

# EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

## Minutes of a Meeting of the Economy Overview Committee held at Knowle, Sidmouth on Wednesday, 26 January 2005

**Present:**

Councillors:

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

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

R Mudge  
J B Nicholson  
T G Reeves  
Mrs L A Roden  
P C Townsend  
A J Toye

**Also Present:**

Councillors:

P A Diviani  
S Hughes  
N Rogers  
P Townsend  
A J Wilkinson

**Apologies:**

Councillors:

D G Button  
A T Moulding  
A S Pascoe  
B J Toye

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.15pm.

\*31 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Economy Overview Committee held on 17 November 2004, were confirmed and signed as a true record.

32 **Service Plans 2005/08**

Consideration was given to the report of the Policy Manager with regard to Service Plans drawn up for the next three years for each of the service areas within the remit of the Committee. The plans reviewed performance for the year ending 31 March 2005, as well as planning for the future. Following the input of actual performance and targets figures in the Performance Indicator table, relevant extracts from all the Plans would be included in the Annual Performance Plan 2005/06.

The following points were noted with regard to each of the plans considered:

Internal Audit

Tanith Clark the Head of Internal Audit summarised the work of the section in 2004. The internal audit plan outlined the purpose of the service which was to provide an ongoing assessment of the reliability and integrity of the entire system of internal controls that regulated the activities constituting the total operational, financial and administrative functions of the District Council.

Members noted that this covered not only the financial operation of the Council but all elements of its operation. The Head of Internal Audit stressed the difficulties that had been experienced recruiting qualified staff in recent years and the service was currently operating with two trainees and one trainee vacancy to be filled.

### Economic Development

Ian Page the Head of Economic Development & Property outlined work carried out in 2004 and plans for 2005 and beyond. Members noted that the service was attempting to provide a holistic approach to economic activity involving tourism and other sectors of the economic development unit which would make for more transparent and efficient working. A new comprehensive and prioritised planned maintenance system to assist in the maintenance of non housing properties in an efficient and sustainable way was being introduced. An economic development strategy had also been introduced.

Efficiency improvements had been made to the service to meet the savings required by the LSPG process and this had included the reduction in funding to the TICs in order to use limited financial resources more effectively. The way forward was to refocus the service on its core values and on the things where it could make a difference, such as in finding more employment land.

### Finance

Simon Davey the Head of Finance outlined work carried out in 2004 and plans for 2005 and beyond. Key achievements in the current year included the introduction of a new systems for Housing Benefits and Council Tax. Financial management. Income management and Council House Rental. The initial negative effect of performance of the introduction of so many new systems had been acknowledged. The collection rate for Council Tax was on target at 97% and NNDR was at 99%.

Other achievements included the implementation of a Medium Term Financial Plan and reaching target budget savings of 8% and 12%. Members congratulated staff in the Finance service for their hard work in the past year.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Service Plans for Economic Development & Property, Finance and Internal Audit for the years 2005/08 be approved.

## 33 **Draft Revenue and Capital Estimates 2005/06**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director – Economy with regard to the draft Revenue and Capital Estimates for 2005/06. It was noted that the Executive Board had adopted the draft estimates at its meeting on 17 January 2005. The Board asked all four Overview Committees to consider the estimates, bearing in mind the need to set a balanced budget, and refer their recommendations to the Executive Board for consideration at its meeting on 9 February 2005. The board would then recommend the 2005/06 Council Tax requirement to the Council.

Members noted that the budget represented the Service Plans in financial terms. It reflected the findings of the prioritisation process, recognised that the general fund balance was low and was based on the expectation of matching income with expenditure. The likely increase in Council Tax would be just under 6%.

Members considered the recommendations referred to them by the Executive Board at its meeting on 17 January 2005 (Minute No 148 refers) regarding parking charges for 2005/06.

**RECOMMENDED**

- 1) that the draft Revenue and Capital Estimates for 2005/06 relevant to the Committee be approved;
- 2) that the hourly charge for car parking be increased from 60p to 70p for all car parks other than Sidford where an hourly charge of 20p be made, Lymstone and Colyton where no increase be made and car parking charges be frozen for the next 2 years;
- 3) that the cost of annual town permits be standardised at £75 with the discount no longer being available to two car households and the cost of 6 monthly permits being revised appropriately.

**\*34 Non Domestic Rate: Business Improvement Districts**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director – Economy on the new legislation for Business Improvements Districts. This created an opportunity for the Council to promote partnership schemes with local businesses to generate additional revenue to be used for the improvement of the area.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**\*35 Dates of additional meetings**

**RESOLVED** that the following additional meetings in 2005 be held to discuss the specific areas in brackets:

- Thursday 17 March (Axminster, Seaton & Sidmouth)
- Tuesday 12 April (Honiton & Ottery St Mary)
- Wednesday 11 May (Budleigh Salterton & Exmouth)
- Thursday 9 June 2005 (Rural development sites)

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