

## EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview Committee held  
at Knowle, Sidmouth on 5 October 2017

### **Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 7.35pm.

- \*8 Public speaking  
There were no public speakers at the meeting.
- \*9 Minute confirmation  
The minutes of the Overview Committee held on the 25 July 2017, were confirmed as a true record.
- \*10 Declarations of interest  
Councillor Graham Godbeer; Minute 11  
Personal Interest –Member of 'Make it Local' Panel
- 11 Local Economic Development Activity  
The committee considered a report that provided an update on the work programme of the Economic Development Team, alongside the priority projects and activities

This followed a report to the committee in March 2017 that set out recent economic intelligence. The committee were updated on areas including:

- East Devon Business Centre
- Business support, working with the EHOD
- Rural economy support through BIP
- EHOD Employment and Skills Board recent request for additional funding
- Shared customer relationship management (CRM) system with EHOD

Specific activity on monitoring funding opportunities, developing a Business Engagement Strategy and an Ambassador Programme was discussed. The Economic Development Team had welcomed a new Project Officer (as supported by the Overview Committee in the budget process) and was recruiting for a new Economic Development Officer. The report also set out the marked demand on the service in commenting on planning applications. Next steps for the team include preparing a costed pipeline of projects for consideration in the 2017/18 onwards draft budget and for the medium term.

Members welcomed the news that the East Devon Business Centre was 100% full and based on current performance would return a net income to the council this year of £38,683.

Debate from the committee included:

- Importance of the visibility of the team to business in the district;
- The provision of start-up workshops in the district would be improved by new provision planned in Seaton;
- It was planned to extend the East Devon Business Centre and it was hoped that this principal could be extended to other towns in the District such as Axminster or Exmouth;
- Importance of maintaining the current bank of land allocated for employment use in Exmouth;

- Concern over the haemorrhaging of employment land to housing in the district. Planning policies were needed that were robust enough to retain land for employment use;
- A satisfactory measure was needed for what constituted effective marketing for employment land;
- Importance of economic intelligence and impacts being taken into consideration in planning decisions;
- Sustainability was often an issue raised by planners when considering planning applications for businesses in the countryside. The EDM suggested economic factors warrant equal weight to environmental and social in evaluating sustainable development. The importance of diversification of agricultural businesses was noted;
- There was a need for better policy for provision of business units near villages which would improve their sustainability;
- Need to support initiatives to encourage coastal tourism;
- Town centres were under threat and need support;
- Expansion of rural businesses was important and the Economic Development Service were working for good economic development in rural areas;
- Need for an economically sustainable approach at EDDC;
- Retention of local people to continue living and working in East Devon was important and there was the need to have a budget to assist with the improvement of the skills of young people in the district;
- Town centres have to develop goods and services that were not available on line, the relaxation of Street Trading regulations in the district would be important to them;
- The lack of career counselling for young people was a concern;
- Possibility of having an app which would enable school children to obtain work placements;
- Praise for BiP for their support for business and thank them for what they do on behalf of business in East Devon.

The Committee wished to thank Rob Murray and the Economy Team for an excellent and informative report.

### **RESOLVED**

1. The report on Local Economic Development Activity be noted;
2. The progress made in delivery of local economic development activity be noted;
3. The achievement of full occupation and cost effectiveness of the East Devon Business Centre be noted;
4. That Members agree to support and develop business bulletins to promote the services and advice that the Council can provide, tailored and targeted to specific business groups throughout the district.

**RECOMMENDED to Strategic Planning Committee** that a report be presented to them, in consultation with the Development Management Team which:

- a) Details the enhanced economic evidence and intelligence input from the Economic Development Team including advice on planning applications;
- b) Identified the practical advantages of closer working between Economic Development and Development Management functions;
- c) Explores means by which the positive economic impact of planning policy be maximised.

\*12 Housing Delivery Task and Finish Forum update

The committee received an update on the nine recommendations made by the Forum, which were agreed by Cabinet on 10 May 2017.

The committee welcomed progress made on the issues and debate included:

- The Local housing Company was progressing well and had held its first meeting;
- 25 homes had been purchased by EDDC and were being let to local families at 80% of market rents;
- Need to invite relevant officers to a future meeting of the committee to give a report on the recommendations made by the TAFF.

**RESOLVED** that the update on progress on the recommendations be noted.

\*13 Overview committee forward plan

The forward plan was noted and an additional item on Income Generation and council transformation be added, possibly to be discussed at a special meeting. Members noted the need to have an investigation group to gather information on this issue before it was discussed in detail.

**Attendance list**

**Councillors Present:**

Graham Godbeer (Chairman)  
Ian Hall (Vice Chairman)  
Peter Faithfull  
Rob Longhurst  
Mike Allen  
Mark Evans-Martin

**Councillors Also Present:**

Jill Elson  
Philip Skinner  
Paul Carter  
Pauline Stott  
Geoff Jung

**Officers**

Richard Cohen, Deputy Chief Executive  
Rob Murray, Economic Development Officer  
Giles Salter, Solicitor  
Lindsey Lawrence, Economy Project Officer  
Chris Lane, Democratic Services Officer

**Councillor Apologies:**

Jim Knight  
Mike Howe  
Tom Wright  
John Dyson  
Phil Twiss

**Officer Apologies:**

Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

Chairman .....

Date.....