

**EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held at**  
**Knowle, Sidmouth, on Wednesday, 9 December 2009**

**Present:**

**Councillors:**

Graham Liverton (Chairman)  
Tony Reed (Vice Chairman)

|                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Vivienne Ash       | Stuart Hughes        |
| David Atkins       | Douglas Hull         |
| Ray Bloxham        | John Humphreys       |
| Roger Boote        | John Jeffery         |
| Peter Bowden       | Stephanie Jones      |
| Graham Brown       | David Key            |
| Derek Button       | Jim Knight           |
| Bob Buxton         | Ann Liverton         |
| Geoff Chamberlain  | Stuart Luxton        |
| David Chapman      | Andrew Moulding      |
| Iain Chubb         | Frances Newth        |
| Trevor Cope        | Darryl Nicholas      |
| David Cox          | Marion Olive         |
| Andrew Dinnis      | Helen Parr           |
| Paul Diviani       | Bob Peachey          |
| Christine Drew     | Ken Potter           |
| Vivien Duval-Steer | Sara Randall Johnson |
| Jill Elson         | Margaret Rogers      |
| Malcolm Florey     | Philip Skinner       |
| Ray Franklin       | Pauline Stott        |
| Chris Gibbings     | Brenda Taylor        |
| Roger Giles        | Ian Thomas           |
| Graham Godbeer     | Graham Troman        |
| Pat Graham         | Mark Williamson      |
| Mike Green         | Tim Wood             |
| Steve Hall         | Eileen Wragg         |
| Peter Halse        | Steve Wragg          |
| May Hardy          |                      |

**Also Present**

**Honorary Aldermen**

Lt Col A J M Drake  
B C J Hughes  
D Scott  
A J Wilkinson

**Officers:**

Mark Williams, Chief Executive  
Peter Jeffs, Corporate Director  
Karime Hassan, Corporate Director  
Diccon Pearse, Corporate Director  
Rachel Pocock, Head of Legal, Licensing and Democratic Services  
Diana Vernon, Democratic Services Manager

**Apologies**

**Councillors:**

Ben Ingham  
May Hardy  
Barry Nicholson

**Honorary Aldermen**

Dr H W Waterworth

The meeting started at 6.30 pm and finished at 8.20 pm.

\*40 **Public question time**

The Chairman welcomed members of the public, visitors and Honorary Aldermen.

Honorary Alderman Lt Col Drake referred to the recently announced recommendations of the Boundary Committee and asked the Leader to do everything in her power to persuade Devon County Council to change its stance in respect a unitary Devon authority.

\*41 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 14 October 2009 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

\*42 **Trinity Ward Member**

The Council formally received the report of the Returning Officer on the election of Councillor Ian Thomas for the Trinity Ward of the District.

\*43 **Local Government Review**

The Leader referred to the Boundary Committee's recommendations which if implemented would create a huge authority of three quarters of a million people. She implored all Members to fight the recommendation for the benefit of the local community. The report of the Boundary Committee was being examined in detail and the resultant options would be reported to the Executive Board for consideration.

\*44 **Work of Standards Committee**

The Independent Chairman of the Standards Committee, Ted Butt, outlined the work of the Committee undertaken during the last year. He reminded Members that local Standards Committees now had responsibility for assessing complaints made against parish, town and district councillors. Of the 15 complaints considered, only three had resulted in further investigation. He emphasised the importance of transparency in decision making and of Councillors understanding the implications of the Code of Conduct and being familiar with the rules and guidance on declarations of interest. He referred to the Probity in Planning guidance which would help to ensure that decision making about planning matters was ethical and transparent and would help the public to have more confidence in the decision making process. He referred to complaints made against Councillor behaviour at meetings and asked Councillors to consider the impact of their behaviour, however harmlessly meant.

He advised that the Standards Committee was working proactively with Councillor Ann Liverton, Member Champion for Member Development to help progress Councillors' understanding of the Code of Conduct and help avoid complaints being made against them.

The Committee would publish quarterly up-dates in the Council's newsletter, the Knowledge, to detail the work that the Committee was undertaking and any new guidance available. A separate page would be included on the Council's website to provide further information and to promote the work of the Committee. Mr Butt advised that the Committee was setting up a working group to develop good practice and raise standards in East Devon. Members were asked for their suggestions on how the Committee could further support the ethical agenda. Transparent and effective government at local level would improve public confidence in the way in which the authority functioned.

He thanked the Council for their time and attention.

**\*45 Long Service Awards**

The Chairman awarded Long Service Awards to the following East Devon District Council staff. He spoke of their individual careers and their valued contribution to the Council.

|                     | Length of service | Section                    |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Anne Elliott</b> | 20 years          | Housing Business Unit      |
| <b>Paul Scanlon</b> | 40 years          | Revenues Officer           |
| <b>Andy Grigg</b>   | 40 years          | Housing Services (Manager) |

**\*45 Best Kept Village Competition - results**

The Chairman presented the awards for the Best Kept Village Competition 2009:

- (a) Baker Cup – Whimple as the village in East Devon which scored the highest number of points in East Devon in the Large Village category (after East Budleigh with Bicton which won the Past Winners Section and Talaton which won the New Entry Section both of these Devon-wide winners received separate awards from the competition organisers – the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England) ;
- (b) EDDC Certificate to Colyton as runner up within East Devon in the Large Village category;
- (c) Glanvill Cup – awarded to Dalwood as the village scoring the highest number of points in East Devon in the Small Village category ;
- (d) EDDC Certificate to Hawkchurch as runner up within East Devon in the Small Village category ;
- (e) EDDC Certificate to East Budleigh with Bicton which won the Devon-wide Past Winners Section;
- (f) EDDC Certificate to Talaton which won the New Entry Section.

**\*46 Licensing Chartermark award for Licensing**

The Chairman congratulated the Council's Licensing Team which had been awarded the Chartermark for Customer Service. This award was sponsored by the Cabinet Office. East Devon District Council's licensing service was the first in England to achieve this accolade.

The team dealt with the licensing of taxis and premises for entertainment, drink and gambling. The Chairman advised that, in his report, the independent assessor had said that he found East Devon's Licensing team to have a deep understanding of, and a commitment to, customer service. The assessment included a review of the team's documentation on-site with interviews of the team and a cross-section of 10 of the service's customers.

The Team had been given a Compliance Plus assessment which reflected the fact that the team's behaviours/practices exceed the standard requirements and were viewed as exceptional or an exemplar to others.

The Licensing Manager, John Tippin received the Chartermark certificate on behalf of his team.

Both the Chairman of Licensing and Enforcement and Member Champion – Customer Services congratulated the team on this achievement and spoke of the ways in which the service had been improved to be more customer focussed.

**\*47 Deep Thought – Countryside initiative**

The Chairman advised that the Council's Countryside team has produced a further resource for schools' national geography curriculum – Key Stage 3 – 'bringing the ocean into the classroom'. The film involved East Devon businesses and local children and dealt with the principles of sustainability in a practical and engaging way. The Chairman congratulated the team for this innovative and professional initiative which he said reflected well on the Council.

Charlie Plowden (Countryside Manager) outlined the environmental educational work carried out by the Countryside Team and the collaboration with Devon County's Educational Team which had ensured that the initiative complied with the national curriculum and would help to deliver the environmental message to a wider audience. James Chubb (Education Ranger) introduced and showed the film which he confirmed had been distributed to all schools in the South West.

**\*48 Questions**

In response to supplementary questions in respect of the importance of tourism and Chambers of Commerce to the economy of the area, the Leader advised that the tourism industry needed to look for alternative sources of support including the Regional Development Agency which had a good reputation for training provision. She added that representatives from local Chambers of Commerce attended meetings of the East Devon Business Forum and were therefore well informed and had the opportunity to contribute to the dialogue.

**\*49 Minutes of Executive Board and Committees****RESOLVED**

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

|                               |         |        |
|-------------------------------|---------|--------|
| Executive Board               | Minutes | 82-124 |
| Development Management        | Minutes | 37-52  |
| Planning Inspections          | Minutes | 7-8    |
| Licensing and Enforcement     | Minutes | 6-16   |
| Licensing and Enforcement Sub | Minutes | 11-14  |

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

The Executive Board (minutes 87 and 103) had noted or accepted the Overview/Scrutiny Committees' recommendations with or without amendment.

|                                      |         |       |
|--------------------------------------|---------|-------|
| O/S Co-ordinating Committee          | Minutes | 18-28 |
| O/S Economy Committee                | Minutes | 9-13  |
| O/S Service Delivery/<br>Performance | Minutes | 18-25 |
| O/S Communities                      | Minutes | 15-20 |

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Board held on 2 December 2009 had been circulated to Members electronically prior to the meeting and had been made available on the Council's web site. A paper copy of the minutes was also circulated at the meeting.

**Arising from consideration of the above minutes:-**

a) Financial Strategy (2010 onwards) (Executive Board Minute 89 refers)

The Leader of the Liberal Democrats Group said that his Group supported the recommendations of the Boundary Committee for a unitary Devon and would not support the Council in considering further litigation. He referred to the work of the Leader's Transformation Group, attempts by this Council to work with neighbouring authorities and the inevitable cuts to future service provision. He had not supported the Council's decision to freeze Council Tax last year. He recognised the importance of monitoring costs and balancing the budget and acknowledged the loss of income to the Council from investments and as a result of the national economic situation.

The Leader of the Independent Group said that the Council had taken steps to protect local democracy.

The Leader confirmed that the decision not to increase Council Tax last year had been made for the benefit of the local community. Money was being spent carefully and she emphasised that the Council had to achieve a balanced budget.

b) Overview and Scrutiny Minutes ( Executive Board Minute 103 refers)

- RESOLVED**
- (1) that Councillor John Humphreys be appointed Member Champion for Asset Management,
  - (2) that the Chairman of the Co-ordinating Committee together with Councillors Bob Peachey and Christine Drew sit on the East and Mid Devon Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee; with Councillor Steve Hall as EDDC substitute Member.

c) East Devon Local Development Framework (Executive Board Minute 106 refers)

The Leader of the Independent Group drew Members' attention to the Local Development Framework process which he said was being under-funded. He said that it was crucial to get this right as the Framework would have a significant impact on the future of the district. The Leader acknowledged the importance of the process and the need for this to be resourced. She added that all Members should be actively involved in the work of the Panel whatever the outcome of the Local Government Review.

d) World Heritage Site Management Plan (Executive Board Minute 112 refers)

- RESOLVED** that Councillor Mike Green serve on the World Heritage Site Management Plan Steering Group.

e) Local Democracy Work (Executive Board Minute 116 refers)

Councillor Roger Giles asked for the Council to ensure that local members, ideally who had been involved with Local Democracy Week this year, be invited to present the cheques to the participating schools

(As School Governors, Councillors Roger Giles and Jill Elson and as a Sidmouth College Teacher, Councillor Trevor Cope, declared personal interests in this item.)

**Arising from consideration of the above minutes cont/..**f) Working in Partnership with a Neighbouring District Council (Executive Board Minute 119 refers)

The Leader reminded Members of the long and useful debate at the last meeting of the Executive Board. In referring to the comment made by Honorary Alderman Drake at the start of the meeting, the Leader said that it was doubtful that she, as an individual, could change the current stance of the County Council in respect of its preference for a single unitary Devon.

She advised that working with South Somerset District Council would achieve savings. The Council had a number of significant similarities with South Somerset District Council – it was a rural authority which supported an urban centre; it understood the challenges and importance to local residents of delivering services well; it was politically stable and well run.

Members discussed the practicalities of the proposed partnership and emphasised the importance of keeping the whole Council informed of the negotiating process. The proposed partnership working was a way of achieving savings whilst retaining local service delivery and maintaining local priorities.

Councillor Paul Diviani, Chairman of the Blackdown Hills Joint Advisory Committee explained that the Blackdown Hills was already an effective partnership which involved cross-county boundary collaboration.

The Leader re-iterated the importance of retaining local democracy and the individual aspirations of the East Devon community. She confirmed that the Council would be kept up-to-date in respect of the negotiations with South Somerset District Council.

\*50 **Changes to Committee Membership  
(a) arising from the mid-term election**

- RESOLVED**
- (a) that Councillor Ken Potter replace Councillor David Atkins on the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee,
  - (b) that Councillor Christine Drew replace Councillor Ken Potter on the Service Delivery/Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee,
  - (c) that Vivien Duval-Steer replace Councillor Vivienne Ash on the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee,
  - (d) that Councillor David Atkins be appointed to the Development Management Committee,
  - (e) that Councillor Mike Green be appointed to the Planning Inspections Committee,
  - (f) that Councillor David Atkins be the Substitute Member for Councillor Mike Green on Planning Inspections Committee,
  - (g) that Councillor Ian Thomas represent Trinity Ward on the Seaton Regeneration Programme Board,

\*50 **Changes to Committee Membership cont/..**  
**(b) Other changes**

- RESOLVED**
- (a) that Councillor Margaret Rogers membership of the Seaton Regeneration Programme Board be clarified at its next meeting,
  - (b) that Councillor Mark Williamson be the Substitute Member for Councillors Andrew Dinnis, Helen Parr and Paul Diviani on the Planning Inspections Committee.

\*51 **Changes/additions of Councillor representation on Outside Bodies**

- RESOLVED**
- (a) that Councillor Ian Thomas replace Councillor Bob Buxton on the Devon Conservation Forum,
  - (b) that, further to feedback from Councillor Mike Green who represented EDDC on the South West Regional Standing Committee for the Safety of Small Craft, the Council cease membership of this Committee due to its diminished role,
  - (c) that Councillor Peter Halse replace Councillor Ray Bloxham on the Royal Devon and Exeter Health Care NHS Trust.

\*52 **EDDC representation on County Committees**

- RESOLVED**
- that Councillors Ray Bloxham and Iain Chubb represent the Council on County Committees, the County Council having advised that it was extending membership on its County Committees for a trial period of 12 months to help the District and City Councils to be better briefed in both local and strategic issues.

Chairman .....

Date .....