward the case and answered questions. The Committee's recommendation to support the proposal in principal was agreed by the Executive Board.
Sidford Car Park	3 November 2005	The Committee specifically discussed whether or not pay and display charges should be retained in Sidford car park. Town Council and business representatives put forward their cases and answered questions. The Committee asked for consideration to be given to suspending charging for Sidford Car Park for the duration of the sewage works and this was carried out. The other suggestions put forward by the Committee included the possible introduction of more permits and thirty minutes free parking being evaluated in conjunction with the Sidford Traders Association. The Committee's recommendation was agreed by the Executive Board.
	30 March 2005	The Committee debated appropriate charges for the car park recommending an all day charge of 25p per hour or 15p for half an hour to cover the costs of running the car park. The recommended charges and the proposed 12 month review was supported by the Executive Board .
Leisure Trust	3 November 2005	The Committee gave detailed consideration to the Council's expectations from the Leisure Trust in return for continued Council funding. The Executive Board took the Committee's recommendations into account during its consideration of the matter.
World Heritage Coast – Gateway Visitor Centres	3 November 2005	The Committee gave detailed consideration to the proposed World Visitor Centres' feasibility studies. The World Heritage Coast Projects Co-ordinator, the Clerks of Exmouth and Seaton Town Councils and representatives from Seaton and Exmouth had been invited to the meeting to put forward their views and to answer questions.

**Corporate Overview Committee – annual report – key areas (cont)..**

World Heritage Coast – Gateway Visitor Centres (cont).		The Executive Board took the Committee's recommendations into account during its consideration of the matter.
Draft Revenue and Capital Estimates  (considered at the same time as draft Housing Revenue Account Estimates and Service Plans)	2 Feb 2006	Detailed consideration of the 2006/07 estimates with recommendations being fed back to the Executive Board and taken into account during the budget process. The Committee analysed enhancements to services requested and whether these should be recommended for inclusion and their justification or otherwise. The Committee's suggestion that the analysis of budgets and service plans be brought forward in the financial year has been accepted and fed into the timetable.
East Devon Local Development Framework	2 March 2006	The Committee recommended that the draft work programme for the Planning and Countryside Service be endorsed and that an independent review of employment land be commissioned. This recommendation was considered and approved by the Executive Board at its meeting on 15 March 2006.
District Transport Strategy	30 March 2006	After detailed analysis, the Committee recommended the Strategy be adopted with suggested amendments which were agreed by the Executive Board at its meeting on 12 April 2006.
Thelma Hulbert Gallery Business Plan	30 March 2006	The Committee considered and supported the plan and the proposed review in 3 years time. This was agreed by the Executive Board at its meeting on 12 April 2006.
Think tanks	30 March	Members wanted the conclusions of think tanks referred to the Committee in the first instance before being referred to the Executive Board.

**Corporate Overview Committee – topics for discussion at future meetings:**

- ❑ current allocation of cemetery grants across East Devon and recommend a fair and equitable formula for future allocation
- ❑ Budget review 2006/08
- ❑ Proposed Dowell Street Community Centre, Honiton
- ❑ The Exmouth and Seaton Gateway Visitor Centres
- ❑ Affordable Housing and exception sites
- ❑ Review of policy on the interment of ashes at EDDC cemeteries
- ❑ Issues referred to it by Executive Board

**Scrutiny Committee – annual report**

**Key areas** of consideration by the Committee since June 2005:

Understanding the Budget	27 July 2005	<p>Informative presentation by the Corporate Director – Economy on how the Committee could influence the budget.</p> <p>Julia Wright, independent consult, was present at the meeting to facilitate discussion on the budget and offer advice on how the Committee could scrutinise topics in future.</p>
Communications Review	21 Sept 2005	<p>Internal and external communication issues.</p> <p>The Communications Task and Finish Forum met 7 times and discussed a range of communication issues. Officers and invited guests were invited to attend meetings of the Taff as appropriate.</p>
	18 April 2006	<p>The recommendations of this Taff were discussed and supported subject to minor amendments.</p>
Car Park Charges	26 Oct 2005	<p>The recommendations of the Fees and Charges Taff were considered by the Committee.</p>
Review of Council's activities on anti-social behaviour	26 Oct 2005	<p>Detailed discussion resulting in asking Town Councils to advise the six main anti-social behaviour issues prevalent in their area.</p>
	21 February 2006	<p>Task and Finish Forum set up to make recommendations on an effective integrated approach to using the new powers in the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act and existing anti-social behaviour powers in the light of responses received from Town and Parish Councils on community priorities.</p>
Affordable Housing	23 Nov 2005	<p>Members discussed how this was provided, house prices, housing needs survey and potential for partnership working. The Committee made recommendations to the Executive Board which were noted, amended and would be subject to a full report for future consideration.</p>
Draft Revenue and Capital Estimates	2 Feb 2006	<p>Detailed consideration of the 2006/07 estimates with recommendations being fed back to the Executive Board and taken into account during the budget process. The Committee analysed enhancements to services requested and whether these should be recommended for inclusion and their justification or otherwise.</p>
(considered at the same time as draft Housing Revenue Account Estimates and Service Plans)		<p>A joint Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be held in September 2006 to give early consideration to future budget and service plans – as suggested by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in January 2006.</p>

**Scrutiny Committee – annual report – key issues (cont)..**

Scrutinising decisions of Executive	21 Feb 2006	Free Concessionary Fares Scheme and Computers for Towns and Parish Councils
Performance Management	4 April 2006	The Committee agreed the principle that quarterly service plan monitoring reports will be considered by the Scrutiny Committee.
Traveller Sites policy	18 April 2006	Up-date provided by the Head of Planning and Countryside Services and the Head of Environmental Health and Health Equalities.

**Task and Finish Forum set up by Scrutiny Committee**

<b>Task and Finish Forum</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Remit</b>
Council's Fees and Charges	27 July 2005 – May 2006	To look at the Council's fees and charges with the remit of making specific recommendations for change.
Communications	21 Sept 2005 – April 2006	To review all Council communications.
Anti-social behaviour	To be arranged	To consider how to address issues relating to anti-social behaviour using information from town councils to Identify areas of most concern locally.  Also to discuss the Implementation of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 and how the Council could work in partnership with town and parish councils, the Crime and Disorder Partnership and the Police to adopt an effective integrated approach.
Service Plan Template	To be arranged	Review of template.

**Scrutiny Committee work plan – suggested topics for discussion at future meetings:**

- ❑ How the Quality Parish schemes are progressing – including the benefits to Parish Councils.
- ❑ Public toilets – alternative approaches such as charging for use.
- ❑ Rural deprivation, including rural transport, and the difference between how we treat towns and rural areas
- ❑ The work of the Community Safety Officer and antisocial behaviour issues. (This will be incorporated in the antisocial behaviour Taff.)
- ❑ Concessionary fares scheme.
- ❑ To discuss our elderly population's access to services.

The 'items for discussion at the next meeting' to be standard on future agendas.