

# **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **Minutes of a Meeting of the Economy Overview Committee held at Knowle, Sidmouth on Tuesday, 12 April 2005**

**Present:**

Councillors:

S C Luxton (Chairman)  
C H Wale (Vice-Chairman)

J E D Falby  
J P Halse  
D R A Key  
G K Liverton  
Ms S M Merritt

Mrs F Newth  
J B Nicholson  
A J Toye  
B J Toye

Speakers:

Andy Palmer – Pinnacle  
Ian McCarthy – MC2 Audio  
E J Underdown – Roebuck Farm  
Mrs K Marshall – Park Group Ltd  
Fred McCaigh – Combe Estate  
Bob Buxton - MCTI  
Paul Hackett – Otter Gems  
M J White – Otter Nurseries Ltd  
W Casey – Otter Nurseries Ltd  
Tony Abbott – Abbotts DIY  
Derek Baxter – Ottery St Mary Town  
Council  
Graham Brown – Land owner

**Also Present:**

Councillors:

Miss V Ash  
Mrs R Burrow  
R H Cross  
P A Diviani  
J H Glanvill  
P Skinner  
A J Wilkinson

**Apologies:**

Councillors:

R Mudge  
A S Pascoe

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 9.20pm.

\*42 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development Committee held on 17 March 2005 were confirmed and signed as a true record, subject to the addition to Councillor G K Liverton to the list of apologies.

\*43 **Employment land supply issues**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the representatives for attending. He explained that the main aim of the meeting had been identified at the meeting of the Economic Development Strategy Task and Finish Forum on 19 January 2005, which was to inform consideration of employment land issue throughout East Devon to facilitate deliverance of the Local Development Framework. It was also to provide Members with an opportunity to hear from local business people, landowners and other stakeholders, views on the demand for and supply of employment land in the towns and rural communities of East Devon.

a) Employment land issues in Honiton

Each speaker addressed the meeting putting forward their own ideas. Time was given for Members and other representatives to ask questions and to discuss the various ideas put forward.

The main issues raised on Honiton were:

- The lack of employment land left to develop and the need for more land to be allocated;
- The demand from local business for more land, particularly for freehold development;
- Good road access and the importance of the upgrade for the A30/A303;
- Broad base of industries with many smaller employers, not relying on one large employer;
- The rapid expansion of Honiton in the last few years and the fact that services have not kept up with this pace of development;
- Problems experienced with obtaining enough electric power on the estate and the requirement by Western Power for businesses to pay for any upgrading;
- Lack of policing available on the Heathpark estate after 6.00 pm;
- Difficulties experienced finding suitable workers locally;
- The need for more affordable housing;
- Parking problems on the Heathpark estate and in particular cars parked on the roadside;
- Landscaping on the estate needed addressing;
- The need for planners to understand the requirements of industry better and plan for future need;
- The possibility of developing 40-50 acres of land to the west of Hayne Lane, which could meet Honiton's need for employment land for the next 10 – 12 years;
- That Honiton is the best served town in East Devon to expand.

**RESOLVED**

that the Economic Development Manager write to Western Power, with a copy to the local MP, expressing the Committee's concern over the lack of electric power available to manufacturing businesses on Heathpark and their requirement for businesses to pay for upgrading of this power supply.

b) Employment land issues in Ottery St Mary

Each speaker addressed the meeting putting forward their own ideas. Time was given for Members and other representatives to ask questions and to discuss the various ideas put forward.

The main issues raised on Ottery St Mary were:

- The town was stagnating with no new jobs or industry;
- Most jobs in the town were in the retail industry;
- Transport links had recently improved;
- Young people were having to leave the town due to the lack of jobs and affordable housing;
- The need for more employment land particularly for 1000 – 1500 sq ft industrial units to develop fledgling businesses;
- Planning guidelines around the town were too tightly drawn;
- Negative effect of the closure of the Ottermill Switchgear factory with the resulting loss of jobs and income to the town;
- Possibility of increasing the size of the Finnimore Industrial estate;
- Ottery St Mary was a good place to live and there was a need to be more positive as there were grounds for optimism for the towns future;
- Development of electronics businesses and those such as Project Cosmic was a possible way forward;
- Economic Development Officers should be consulted for planning applications for industrial developments.

**RESOLVED** that due to the broad nature of the issues discussed a copy of the minutes of the meeting be sent to all of the Council's Overview Committees.

#### 44 **The Conversion of Rural Buildings – interim Supplementary Planning Guidance**

The Chairman agreed to take this as an urgent item, which had been referred from the Executive Board on 6 April (minute no 210 refers), in order to be able to make a recommendation to the meeting of the Council on 20 April 2005.

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Planning and Countryside Services in respect of the above SPG produced for the emerging East Devon Local Plan in order to expand on Policy D9B 'Re-use of Rural Buildings Outside Settlements'. It had been produced to provide advice on the implementation of Policy D9B and to expand on the reasoned justification.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance entitled 'Conversion of Rural Buildings' be supported subject to the following amendments:

Section 4.2 i) Delete "or partly redundant" (as it is not a requirement of PPS7).

Section 4.2 ii) Add "Suitably located modern buildings of permanent design or construction capable of re-use and/or resiting adjacent or closely related to rural settlements".

Section 4.2 iii) Delete.

Section 4.9 The requirement that conversion can only take place to a listed building should be deleted and replaced with "The need to preserve or the desirability of preserving buildings of architectural or historic or architectural importance or interest or which otherwise contribute to local character" (reason – PPS7 Paragraph 17 and also Inspectors quote re Tale Farm, Payhembury).

Section 4.12 Delete "with defined Built-up areas Boundaries".

Section 4.17 Delete "may apply" and substitute with "might want to apply". Delete "becomes" for "would become".

44 **The Conversion of Rural Buildings – interim Supplementary Planning Guidance**(Cont)

The Committee wanted it recorded that the vote on this item was unanimous.

(Councillor S Luxton declared a prejudicial interest in this item as he had a submitted a planning application for conversion of a rural building and left the room during discussion and voting. In the absence of the Chairman, Councillor C H Wale took the Chair).

45 **The future of Exeter and surrounding area to 2026**

The Chairman agreed to take this as an urgent item due to need to reply to the consultation document by 29 April 2005

Consideration was given to a consultation document on a study being undertaken on behalf of the South West Regional Assembly entitled ‘ The future of Exeter and surrounding area to 2026’.

**RESOLVED** that Option 3 on the consultation document be supported.

Chairman ..... Date.....