

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Draft Corporate Strategy for 2010/11

The Council's Corporate Strategy establishes our vision, our priorities and our values and drives the delivery of our services to customers.

Our Vision: 'Outstanding and sustainable quality of life for everyone in East Devon'

Our Values:

Courage : to lead
Wisdom : to listen
Passion : for people, places and performance
Champions : of improvement and challenge

To achieve our vision, we'll work towards **three priorities:**

- Thriving communities
- An outstanding environment
- Excellent services for our customers

East Devon - a beautiful and rural District

We live in a rural environment in a beautiful part of the world. Most of our residents are very happy with their quality of life but there are things we need to tackle that would benefit the District, and they are included in the priorities of our Corporate Strategy.

How did we develop our Corporate Strategy?

The process of agreeing our Corporate Strategy each year has evolved during this decade and has involved consultation with local people, Parish and Town Councils, our partners, councillors and staff and reference to national and regional priorities, the East Devon Sustainable Community Plan and inspection reports. During 2007 the process of developing our priorities and how we would achieve our aspirations revolved around an exercise to develop a vision for the new Council that was elected in May 2007 for the next 4 years, known as Vision 2011.

Our increasingly difficult financial predicament means that carefully reviewing our finances and structure and exploring the shared delivery of services with South Somerset District Council gives us the best chance of not having to cut public services in 2011/12 and beyond. In light of these looming challenges, we reviewed and refreshed the Corporate Strategy during early 2010. In particular, we took account of the opinions of residents as expressed in recent engagement exercises, notably the results of the Place Survey of 2008, work associated with the Sustainable Communities Act in summer 2009 and consultation undertaken with a variety of people for the Leader's Service Transformation Group in autumn 2009, as well as the Audit Commission's comments in our CAA Organisational Assessment published in December 2009.

Clearly, some of the work planned in this strategy is subject to the new Coalition Government's spending plans, in particular the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review which is expected to be announced in the autumn. However, the strategy is due to be fundamentally reviewed for 2011/12 following the local elections in May 2011.

Format of our Corporate Strategy

For each of our **three priorities** on the pages which follow, we have set out:

- **our vision**
- **the current position and the key challenges we face**
- **the outcomes we want to achieve**
- **examples of the key strategic objectives to achieve the priority and outcomes.**

We have also produced separate **Corporate Priority Delivery Plans** that will be monitored by councillors every quarter and which provide more details on the key strategic objectives and selected service projects which will also contribute to the achievement of each priority and its intended outcomes and the resources allocated to the key strategic objectives and selected service projects.

Priority one: THRIVING COMMUNITIES**Long term vision:**

A Viable or Sustainable Community depends on the provision of homes, jobs, economic growth and revitalising communities to improve their local facilities and services for our residents now as well as for future generations. Our services are working together and with our partners to improve both the physical infrastructure and the issues that encourage better social cohesion across the District.

Recent feedback from residents confirmed Affordable Decent Housing as a top local priority and we want to provide, with the help of partners, more affordable homes. This includes:

- delivering the new community at Cranbrook
- increasing the amount of land available for private new build and also new council houses
- returning empty properties back to use
- continuing with our dramatic reductions on the numbers of homeless people through early help and intervention
- delivering, with our partners, economic growth throughout the District, particularly in the West End, and the regeneration of Seaton and Exmouth.

The position now and key challenges we face:

Housing completions across the District are less than a half of what they have traditionally been. The economic down turn and the challenge of funding the strategic infrastructure to enable housing to start has been a considerable barrier to delivering housing at Cranbrook. This and the second strategic housing site remaining in the District, the Seaton regeneration area, look as if they will finally resolve pre-development issues to enable development to commence in 2010, with housing coming forward in 2011 although significant numbers of units will not be delivered until 2012.

We have spent a number of years negotiating with regional and local agencies to bring about successful large scale developments in the West of the District: a new Science Park, 'Skypark' Business Park, the intermodal-rail freight facility and distribution centre, the expansion of Exeter Airport and transport infrastructure. A Steering Board and a New Growth Point Team are in place and £7.1m of funding has been secured from Government.

The outcomes we want to achieve:

- a. Make more affordable homes available for our residents.
- b. Maintain residents' high satisfaction with their area and home as places to live.
- c. Delivery of strategic employment sites in the West of the District.
- d. Regeneration of Exmouth and Seaton.
- e. Delivery of economic growth throughout the District.

Examples of the key strategic objectives to achieve the priority and outcomes:

1. Complete at least 100 new affordable homes including at least three rural based housing schemes.

2. Conclude land deal with Tesco Stores Limited at Seaton to ensure the wider regeneration site is raised to a level ready for new development to commence in 2011.
3. Commence site infrastructure on first phase of Science Park in 2010 and begin construction on first building in 2011.
4. Skypark to have progressed to building works on site by 2011.
5. Flybe Academy to open before the end of 2010 with the creation of 15 new jobs in Phase 1 and 45 new jobs in Phase 2.
6. Provide a new railway station with double track at Cranbrook in 2011 with public transport provision to all major West End sites.
7. Provide £80,000 towards improving youth facilities in Seaton and match funding of £45,000 to fund town manager post for 3 years.
8. In Exmouth produce in 2010 a master plan for the town centre and development briefs for the strategic town centre sites, including the identification of a solution to the car parking shortfall in the town centre.
9. Work with land owners and developers in 2010 to bring forward in a timely manner the appropriate expansion of existing employment sites to address the short term difficulties caused by the recession.

Priority two: AN OUTSTANDING ENVIRONMENT
Long term vision:
We must balance the need to improve opportunities for jobs and homes with the need to promote and protect our outstanding environment. We have high satisfaction levels with the quality of life in our District and we attract many visitors to our shores and beautiful countryside. Our aim is to continue to achieve this balance but also to increase the biodiversity of our landscapes as well as reduce the amount of landfill and increase recycling/composting. Helping international efforts to reduce the impact of human behaviour on the world's climate and achieve a reduction in the Council's carbon footprint are also important aspects of our work.
The position now and key challenges we face:
<p>We are fortunate to live in an area of the world designated, for the most part, as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This priority is about how we protect and enhance our beautiful District's world class natural environment, in particular how we make sure it is a clean and green part of the world to live in and visit.</p> <p>Our communities each have a special character and culture which we must not lose whilst making them sustainable for the future. We need to make sure that community facilities, especially village halls, remain viable. Our residents and our tenants must be involved in the way their homes and neighbourhoods are maintained or developed; we need to reduce the number of people who feel marginalised by their own communities.</p> <p>New recycling and refuse collection arrangements have been rolled out to three fifths of households and the rest of the District will be covered by the end of 2010. As a result, we are moving from the lowest rate of recycling and composting within Devon to the top 10% nationally by 2013.</p> <p>Actions aimed at reducing our use of natural resources to combat climate change are set out in the Climate Change Strategy that was</p>

approved in March 2008 and the production of the Carbon Management Plan in 2009 was an important step in putting sustainability at the heart of the Council's activities and service delivery.

The outcomes we want to achieve:

- a. An outstanding environment.
- b. A rise in recycling and composting and a fall in the disposal of other waste.

Examples of the key strategic objectives to achieve the priority and outcomes:

1. In partnership with Devon County Council, deliver the Ottery St Mary footbridge and cycleway.
2. Progression of the Axe Wetlands Project to deliver a regional scale nature reserve.
3. Meet criteria for achieving Level 2 under NI 188 (adaptation to climate change) by undertaking a comprehensive risk based assessment of vulnerabilities to weather and climate.
4. The provision of the Country's first volume housing zero carbon housing development at Cranbrook as a demonstration of Cranbrook's status as a Prototype Eco-Town.
5. Successfully complete the roll out of the last two phases of new recycling and refuse collection arrangements during 2010/11.
6. Reduce the low amount of waste sent to landfill in the District so that we are amongst the 10 best performing councils in England.

Priority three: EXCELLENT SERVICES FOR OUR CUSTOMERS

Long term vision:

We want our services to be designed in a way that delivers what matters to our customers. Our research tells us that in most cases, this means that we need to make decisions about our customers' applications and queries at the earliest possible point and that we have the right skills in the right place to do this. We are steadily working through all our services to make sure that this is exactly what we do. In most areas so far, this has led to a radical rethink about how to organise and run our services.

We want to see through planned improvements on equality and procurement which truly took off when dedicated officers for both areas took up post during 2009/10.

Budget constraints mean that partnership working has become even more critical to our success. Our landmark agreement in February 2010 to share a Chief Executive with South Somerset District Council may also lead to an extended partnering arrangement across many of our services in the years to come. The link up with South Somerset and members' review of our finances and structure will offer opportunities to rationalise service delivery and deal with the worsening financial pressures forecast for 2011/12 and beyond.

The position now and key challenges we face:

Thanks to our redesign of services to deliver what matters to customers, our customer service centre handles the vast majority of its calls one stop (which means we don't have to pass our customers on). Our latest research tells us that our customers contacting us face to face or on the phone are very happy but customers who use our website to access services tell us that this is not so effective so we will be redesigning the website, marketing it and updating it more regularly and, if possible, making it fully transactional.

We have national awards recognition in customer service excellence for four of our teams and our Licensing Team became the first one in England to achieve this award. We would like to add another award this year in our Revenues and Benefits Service. Councillors' training has been recognised by the achievement of the South West Member Development Charter. We have also achieved the Investor in People award for the second time which recognises our excellent customer service training, wide range of employee engagement activities and high levels of staff morale and motivation.

The outcomes we want to achieve:

- a. Efficiencies; financial and time-saving.
- b. Improved services through understanding our customers.
- c. Consistently satisfied customers.

Examples of the key strategic objectives to achieve the priority and outcomes:

1. Develop a council-wide mobile working IT framework involving investment in mobile working, the development of project plan, implementation of a pilot and roll out of solutions for each service.
2. Achieve a £75,000 cash saving target for 2010/11 through sensible procurement.
3. Engage meaningfully with children and young people through initiatives such as Scene and Heard, Social Zest, Youth Press Officers, Junior Rangers, Masterpieces, play consultations, 11 million Takeover Day, political speed dating, and Switch (youth initiative in Housing).
4. Successfully implement phase 4 of the Neighbourhood Assessments in six villages in partnership with the Red Cross and the Police which will also promote the identification of fuel poverty and the need for additional energy efficiency measures.
5. Use Systems Thinking, Customer Insight and Customer Service Excellence to improve customer service throughout the Council.
6. Embed improvements in equality and diversity to reach the 'Achieving' level of the Equalities Framework.
7. Undertake a successful round of 8 Participatory Budgeting engagement projects to design play and recreation facilities using Section 106 funds.
8. Complete redevelopment of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery.