

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held at Knowle, Sidmouth, on Wednesday, 12 December 2007

Present:

Councillors:

P A Diviani (Chairman)
Mrs P A Stott (Vice Chairman)

Miss V Ash	D R H Hull
D G Atkins	J Humphreys
R Bloxham	B O Ingham
R W Boote	H J Jeffery
P Bowden	Mrs S Jones
D G Button	D R A Key
G P Chamberlain	J A Knight
D B Chapman	Mrs A E Liverton
I R Chubb	G K Liverton
T A Cope	A T Moulding
A E J Dinnis	Mrs F I Newth
Mrs C E Drew	Mrs H E Parr
Ms V Duval-Steer	R C Peachey
Miss J M Elson	Miss S M Randall Johnson
R G Franklin	A W J Reed
K W George	Mrs M A Rogers
C F A Gibbings	P J Skinner
A R Giles	Mrs B O Taylor
G Godbeer	C T Tratt
Mrs P A Graham	G M Troman
M J L Green	J M Williamson
S Hall	TJ R Wood
J P Halse	Mrs E E Wragg
Mrs M L Hardy	S C Wragg
S Hughes	

Apologies

Councillors:

Mrs M J Boote	S C Luxton
G P Brown	K D Nicholas
D J Cox	J B Nicholson
M Florey	K C Potter

The meeting started at 6.30 pm and finished at 7.45 pm.

*40

Jack Sadler

The Chairman asked the Council to remain standing in memory of Jack Sadler, a volunteer, who had died in action in Afghanistan last week. Jack was a local boy, studying at London University. His dream was to have a career in the British Army. The Chairman spoke of Jack's family and the time of sorrow. The Council stood in silence in respect of the sadness and loss.

RESOLVED

that a letter of condolence be sent to Jack's parents on behalf of all Members of the Council.

*41

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Council, held on 17 October 2007, were confirmed and signed as a true record.

*42 **Obituary – former Councillor Percy John Spencer**

The Chairman advised that he had been made aware of the recent death of former Councillor Percy John Spencer who had represented Sidmouth Rural Ward on this Council between 1973 and 1984. He had been the first Chairman of the Finance Sub Committee and was also Chairman of Housing between 1982 and 1984. He had served on a number of Committees including Policy and Resources, and Environment.

Members stood in silence as a mark of respect.

*43 **Parish and Town Councils' meeting – 23 January 2008**

The Chairman advised that letters had gone out to all Parish and Town Councils inviting them to apply for 2 new awards which would be presented at a special evening event here at Knowle on 23 January 2008. It would recognise the exceptional work being carried out by the local councils in East Devon with the intention of celebrating the achievements and giving the councils opportunities to learn from each other.

There were two categories of award, namely:

- Best achievement of a council in the last 5 years which had directly benefited the local area,
- The most exciting plan(s) in the pipeline.

Awards would be given to a parish council and town council in each of the two categories. An independent panel of judges would judge the submissions. The panel would look for ideas which were innovative, achieve value for money, show good partnership working and were of the greatest benefit to the local community.

Members were reminded that the submissions were due in on 21 December and Members were asked to encourage the local councils within their ward to submit details of their achievements so that the event would be a worthy celebration and an opportunity for shared learning.

*44 **Britain in Bloom Silver Salver**

The Chairman advised that arrangements were being made for the Britain in Bloom Silver Salver to be presented to Council Gardeners (Streetscene) in the near future. The Salver had been won for the Three Corner Plot 'Marine Life' planted display.

*45 **Sustrans success**

The Leader of the Council reported that Sustrans Connect2 had won The People's £50 Million National Lottery Giveaway. Sustrans Connect2 was in the final 4 projects bidding for the £50m for new footpaths, cycleways, bridges and tunnels across the country. The other short-listed contenders were the Eden Project, Sherwood Forest and Black Country Park. The Sustrans' initiative would benefit the whole country and would help encourage people to walk and cycle in safety.

The Council would match fund money earmarked within the district. This would help build a new footpath and cycle line from Ottery Town Centre across the River Otter to the King's School, hospital, leisure centre and new housing estate. Officers, Steven Power, Urban Designer and Nick Stephen, Communications Officer, were thanked for raising awareness for the project and encouraging people to vote. Thanks were also extended to the local Councillors, the Environment Agency, Devon County Council, Ottery St Mary Town Council, the King's School and to everyone who had voted for the project. The success was seen as a very positive community effort.

***46 Questions**

In pursuant to Procedure Rule No 8.2 the Portfolio Holder – Communities set out in how this Council's tenants would be informed of the arrangements for Digital TV switchover. She confirmed that all tenants had been sent details of the switchover in the Partnership News publication.

***47 Minutes of Executive Board and Committees**

RESOLVED (1) that the under-mentioned minutes be received and the recommendations approved

Executive Board	Minutes	77-121
Development Control	Minutes	28-41
Planning Inspections	Minutes	12-19
Licensing & Enforcement	Minutes	9-13
Licensing and Enforcement Sub A & B	Minutes	8-14(B)
Standards	Minutes	1-8

(2) that the under-mentioned minutes be received.

The Executive Board (minutes 82 and 101) had noted or accepted the Scrutiny and Corporate Overview Committees' recommendations with or without amendment.

Scrutiny	Minutes	28-41
Corporate Overview	Minutes	15-23

Arising from consideration of the above minutes:-a) Housing in East Devon for 2006 to 2026 period (Corporate Overview Minute 17)

The Chairman of the Corporate Overview Committee asked for a correction to be made to bullet point 3 so that it now read 'The importance of removing the development lines around communities' which he said was a true reflection of the point raised during the debate.

b) Delegation of Powers to Quality Parish Councils (Development Control Minute 37)

The Chairman of Development Control drew Members' attention to the decision for powers to determine Tree and Advert applications within the individual areas of Quality Parishes be delegated to those Councils for a trial period of 12 months commencing 13 December. This arrangement would not remove existing delegation arrangements should these need to be exercised at any time. The Chairman was encouraged by the initiative and asked Councillors to support its trial implementation.

c) Planning Inspections Committee – 30 November 2007-12-13

It was confirmed that Councillor S Hall had attended the meeting as a substitute for Councillor R Franklin. The correction would be made to the minutes before they were signed by the Chairman at the next meeting of the Committee.

*48 **Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 – statutory changes to executive decision-making and delegation arrangements**

Members noted the report of the Head of Legal, Licensing and Democratic Services which had been circulated prior to the meeting. Part 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 would come into force on 30 December 2007. In practice this meant that the Leader would be responsible for deciding the scheme for discharge of those functions which were the responsibility of the Executive Board. The Constitution would need to be amended to reflect any changes to the scheme of delegations. In practice, the Leader advised that this was a bureaucratic requirement and that she did not plan to make changes to the existing scheme of delegations.

- RESOLVED**
- (1) that it be noted that as from 30 December 2007, following changes to executive arrangements under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the Leader will have the responsibility to make arrangements for the discharge of Executive functions, as between herself, the Executive Board, members of the executive, and officers.
 - (2) that it be noted that pending a review of the Constitution and current scheme of delegations, and confirmation from the Government that this change is intentional and not likely to be reversed by Order, the Leader intends to confirm the current executive arrangements in the Constitution.

*49 **Membership on Outside Bodies – East Devon Citizens' Advice Bureau**

- RESOLVED** that the number of East Devon District Council nominated representatives on the East Devon Citizens' Advice Bureau be reduced from three to two, namely Councillors C Gibbings and J Humphreys.

*50 **Presentation by the Deputy Chief Executive: 'Permission to wow – managing the challenge of happy customers'**

Denise Lyon gave the presentation to inform Councillors of the new approach to service delivery and how Councillors could actively support the process. She advised that there was a direct link between performance management and customer satisfaction. Her aim was to achieve happy customers and for this Council's performance to compare favourably with the best performing Councils in the country.

She advised that the Council needed to design services around the differing needs of its customers, getting it right first time within acceptable turnaround times.

The values within the newly approved Corporate Strategy would help the Council to achieve this ambition. The Strategy set out the Council's key values as:

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

It would be a customer driven process to bring about a 'customer service revolution'.

The Council's 7 priorities within the Corporate Strategy, namely: affordable housing, thriving economy, safe, clean and green environment, recycling, children and young people, excellent service for our customers and an inspirational Council, reflected the feedback from the General Survey. The Survey also highlighted the need for improved communication and information sharing.

*50 **Presentation by the Deputy Chief Executive: ‘Permission to wow – managing the challenge of happy customers’ (cont)..**

The importance of clear simple messages such as ‘we asked ... you said ... we did’ would help improve the public’s perception of the Council and what it was trying to achieve. The Council needed to increase public engagement and participation and let people know how they could influence decision making and service delivery.

Service performance was an on going process that needed to be monitored so that customers’ needs were kept at the heart of the Council’s business.

Systems thinking was a different way of working. The method was to identify ways of doing things better, totally from the customer’s point of view. A better service would result in happier customers which in turn would help motivate staff.

Councillors were asked to help support the services through the inevitable time of turmoil when changes were being progressed. They were also asked to be aware of best performing Councils so that they could effectively and constructively challenge this Council’s performance.

Alex Chapman, Govmetric, had been commissioned by the Council to help progress the ‘customer revolution’. He outlined the ways in which customer satisfaction would be measured so that customer needs could be identified and met. Bench-marking over time would provide the data for performance improvement. Good communications were vital for this process so that customers would be aware that the Council had listened and responded to their needs. Services, including planning and benefits had been identified as areas needing immediate attention. Customer profiling would also help the Council to target its resources in an effective way. He confirmed that improved customer satisfaction would benefit the Council and its staff.

The Chairman of the Council thanked Denise Lyon and Alex Chapman for their helpful presentation. He extended best wishes to Members for a happy Christmas and invited them to join him for refreshments in the Members’ Area.

Chairman

Date