

Meeting not open to the public



District Council

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Agenda for Asset Management Forum Thursday, 8 October 2015; 9.30am

To: Members of Asset Management Forum; Service Leads

Venue: Committee Room, Knowle, Sidmouth

Contact: [Chris Lane](#), 01395 571544 (or group number 01395 517546): Issued 5 October 2015

- 1 To confirm the report of the meeting of the Asset Management Forum held on 3 September 2015 (pages 2 - 4)
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Tenanted Non Residential Property Review – Sports & Activity Clubs
- 4 Tenanted Non Residential Property Review – Beach Huts & Chalets
- 5 Data Management – Chris Powell
- 6 Date of next meeting – Wednesday, 5 November 2015, 9.30am, in the Committee Room

[Decision making and equalities](#)

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Confidential; Report of a Meeting of the Asset Management Forum
held at Knowle, Sidmouth on Thursday, 3 September 2015

Present: Councillors:
Geoff Pook
Paul Diviani
Philip Skinner
Ian Thomas

Officers:
Donna Best
Richard Cohen
Simon Davey
Sue Percival
Jamie Buckley
Debbie Meakin
Chris Lane

Also present:
Megan Armstrong
Matthew Booth
Peter Burrows
Alan Dent
John Dyson
Roger Giles
Marcus Hartnell
Marianne Rixson
Pauline Stott

Apologies: David Barratt
Peter Bowden
Rob Longhurst
Andrew Moulding

The meeting started at 9.30am and finished at 11.35am.

- 1 Notes
Members noted the report of the meeting held on 16 July 2015.
- 2 Freedom of Interest Request
Richard Cohen, Deputy Chief Executive reported on a Freedom of Information request that had been made and included agendas, reports and background papers of the Asset Management Forum from February 2009, suitably redacted to remove commercially sensitive information. Having discussed this request with other Forum members, the Chairman was happy to authorise copies of agendas, and reports of the Asset Management Forum being made publicly available and eventually published on the website.
- 3 Data Management
Donna Best, Principal Estates Surveyor gave an update on the situation with regard to Data Management.

Members noted that Strata were now looking at producing data through Business Objects software to combine both information from the property register and finance system. The Chairman requested that a scoping document be produced before the next meeting on this project.

Donna Best further gave an update on the new property management system and the associated transformation projects. There remained problems relating to Civica and the document management system, along with the joint project with Exeter City to implement new valuation software. Strata were aware of the problems and looking to find ways to resolve them.

RESOLVED that Chris Powell, Strata Chief Executive be invited to the next meeting of the Forum on 8 October 2015, to report on progress on ICT provision for Property Services.

4 Tenanted non residential property review – Beach Huts and Chalets

Members discussed the recent consultation on some of the changes proposed for the beach huts service. Consultation had closed on 13 July and about 700 responses had been received. Members were reminded that the aim of the proposals was to:

- 1) Give more people a chance to hire a beach hut/site;
- 2) The Council needs to increase revenue income

During discussions the following points were noted:

- Alternative approaches could be investigated to achieve the Council's aims of increased revenue;
- A formal sharing system for individual beach huts could be looked at;
- Was EDDC the best body to rent out beach huts or would this be better done by a third party, such as town/parish councils?;
- There was scope to increase the number of huts for hire on many of the foreshores;
- The low usage of some beach huts/sites was noted as was the informal sub letting which was seen as a way to get around the excessively lengthy waiting lists;
- The hire charges for beach huts in East Devon was seen as very low;
- There were concerns from existing licensees that if the fees were increased too much then many local people could not afford to rent them;
- The lack of transparency on the waiting list;
- Majority of beach hut renters would prefer to rent the site and not huts;
- The need to establish the market rate for beach huts;
- Acknowledgement of the need to take into account the social aspect of renting a beach hut;
- Acceptance that EDDC needed to operate commercially as an organisation and achieve a better return from its beach hut portfolio ;
- EDDC should adopt a more commercial attitude to beach huts, but should also be sensitive to local concerns and accept that every town is different and has different needs;
- In the spirit of localism, decisions of allocating beach huts should be taken at the lowest appropriate level, which in this case was town/parish councils;

- Possibility of consulting with town/parish councils to identify more sites for beach huts;
- Importance of reviewing waiting lists and making them more transparent;
- It was not appropriate to auction off the sites, but instead to provide a significant percentage increase to the fixed rates.

In response to a question from Councillor Roger Giles, Chairman of Scrutiny Committee, members agreed that the Forum would not make a recommendation to Cabinet on beach huts before the Scrutiny Committee had a chance to debate this issue at their meeting on 17 September 2015. Recommendations would then be made to Cabinet at the earliest opportunity thereafter.

The following general principals for Beach Huts were noted:

1. that the general principal of a commercial approach to beach huts be accepted;
2. that beach hut sites only be leased from 2016/17 at Budleigh and Seaton, with existing licensees being given the opportunity to purchase their huts;
3. that each licensee be responsible for their own NNDR from 2016/17;
4. that hire charges be reviewed;
5. that further consultation be carried out with Town/Parish Councils with a view to transferring the management of Beach Huts at an appropriate rent.

RECOMMENDED 1. that it be confirmed to tenants that the current arrangements remain in place for 2016;
2. that the hire charges continue to be reviewed on an annual basis.

5 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Asset Management Forum would be held on **Thursday 8 October 2015** at 2.00pm in the Committee Room, Knowle, Sidmouth.