

# East Devon District Council Corporate Strategy

## A few facts about East Devon and its residents

### A beautiful and rural District

In East Devon we have a dispersed and mainly rural population. The rural nature of the District is emphasised by the low population density of 1.5 per hectare (the England and Wales average is 3.4). The District is fully parished with 68 Town and Parish Councils. A high proportion of the District is covered by Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the World Heritage Coast.

### Our main settlements

Our main settlements comprise the coastal resorts of Exmouth (Devon's largest town – population 34,000), Budleigh Salterton, Sidmouth and Seaton. In the mainly rural inland area the settlements comprise Honiton, Ottery St Mary, and Axminster. There are numerous villages and hamlets.

### Public satisfaction

A recent MORI survey revealed that the vast majority of residents are satisfied with Devon as a place to live. MORI state that the results are "some of the most positive MORI records anywhere in the UK". 91% of residents are satisfied with Devon as a place to live. Within Devon, the residents of East Devon are among the most satisfied at 94%.

### Our population

The District's population currently stands at 128,800: 60,853 males and 67,947 females, with a small black and ethnic minority population of 0.7% (just under 880 people described their ethnic group as non-white in the 2001 census, with Chinese being the single largest grouping at 169). The 2001 census also confirmed that Devon was the fastest growing county in England between 1991 and 2001, with the largest predicted growth over the next 15 years being in the 65-69 year old age band. Here in East Devon, we already have the third highest proportion of people of retirement age in the whole country (Office for National Statistics), which has an impact on health, mobility, household composition, and isolation and has implications for the way we need to plan for the future delivery of our services.

### Wages and work

Our average household earnings and income are low whereas house prices are high. We have an economy with a high degree of part-time and seasonal work. Thus the Joseph Rowntree Foundation identified East Devon as the eighth least affordable district to live in England. Council housing is still owned by the Council, and we are now trying to develop a new community, and regenerate others.

### In short

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

# East Devon District Council Corporate Strategy

## Information about our Corporate Strategy

### Why are we here?

The Council's purpose is to 'improve people's quality of life without spoiling the outstanding local environment for the generations to come'. To do this effectively, we must work together with other local and regional organisations such as Devon County Council, Government Office for the South West and East Devon's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The LSP is a partnership made up of public, private and voluntary organisations whose aim is to improve life for East Devon residents and visitors. One of its key documents is the Community Plan, and we have identified all the Plan's priorities we think this Council can help achieve, and included actions we will take in our Corporate Strategy.

### The future

What would we like to achieve for East Devon by the year 2010? We want:

- to make a success of building a new sustainable community at Cranbrook without imposing large increases in council tax
- the housing supply to be adequate and affordable for all needs
- a diverse economy, with jobs that suit all needs, and which improves overall wealth
- to retain and attract more young people (18-35) to balance out our ageing population
- to promote our world heritage coast and areas of outstanding natural beauty to encourage green tourism
- further progress in the 'can do' business culture of the Council to assume the role of community leader capable of dealing with the urban problems we are increasingly facing

### How do we decide what is important?

The process of agreeing the priorities evolves each year. To date we have:

- completed a public consultation exercise in 2002
- split the priorities into top and secondary priorities in 2003
- consulted specifically with the Parish and Town Councils in early 2004
- held budget prioritisation meetings, made up of councillors and members of the public, in summer 2004 and prioritised all Council services into five bandings
- held two away days (in 2003 and 2005) for the Executive Board and the Strategic Management Team to discuss the strategic focus of the Council
- held Staff Awareness Sessions each year to hear their feedback
- used inspection reports to inform our thinking about the Council's priorities
- reviewed national and regional priorities on an annual basis
- worked with the Local Strategic Partnership and reflected the priorities of its Community Plan in our Corporate Strategy

# East Devon District Council Corporate Strategy

## Information about our Corporate Strategy

### What are our priorities in this Strategy?

There are four overarching priorities:

- **Achieve thriving, balanced communities**
- **Take care of and improve our environment**
- **Encourage a flourishing local economy**
- **Provide community leadership and good value for money, customer focused services**

You will see that some of the work we do cuts across all the priorities, for example, our work on developing a new community at Cranbrook is of major importance to the Council and touches all four of the priorities. In fact, there are many links between the priorities: thriving communities depend on a flourishing economy and good public services, for example. We cannot be community leaders unless we can show that we are listening to the public and helping all sections of our community get access to homes and higher paid jobs – things people have told us are important. This co-dependence is reflected in the actions, in as much as each of our directors has responsibility in more than one priority.

### How will we make sure we tackle our priorities?

We have identified the main areas we need to focus on to achieve each priority. Also, for each priority we have set out actions we will take, with a lead director identified for each one. These actions will filter down into our service plans and strategies. This information will then form the basis for individual employee objectives as part of the annual staff appraisal programme.

Every year, we will review progress against our priorities, taking into account the views of all those who are important to us – our customers, our partners, our colleagues.

### What drives the Council's priorities?

At the heart of our priorities are our **core values**:

- Be open and honest
- Have courage and gusto
- Customer focused improvement

# East Devon District Council Corporate Strategy

## Priority 1:

## Achieve thriving, balanced communities

### Why is it a priority?

- This is a national, regional and local priority and, for us in East Devon, principally revolves around the need for affordable housing. The Government's Sustainable Communities Strategy points to the need for a well integrated mix of decent homes, of different types and tenure, to support a range of household sizes, ages and incomes. Affordable Housing was also the top priority of local residents in our survey in 2002, and we know that the Joseph Rowntree Foundation identified East Devon as the eighth least affordable district to live in England.
- According to the Office for National Statistics, East Devon has the third highest proportion of people of retirement age in the whole country. In addition, the 2001 census confirmed that Devon was the fastest growing county in England between 1991 and 2001 and the largest predicted growth over the next 15 years is in the 65-69 year old age band.
- These population facts have a direct impact on our ability to promote balanced communities and deliver services which cater for all our residents' needs. Our approach needs to recognise the particular health, and community support needs of the elderly. At the same time, however, we must directly respond to the challenge of retaining and attracting young people to live and work in our communities.
- For communities to thrive, people need to be free from fear, and although East Devon is a relatively safe place to live (in the top 10% of safest places in the country), we still need to deal with the tensions, not least those between an ageing population and young people's desire to socialise.

# East Devon District Council Corporate Strategy

**Priority 1:**

**Achieve thriving, balanced communities**

**Outcome 1: Maintain the % of people satisfied with East Devon as a place to live and increase the % of people satisfied with services provided by the Council**

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Lead and timescale</b>
1. Meet the phasing targets for the development of community infrastructure at Cranbrook, in particular a community hall to be built by the time of the occupation of the 150 <sup>th</sup> house.	KH 2008
2. More than 60% of general survey respondents are fairly/very satisfied with sports and leisure facilities.	PJ Dec 2006
3. Work with the Community Safety Partnership to deal with people's perceptions of crime, which are not related to the reality. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase by 10% (56% to 66%) the number of people who believe the crime rate has remained the same.</li> <li>• Increase by 10% the number of people, particularly young people, who feel safe when out on their own after dark.</li> </ul>	PJ March 2007
4. Collate base data at the parish level to enable us to plot on GIS the range of facilities in our settlements to help assess the sustainability of our parishes and plan future interventions. Facilities to plot include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School</li> <li>• Public transport</li> <li>• Place of worship</li> <li>• Shop</li> <li>• Post office</li> <li>• Pub</li> <li>• Village halls that are Disability Discrimination Act compliant</li> <li>• Doctor's and dentist's surgery.</li> </ul> In 2007, measure the % of communities within two miles of community facilities and set targets to increase where necessary.	PJ March 2006
5. The number of council tenants who are fairly/very satisfied with the overall landlord service remains in the top 25% of all councils.	PJ Dec 2006

## East Devon District Council Corporate Strategy

### Priority 1:

### Achieve thriving, balanced communities

#### Outcome 2: An increasing number and range of appropriate and affordable homes

Measures	Lead and timescale
1. Work with the developers involved in the new community plans at Cranbrook to deliver 40% of affordable housing there for East Devon residents.	KH March 2006
2. Work with Town and Parish councils to identify rural exemption/exception sites that can be used for building affordable homes and complete at least one rural housing scheme a year.	PJ March 2006
3. Thirty extra affordable homes for occupation each year, of which at least twenty should be rented and ten shared ownership, with an increase to 240 units a year from 2008 through the Cranbrook development.	KH 2008
4. Meet our target response times on housing repair requests for private and council housing.	PJ March 2006
5. Make sure that all houses in multiple occupation meet legal standards by inspecting 60 a year.	PJ March 2006
6. Bring twenty empty homes into use a year.	PJ March 2006
7. Increase the % of council homes meeting the Decent Homes Standard to 100% by 2005.	PJ Dec 2005
8. Measure in 2006, then improve in 2007, satisfaction levels with the Choice Based Lettings System.	PJ Dec 2006
9. 100% of second homes income returned into the East Devon area by Devon County Council is spent on affordable housing.	MW April 2006
10. Reduce the number of homeless people in temporary accommodation by 10%.	PJ March 2007
11. Retain our Housing Strategy's 'fit for purpose' judgement.	PJ March 2007

## East Devon District Council Corporate Strategy

**Priority 1:**

**Achieve thriving, balanced communities**

**Outcome 3: An increase in the number of 'engaged' communities**

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Lead and timescale</b>
1. Increase the number of village/town plans from 8 to 18 by 2007.	KH March 2007
2. Increase the number of 'Devon village of the year' and 'Britain in bloom' entries by 5%.	KH July 2007
3. Expand the Local Democracy Week (LDW) activities with schoolchildren to increase the participation of schools/colleges beyond LDW in follow-up sessions.	DL Oct 2007
4. Increase, by 1% a year, the number of voluntary and community groups registered with East Devon Voluntary Services Agency.	PJ 2006
5. Increase by 5% the number of people engaged with Leisure East Devon in active leisure from 2006 - 2008.	PJ March 2008
6. Add value to the school curriculum by influencing and contributing to the environmental education of all ranges of children.	KH 2006
7. Work with the Tenant Customer Panel to review and republish the Tenant Compact by 2007.	PJ Dec 2007
8. Develop the eastdevonunlimited.com site for young people and get 2,000 hits over summer 2006.	PJ/DL Sept 2006
9. Measure the baseline for levels of community hall/facility use in five targeted facilities and work with local communities to increase use by at least 5% a year.	PJ March 2006
10. Involve young people in consultation on all significant development and regeneration projects.	DL March 2007
11. Review 100% of our services by April 2006 using the social inclusion tool.	PJ April 2006
12. An increase in the numbers of over 60s taking up the benefits they are entitled to (achieving more than the 2005 take up campaign of £865,847 additional entitlement)	DP Dec 2006

# East Devon District Council Corporate Strategy

## Priority 2:

## Take care of and improve our environment

### Why is it a priority?

- A MORI survey in 2002 showed that 94% of people appreciate the quality of life in East Devon. We want to make sure we do all we can to maintain this very high satisfaction with the area by having high quality green parks and clean, litter free streets and beaches.
- Maximising recycling and minimising waste are both national and regional priorities which we support, plus our beautiful environment is at risk if we do not find alternative ways to landfill sites of dealing with rubbish.
- The quality of the built environment is vital in such a beautiful part of the country where World Heritage Coast sites and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) have both national and international importance.
- Climate change is a real and immediate threat that will affect our environment.

### Outcome 1: Maintain the % of people satisfied with parks, open spaces and litter levels

#### Measures

#### Lead and timescale

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Meet the phasing and quality targets for sustainable and high quality facilities and open space in Cranbrook.   | KH<br>March 2008 |
| 2. Maintain Green Flag awards for our parks and the Local Nature Reserve at Sidmouth, Exmouth and Seaton and achieve the award for our park in Seaton and one more Local Nature Reserve. | KH<br>March 2006 |
| 3. Improve street cleaning, particularly in Exmouth, to achieve an 8% increase in the national quality standard.   | KH<br>March 2006 |
| 4. Increase from 69% the number of general survey respondents who are fairly or very satisfied with the way we keep public land clear of litter and refuse.                              | KH<br>Oct 2006   |
| 5. Achieve a 90% customer satisfaction rating with our Local Nature Reserves and Schools event programme.  | KH<br>March 2006 |
| 6. Ensure the quality (safety and hygiene) of places where people shop, work or spend leisure time by meeting 100% of inspection programme targets.                                      | PJ<br>March 2006 |
| 7. An increase of 20 in the number of 'smoke free' food businesses.  | PJ<br>March 2007 |

## East Devon District Council Corporate Strategy

### Priority 2:

### Take care of and improve our environment

**Outcome 2: A reduction in landfill by increasing the availability of the recycling collection service to 100% of residents and increasing the amount recycled to 27% by March 2007**

Measures	Lead and timescale
1. Enter into a new contract in 2005 to make sure that: 100% of households have a separate collection for recycled rubbish. 27% of household waste is recycled.	KH 2005
2. Maintain high levels of satisfaction (89% of general survey respondents are fairly or very satisfied with our waste collection service) during the complex transition of the recycling contract in 2006.	KH 2006

**Outcome 3: Ensure all new buildings and homes are safe, sustainable, high quality buildings**

Measures	Lead and timescale
1. Deliver the Design Action plan and promote a “sense of place” through Village Design statements from 10 to 20 parishes.	KH March 2007
2. Ensure new homes built at Cranbrook comply with the master plan, design codes and the ecohomes ‘very good’ standard.	KH March 2007
3. Establish and implement a buildings design quality test using Design Awards and peer review.	KH Oct 2006
4. Initiate investigation of 20 potentially contaminated high priority sites a year as approved in our Contaminated Land Strategy.	PJ March 2007
5. Undertake flood alleviation and coast protection schemes where the Environment Agency and English Nature have agreed they are a priority.	KH 2006
6. Provide dedicated, accessible and safe public transport, cycling and walking connections to and from major new employment parks and regeneration schemes.	KH March 2007

## East Devon District Council Corporate Strategy

### Priority 3:

### Encourage a flourishing local economy

#### Why is it a priority?

- One of the aspects a thriving community needs is a buoyant economy offering a variety of employers, jobs and wage levels. Here in East Devon, although unemployment is currently low, average weekly wage levels are also low: £370.60 a week compared to £475.80 a week nationally, and much work is part time. In addition, industries that maintain the fabric of the countryside, farming and forestry for example, are experiencing serious difficulties, and other sectors valuable to the countryside such as tourism are often low wage, small-scale and fragmented. There are, in fact, few employers in the District who offer well paid jobs to graduate calibre job seekers. On its own, the Council can do little to directly influence jobs and wage levels, but we will work in active partnership with the Exeter and Heart of Devon Economic Partnership to achieve this.
- Communities and towns that don't make the most of opportunities to expand, grow or respond to people's changing needs will at best stagnate and at worse fail. Our plans for two of our major towns reflect this recognition.
- Our transport and other infrastructure often fail to reflect the needs of modern businesses and the workforce that sustains them. This, together with the fact that the 2003 public satisfaction survey showed that transport was a major issue for local people, puts it into our top priority category.

## East Devon District Council Corporate Strategy

### Priority 3:

### Encourage a flourishing local economy

#### Outcome 1: Deliver jobs, services and infrastructure to regenerate existing towns and lead to an improvement in the overall wealth of the population

Measures	Lead and timescale
1. Deliver the Unlocking Exmouth regeneration project to achieve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A £20-40 million injection of private sector funding</li> <li>• Creation of 300 jobs through this development in 3-5 years</li> <li>• Raise the quality and quantity of leisure and retail facilities (figures and measures to be agreed in 2006)</li> </ul>	KH 2008
2. Deliver the Seaton regeneration project aims to achieve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A £15-30 million injection of private sector funding</li> <li>• Creation of 200 jobs through this development in 3-5 years</li> <li>• Raise the quality and quantity of leisure and retail facilities (figures and measures to be agreed in 2006)</li> </ul>	KH 2008
3. Deliver sufficient housing and employment land in the Local Development Framework to meet Axminster's needs, with preferred options published in 2007.	KH March 2007
4. Identify employment land needs for Honiton, Sidmouth and Ottery St Mary.	KH March 2007

#### Outcome 2: Deliver the new community, and east of Exeter area, as a sustainable settlement

Measures	Lead and timescale
1. Deliver the new community at Cranbrook in line with the phasing targets.	KH 2010
2. Work with our partners to deliver a Science Park: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplementary planning application by 2006</li> </ul>	KH 2006
3. Work with our partners to deliver Sky Park: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised planning application by end 2005</li> </ul>	KH 2005

## East Devon District Council Corporate Strategy

### Priority 3:

### Encourage a flourishing local economy

### Outcome 3: Improve the transport infrastructure in East Devon

Measures	Lead and timescale
1. Promote an intermodal rail freight facility on the Exeter to Waterloo Rail Line and progress the planning application to determination.	KH Aug 2006
2. Deliver a new train station at Cranbrook on the Exeter/Waterloo railway line.	KH Dec 2008
3. Make improvements to the transport interchange at Exmouth Station.	KH March 2008
4. Support improvements to the A303.	DP Dec 2006
5. Deliver the Clyst Honiton bypass.	KH March 2009
6. Develop the loops on the Waterloo line to improve the timetable.	KH March 2008

## East Devon District Council Corporate Strategy

### Priority 4:

**Provide community leadership and good value for money, customer focused services**

### Why is it a priority?

- Any organisation can only be successful when its ambition drives it to look for year on year improvements in its services. Councils that are content to stay as they are will inevitably become out of touch with their residents and fail to meet customer expectations and demands. We are committed to continuous improvement and to delivering quality services how, when and where our customers would like them. We will continue to invest in both our employees and in technology to achieve this aim.
- This Council understands the need to be a community leader, to take responsibility for listening to the public's views and to represent them at the local, regional and national level. Our residents' views have implications for the policies of other organisations in the District and South West region, and we believe we must make their voices heard. Where there are conflicting views, this Council is committed to taking hard decisions, and will be fearless in its leadership.
- In increasingly difficult financial times, we need to demonstrate prudent management of our income, the highest standards of financial management, a robust approach to finding efficiency savings and appropriate management and disposal of our assets.
- Consultation and communication are both areas where we know we can improve our performance. Work with our partners to involve them in service planning and delivery and to promote equality of access is therefore a priority for us. Our target groups are the town and parish councils, the Local Strategic Partnership and young people.

## East Devon District Council Corporate Strategy

### Priority 4:

**Provide community leadership and good value for money, customer focused services**

### Outcome 1: All stakeholders believe the Council genuinely consults and plays an active role in shaping the future of the District

Measures	Lead and timescale
1. Manage and continuously improve our relationships with key local and regional decision makers (Regional Assembly, Government Office for the South West, Regional Development Agency, Devon County Council, Devon and Cornwall Police, Primary Care Trust) measured by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit Commission Direction of Travel Statements</li> <li>• Inspections and peer reviews</li> <li>• Comprehensive Performance Assessment government inspection</li> </ul>	MW 2006
2. Lead the completion of the Local Strategic Partnership's Community Plan review.	PJ June 2006
3. Achieve the objectives of our Consultation Strategy, embed the newly introduced Consultation Calendar into our day to day management and analyse evaluations of consultation exercises.	DL March 2006
4. Hold a Scrutiny Committee review of communication then set and meet actions for our communications function.	DL March 2006

## East Devon District Council Corporate Strategy

**Priority 4:**

**Provide community leadership and good value for money, customer focused services**

**Outcome 2: Deliver faster, better targeted services how, when and where our customers want them**

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Lead and timescale</b>
1. Set up a customer contact centre to respond to 80% of calls at first point of contact.	DL Dec 2007
2. Establish customer satisfaction measures and baseline then set % increase targets.	DL Sept 2006
3. E-enable 100% of those services that it is possible to e-enable.	DL March 2007
4. Develop the Council's website to be fully transactional for all Council services.	DL March 2006
5. Meet Level 2 of the Equality Standards by 2008	PJ March 2008
6. Complete access audits to improve access to services for disabled people by 2006.	DP Sept 2006
7. Maintain top 25% performance in the number of general survey respondents who are fairly/very satisfied with the way the Council handles complaints.	DL Dec 2006
8. Have two flagship services (Building Control and Homesafeguard) which operate on a business model by 2008.	KH/PJ April 2008

## East Devon District Council Corporate Strategy

### Priority 4:

**Provide community leadership and good value for money, customer focused services**

### Outcome 3: Achieve a culture of continuous improvement

Measures	Lead and timescale
1. Introduce a Council Business Plan.	DL March 2006
2. Further develop the performance management framework and achieve better links between the corporate strategy, service plans and individual objectives measured by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit Commission Direction of Travel Statements</li> <li>• Achievement of the four top priorities in this Corporate Strategy.</li> </ul>	DL April 2006
3. Meet the targets of the Council's Improvement Plan.	DL March 2007
4. Improve the performance of the Revenues and Benefits services to top 25% performance in key Best Value Performance Indicators.	DP March 2007
5. Continue to improve the Planning service to enable it to meet government targets on the speed of processing planning applications.	KH 2007
6. Improve the actual performance of specific PIs NAME THEM.	All
7. Develop effective managers who help our people reach their full potential measured by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Resource audits</li> <li>• Turnover statistics</li> <li>• Grievance statistics</li> <li>• Succession planning</li> <li>• Staff survey.</li> </ul>	DL March 2007
8. Embed corporate governance work in the culture of the Council, measured in the next Comprehensive Performance Assessment.	DL 2008
9. Demonstrate four improvements a year based on shared learning by Heads/Managers.	DL March 2007

## East Devon District Council Corporate Strategy

**Priority 4:**

**Provide community leadership and good value for money, customer focused services**

**Outcome 4: More efficient, business like service delivery which supports the corporate priorities**

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Lead and timescale</b>
1. Ensure a culture of accountability and ownership is embedded to effectively support the proactive management of the Council's finances.	DP Oct 2006
2. Demonstrate sound financial management by realising efficiency savings and budget reductions in future budgets in line with the Council's priorities.	DP Oct 2006
3. Maintain a prudent general reserve level of an advisory minimum of 7.5% and an absolute minimum of 5% of the net general fund budget.	DP Dec 2006
4. Maximise income potential by running all suitable services on a business model by 2010.	DP March 2010
5. Complete full implementation of the Financial Management System and Income Management System and train 100% of mangers in basic financial budgetary principles and the finance system by 2006.	DP March 2006
6. Implement and update an ongoing comprehensive and prioritised planned maintenance system for the Council's non housing property 2006.	DP Oct 2006
7. Ensure that good asset management is embedded in service planning.	DP Oct 2007