

This news round up is being sent to all Town and Parish Councils. You may wish to include it in your parish magazines. I hope that you find these highlighted topics interesting and relevant. For more detailed information, you can go straight to the Council web site page on agenda, reports and minutes by following this link –

http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/index/your_council/committee_minutes_and_agendas.htm

Council news round-up for November/December 2007

Sustrans Connect2 win the People's £50 Million National Lottery givaway

Sustrans Connect2 was in the final 4 projects bidding for £50m of National Lottery funding for new footpaths, cycleways, bridges and tunnels across the country. As a result of the public vote, Connect2 beat off challenges from the Eden Project, Sherwood Forest and Black Country Park. The money will help build a new footpath and cycle line from Ottery St Mary town centre, across the River Otter to the King's School, hospital, leisure centre and new housing estate. As well as making this essential link, the proposal will open up access to a tranquil section of riverbank and water meadows. This is an excellent result for East Devon.

Exeter's unitary bid not to proceed

In December, the Department for Communities and Local Government announced that the Government would not proceed with Exeter City Council's proposal for a unitary council for the city. East Devon District Council did not support Exeter's proposal because it did not believe that it would deliver best value services to the city, the district or the county. East Devon District Council will work with the Boundary Committee and stakeholders to ensure that any future proposals for changes to the local government structure in Devon are in the best interests of the people who live in the district and our visitors. All parishes and district councillors will be sent a copy of the Boundary Committee for England's terms of reference for the review, when received. The Council will work with the other Devon Councils and make sure that East Devon's interests are protected. It will set up a working group to help co-ordinate the work, and direct and support officers. The Council's initial preference is for a Unitary Council - to take in East Devon and surrounding areas - but the working group will consider the range of options, which will be put forward to the Boundary Commission in the first stage of the process.

Member Champions

The Council has appointed a number of Councillors to be Member Champions within specific areas. The role of Member Champions complements and enhances the work of Portfolio Holders and of the Council with the aim of driving service improvements in key areas. The Council now has the following Member Champions: Business (Graham Brown), Community Safety (Chris Gibbings), Culture (Vivienne Ash), Design (Andrew Dinnis), Data Quality (Graham Troman), Equalities (Andrew Moulding), Post Offices (Ken Potter), Procurement (Mark Williamson), Risk Management (Ray Bloxham), Sustainability – Eco Issues (Frances Newth), Town/Strategic Planning – Exmouth – (Philip Skinner), Young People (Darryl Nicholas).

Downsizing (Housing Needs Team 01395 517469)

The Council has a scheme that pays up to £1,100 to help its tenants to downsize. Many tenants are living in a house too big for their needs or with a garden that is now too much for them to look after. The Council has lots of tenants and new applicants who are desperate for larger family accommodation. The scheme helps people ready to down size and those needing a family sized property. If you move from a general-purpose house to a smaller (one or two bedroom), flat or bungalow, the Council will pay up to £1,100 to help you move. It is the tenant's choice and the Housing Needs Team is here to help and advise.

Celebration of Parishes and Towns – 23 January 2008 (PA to Chairman 01395 517408)

The plans for the Parish and Towns event are well underway. We have received details of some very interesting schemes, for sharing with other councils. The evening should be informative and helpful. We hope that all councils will attend the event, including those who haven't submitted details of a scheme. The purpose of the evening is to learn from each other. In addition, the keynote speaker will cover funding issues – how to access funds and cost effective use of money at grass roots level. Please advise the PA to the Chairman if you have yet to confirm attendance.