

# **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **Minutes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 11 June 2008**

### **Present:**

Councillors:

Roger Giles (Chairman)  
Jim Knight (Vice Chairman)

Bob Buxton  
Christine Drew  
Vivien Duval Steer

Frances Newth  
Margaret Rogers  
Eileen Wragg

Officers:

Diccon Pearse – Corporate Director  
Peter Jeffs – Corporate Director  
Denise Lyon – Corporate Director  
Chris Lane – Democratic Services Officer

### **Also Present**

Councillors:

David Cox  
Jill Elson  
Mike Green  
Peter Halse

Stuart Hughes  
Ann Liverton  
Helen Parr  
Pauline Stott

### **Apologies:**

Councillors:

John Jeffery  
Darryl Nicholas  
Chris Tratt

### **Apologies from non-Scrutiny Members:**

Vivienne Ash  
Geoff Chamberlain  
Tony Reed

The meeting started at 6.35pm and ended at 8.35pm.

\*1

### **Minutes**

Members confirmed the minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 7 May 2008.

Members discussed the difficulties in raising items relating to the minutes of the last meeting when they were not attached to the agenda. This was now normal practice where they had been submitted previously to Executive Board or Council.

The Chairman informed Members that the Executive Board had discussed the Scrutiny Committee's recommendation contained in minute \*73 that all Ward Members should be involved from the beginning in all matters affecting their Ward at meetings of the Asset Management Forum, at its meeting on the 4 June 2008 and had resolved as follows:

“that a full report be made to a future meeting of the Executive Board on the issue of the Asset Management Forum consulting Ward Members on all matters affecting their Ward, but only following the production and consideration by the Asset Management Forum of the Asset Management Strategy”.

\*1 **Minutes (continued)**

Members welcomed the decision of the Executive Board.

**RESOLVED** that Scrutiny minutes be emailed to all members of the Committee when they have been finalised as well as being attached as a paper copy to the agenda of the Executive Board.

\*2 **Update on Civil Parking Enforcement**

Members were advised that no officers from the District or County Council were available to talk to this item and accepted that it should be deferred until the next meeting on 7 July 2008.

**RESOLVED**

1. that the item be deferred until the next meeting on 7 July 2008;
2. that before the next meeting the Scrutiny Committee request from Devon County Council:
  - a) a list of all parking orders in East Devon;
  - b) clarification from Devon County Council on whether there was sufficient funding to pay for the introduction of civil parking enforcement;
  - c) clarification of whether East Devon will get full authorisation from the transport authority to carry out traffic orders.

(Councillors Roger Giles, Margaret Rogers and Eileen Wragg declared personal interests in this item as members of Devon County Council)

\*3 **Engaging young people with Scrutiny work**

Committee considered the report of Peter Jeffs, Corporate Director, who spoke to his item on engaging young people with Scrutiny work.

Members noted that the Scrutiny Committee had expressed the wish for more public engagement, in particular with young people. The report presented covered work already undertaken by the Council to engage young people; and sought to identify ways of engaging young people with the Council and Scrutiny work. As part of the community leadership role the Council had a clear responsibility to consider the needs of children and young people, who in this case were defined as 10 – 18 year olds. However, Members noted that East Devon had no legal duty towards young people, this lay with Devon County Council.

Members discussed a number of ways of improving engagement with young people with Scrutiny work and noted the following points:

- that young people were a minority in East Devon, the district had a largely elderly population profile;
- there was the need to bring back a balance and recognise the needs of young people;
- that there were significant issues around the transport needs of young people and the possibility of introducing a concessionary fare scheme for public transport was noted;

\*3

### **Engaging young people with Scrutiny work (continued)**

- that East Devon had a legal duty to cooperate with other bodies who had the responsibility for young people;
- the importance of engaging young people in an environment in which they were comfortable;
- that political speed dating in schools during Democracy week had been a very successful way for the District Council to engage with young people;
- the differing needs of a 12 year old with a 16 year old;
- the importance of intervening and engaging with the more troubled teenagers in the District;
- that the majority of teenagers were mature and sensible and engaged with the community;
- the success of the inter-generational day recently held at County Hall;
- the success the Communities Think Tank had achieved when it had worked with the Youth Service in Exmouth to engage young people;
- that Honiton seemed to be a particularly troubled area for young people.

#### **RESOLVED**

1. that a Task & Finish Forum be set up to discuss engaging and involving young people and should include members of the youth service, the membership to be Margaret Rogers, Christine Drew, Frances Newth, Iain Chubb, Roger Giles and Jim Knight and Jill Elson encouraged to come to all meetings;
2. that the meetings of the TaFF to be held at a time and place to suit young people, away from the Knowle. Work to start as soon as possible;
3. that the terms of reference of the Taff be established at its first meeting and that in doing so, Members think carefully about what they wish to achieve and do not repeat what has been done by Cllr Elson's Think tank.

\*4

### **Yearly Performance Indicators 2007/ 08**

Members considered the report of the Communications & Improvement Manager on the Council's performance against national Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI) and Local Performance Indicators for 2007/08. Performance was compared with targets set the previous year, performance in 2006/07 and national average figures for district councils in 2006/07.

Members noted that the Council had a statutory duty to report its performance against national Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) every year for the period 1 April to 31 March. Diccon Pearse, Corporate Director reported that 2007/08 had been a good year as 63% of Performance Indicators (PI's) had been achieved or exceeded and only 37% were at target or below. This had been an improvement on 2006/07. Members welcomed the Performance Indicators that had been achieved or exceeded and then considered those that were of some concern.

#### **RESOLVED**

that the report be noted and the improved performance be welcomed.

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### **Revenue & Capital Outturn Report 2007/08**

Members considered the report of the Financial Services Manager on the Revenue and Capital Outturn figures against budgets for the 2007/08 financial year for General Fund Services, the Housing Revenue Account and the Capital Programme.

**\*5 Revenue & Capital Outturn Report 2007/08 (continued)**

The report compared the outturn figures for Revenue and Capital against the original and revised budgets for the financial year 2007/08. During 2007/08, the monthly budget monitoring reports had informed members of the overall net budget position. The month 11 report, presented to the 26 March meeting of the Executive Board, had predicted an overall saving of £859,000 for the General Fund, a saving of £175,000 on the Housing Revenue Account and a balance of £1,053,000 of capital receipts available to support future capital programmes.

Diccon Pearse, Corporate Director reported that 2007/08 had been a good year financially for the Council and instead of having to use £350,000 from the reserves as had been anticipated, £1,197,000 had been added to balances, a turn-around of £1,500,000. This had been due to three factors.

Firstly, the re-phasing of the recycling and refuse contract has produced savings of £0.557m in 2007/08. However, it was be noted that the new “open book” accounting arrangement needed to be carefully scrutinised and the staged roll-out of the Recycling and Refuse scheme throughout the District would undoubtedly place more pressure on subsequent budgets.

Secondly, another significant area where the Council generated greater income than estimated was its investment interest receipts. In 2007/08 the overall interest figure exceeded a very prudent budget by £0.450m. A separate Treasury Management report noted that it was extremely likely that investment interest would be significantly lower that estimated for 2008/09 (in the region of £0.250m).

Thirdly, the Council has just received notification of its Local Authority Business Growth Incentive (LABGI) payment. Another adjustment for 2005/06 and 2006/07 and the actual 2007/08 payment had just been announced. This amount was some £0.430m above what was included in the original estimate. Consideration needed to be given to whether any remaining LABGI monies were specifically reserved for Economic Development activities, as identified in the Council’s Corporate Strategy.

Diccon Pearse, Corporate Director, outlined the areas where the additional funding would be spent. This included funding of the purchase of recycling bins from reserves; assisting regeneration schemes and economic development such as Science Park; funding projects the Council had committed to in the last financial year, committing to a maintenance reserve for Council properties and the list of special items outline in the report. In response to a question from a Member, Diccon Pearse agreed to investigate whether the funding for a process mapping analysts was over one year or two.

Members wished to congratulate officers, including Diccon Pearse, Corporate Director, the Head of Finance and the Financial Services Manager for the excellent results achieved. Although a surplus was shown in the outturn report, Members were warned that the Council should continue to be prudent as the three items that contributed to the excellent budget result were “one offs”. The Council intended to continue to be a prudent authority and have “debt free” status.

**RESOLVED** that the Revenue and Capital Outturn Report for 2007/08 be welcomed.

**\*6 Scrutiny Forward Plan**

Members considered the forward plan for the Scrutiny Committee. Members noted that the Executive Board at its meeting on 4 June had agreed to appoint a Procurement Officer. Members had emphasised the need to monitor the savings made by this appointment and that the costs would be met by staff savings made in 2008/09. It was felt that Scrutiny Committee should scrutinize the effectiveness of this appointment and

**\*6 Scrutiny Forward Plan (continued)**

also that of the Section 106 Monitoring Officer to ensure the Council was receiving value for money.

Members noted that the Section 106 Monitoring Officer would be sending an update report to the Corporate Overview Committee at its next meeting and requested that this report go to Scrutiny Committee instead. It was suggested that the review of support for the East Devon Volunteer Support Agency be brought forward to October. Also that Scrutiny Committee should investigate the effect of Polyclinics on East Devon, including inviting the two doctors consortium in the District.

**RESOLVED**

1. that the Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan be noted;
2. that the following changes be made to the Forward Plan:
  - a) Add a review of Polyclinics;
  - b) Add a review of the effectiveness and value for money of the Section 106 Monitoring Officer and the Procurement Officer six months after appointment;
  - c) Move the review of support for the East Devon Volunteer Support Agency to the October meeting;
3. that an Exmouth Byelaws TaFF be established consisting of Eileen Wragg, Pat Graham, Vivien Duval Steer and two members of Exmouth Town Council.

**\*7 Task and Finish Forum Status Report**

Members noted the Task and Finish Forum Status report which presented details of the current Task and Finish Forums. Members were disappointed to hear that due to workload issues the Corporate Overview Committee had not held a meeting of the Sustainable Buildings TaFF.

**RESOLVED**

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the Corporate Overview Committee be requested to arrange a meeting of the Sustainable Buildings TaFF as soon as practicable.

Chairman .....

Date.....