

Agenda for Cabinet

Wednesday 28 November 2018; 5.30pm



[Members of Cabinet](#)

Venue: Council Chamber, Knowle, Sidmouth, EX10 8HL

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Members of the public exercising their right to speak during Public Question Time will be recorded.

- 1 [Public speaking](#)
- 2 Minutes of 31 October 2018 (pages 4-11), to be signed as a true record
- 3 Apologies
- 4 Declarations of interest
Guidance is available online to Councillors and co-opted members on making [declarations of interest](#)
- 5 [Matters of urgency](#)
- 6 Confidential/exempt items – there are no items which officers recommend should be dealt with in this way.

7. Forward Plan for key decisions for the period 1 January 2019 to 30 April 2019 (pages 12-14)
8. Minutes of the Arts and Culture Forum held on 10 October 2018 (pages 15-20)
9. Minutes of the Budget Working Party held on 17 October 2018 (pages 21-22)
10. Minutes of the New Homes Bonus Panel held on 25 October 2018 (pages 23-24)
11. Minutes of the Overview Committee held on 15 November 2018 (pages 26-30)
Recommendations for Cabinet consideration can be found on page 25
12. Minutes of the Housing Review Board held on 22 November 2018 (pages 32-38)
Recommendations for Cabinet consideration can be found on page 31

Part A matters for decision

13. **Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20** (pages 39-43)
To consider and approve the working age Council Tax Reduction Scheme (known as Council Tax Support) for 2019/20 which remains unchanged from 2018/19.
14. **Council Tax - Long Term Empty Homes Premium** (pages 44-46)
Legislation has recently been passed that will allow Billing Authorities to increase the long term empty homes premium (currently an additional 50% on the full charge) for properties that are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished and have been for more than 2 years. The Government's aim is to help encourage owners to bring their properties back into use.
15. **Heart of the South West Joint Committee - Council update** (pages 47-58)
To update the constituent authorities on the HotSW Joint Committee and the recommendation to delegate responsibility for the local authority input into the Local Industrial Strategy to the Joint Committee.
16. **Digital Strategy** (pages 59-68)
To outline the Council's activity in relation to becoming Digital East Devon.
17. **Access to information 2017/18** (pages 69-71)
This report provides information about requests received under the Freedom of Information Act (and Environmental Information Regulations) between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018. The report also looks at steps taken during the last 12 months to improve the accessibility of information.
18. **Home Safeguard System Upgrade** (pages 72-82)
To gain approval for the expenditure necessary to upgrade the Home Safeguard call handling system as outlined in the business case.
Appendix 1 – Home Safeguard business case
19. **Monthly Performance reports – October 2018** (pages 83-86)
Performance information for the 2017/18 financial year for October 2018 is supplied to allow the Cabinet to monitor progress with selected performance measures and identify any service areas where improvement is necessary.
Appendix 1 - October 2018 snapshot

20. **Response to the Payhembury Neighbourhood Plan Submission** (pages 87-92)
To agree the response by this Council to the current Regulation 16 submission consultation for the Payhembury Neighbourhood Plan.
21. **Warren View Sports Ground Investigation** (pages 93-95)
To consider an increase of £20,000 in the project budget.

[Decision making and equalities](#)

For a copy of this agenda in large print, please contact the Democratic Services Team on 01395 517546

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 31 October 2018

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 5.30pm and ended at 7.15pm

The Chairman led a minute's silence for our dear friend and colleague Councillor Bill Nash who sadly passed away during the last week.

***77 Public Speaking**

Cllr Kevin Blakely, Chairman of Cranbrook Town Council submitted a question with notice, regarding financial support for a Deputy Town Clerk for Cranbrook. This was to provide temporary financial support to fund the employment of a Deputy Town Clerk until there was sufficient development and consequently sufficient income from the parish precept for the Town Council to be independent and sustainable. In answer to the question, the Chairman suggested that the request to be considered again at the point of debating the 2019/20 draft budget in January/February 2019 so it could be considered alongside other competing demands and in the context of the Council needing to approve a balanced budget, rather than making a decision in isolation. Members and Cllr Blakely agreed to this suggestion.

Mr Conrad Libischer spoke on Minute 92, Axminster Relief Road. He was concerned to the issues of the Waycroft Bridge and A35 junctions at the ends of the new road, as costs indicated did not include the two junctions. The 650 houses being built at the Waycroft Bridge end would increase traffic, which at times already caused this to bottleneck. Mr Libischer claimed the A35 end was unsafe and more needed to be invested to make this a safer junction especially when turning right.

***78 Minutes**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 3 October 2018 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

***79 Declarations**

Cllr Philip Skinner, Minute 80; personal interest – Exeter Science Park Board of Directors and Chairman of Exmouth Regeneration Board

Cllr Pauline Stott, Minute 80; personal interest – Director of Water Sports Centre

Cllr Paul Diviani, Minute 92; personal interest – Chairman of Axminster Regeneration Board

Cllr Paul Diviani, Minute 80; personal interest – Member of Exmouth Regeneration Board

Cllr Ian Hall, Minute 92; personal interest – County Councillor representative for Axminster

Cllr Iain Chubb, Minute 92; personal interest – County Councillor lives in Axminster

***80 Matters of urgency**

Queen's Drive Regeneration Project

The purpose of this report was to seek approval to commence the Queen's Drive road and car park works in November 2018.

Discussions included the following:

- Had audit advice regarding the risks involved be given?
- Was there a written agreement from Grenadier before Cabinet made a decision?
- Concern that not all agreements were in place

- Verbal assurances were not enough when making major financial decisions
- There was a urgent need for a better car park and this work needed to be started soon to be ready for the busy summer season
- The Phase 1 car park was smaller than the present car park, how could this be shown as a benefit to the Town?
- How could it be demonstrated that there would be better all year round usage of the car park as well a planned revenue stream?

The Deputy Chief Executive responded by reminding Members that November 2016 report on Queen's Drive regeneration included cost scenarios and that the report included up to date independent property valuation for the site. The recent verbal assurances from Grenadier would be required to be confirmed in writing.

RESOLVED:

1. that the commencement of works to the realignment of Queen's Drive and the replacement car park to take place in November 2018; and
2. that delegated approval was given to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, Portfolio Holder Finance and Chairman of Exmouth Regeneration Board to instruct the contractor to proceed with this work without further delay, be agreed.

REASON:

To ensure that work can commence on the road and car park so that;

1. Delivery commences before the winter to minimise the possibility of delay owing to bad weather;
2. create the best opportunity to complete the road and car park by spring 2019 thereby avoiding disruption to Exmouth seafront in the busy summer months;
3. cost increases due to any delay were minimised, and
4. it would not be necessary to undertake a re-procurement exercise for the contractor which could result in a further delay and cost increase.

***81 Matters referred to the Cabinet**

There were no matters referred to the Cabinet by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

***82 Exclusion of the public**

There were no items that officers recommended should be dealt with in this way.

***83 Forward Plan**

Members agreed the contents of the forward plan for key decisions for the period 1 December 2018 to 31 March 2019.

***84 Minutes of the Asset Management Forum held on 6 September 2018**

Members received the Minutes of the Asset Management Forum held on 6 September 2018.

***85 Minutes of the Housing Review Board held on 20 September 2018**

Members received the Minutes of the Housing Review Board held on 20 September 2018.

**RESOLVED (1) that the following recommendations be agreed:
Minute 22 Installation of defibrillators across East Devon**

that lifesaving defibrillators be installed and maintained at housing community centres across the district.

Minute 23 Housing Green Paper – a new deal for social landlords

the contents of the social housing Green Paper, and agree the Strategic Lead – Housing, Health and Environment's response on the key issues being proposed for the social housing sector, be considered.

Minute 24 Consultation on the use of receipts from Right to Buy sales

the response to the consultation on the use of Right to Buy receipts contained in appendix 1 to the report.

Minute 27 Lift replacement at Poplar Mount, Axminster

the urgent replacement of three lifts at Poplar Mount, Axminster, with delegated responsibility given to the Senior Technical Officer for Asset Management and Compliance to determine the most effective and suitable scheme for replacement.

Minute 28 Roof replacement, various sites

the request for additional funding from the HRA (£334, 492.06) for the re-roofing programme.

Minute 30 Legionella policy

the revised legionella policy

Minute 31 House of multiple occupation purchase, Exmouth

1. that this type of accommodation would be a beneficial addition to the Council's property portfolio, in doing so helping to reduce the need to source and pay for emergency accommodation within the private sector.
2. that the Housing Service ensures that adequate provision is put in place to effectively manage the house of multiple occupation and support tenants, as necessary.
3. that a budget be agreed of up to £500,000 from the Housing Revenue Account to include funding from Right to Buy receipts.

Minute 33 Draft of the Annual Report to Tenants 2017/18

1. the content of the annual report to tenants, subject to the information being graphically designed for reproduction in the December Housing Matters magazine.
2. that every district councillor receive a copy of the annual report to tenants 2017/18 in their pigeon holes.

***86 Minutes of the Exmouth Regeneration Board held on 20 September 2018**

Members received the Minutes of the Exmouth Regeneration Board held on 20 September 2018.

***87 Minutes of the STRATA Joint Scrutiny Committee held on 24 September 2018**

Members received the Minutes of the STRATA Joint Scrutiny Committee held on 24 September 2018.

***88 Minutes of the STRATA Joint Executive Committee held on 25 September 2018**

Members received the Minutes of the STRATA Joint Executive Committee held on 25 September 2018.

***89 Minutes of the Capital Strategy and Allocation Group held on 26 September 2018**

Members received the Minutes of the Capital Strategy and Allocation Group held on 26 September 2018.

***90 Minutes of the Overview Committee held on 27 September**

Members received the Minutes of the Overview Committee held on 27 September.

The Chairman of the Overview Committee thanked Tim Child, Property and Estates Manager for his thorough work into the Commercial Property Investment Framework.

***91 Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 4 October 2018**

Members received the Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 4 October 2018.

RESOLVED (1) that the following recommendation be agreed:

Minute 26 Review of Economy & Regeneration Services and the Growth Point Team service plans 2018/19

1. that the committee acknowledges the risk identified in the Growth Point Service Plan that housing and employment development should not be out of kilter and will be monitored closely by the Growth point Team.

RESOLVED (2) that the following recommendation be referred back to the Scrutiny Committee for further explanation:

Minute 26 Review of Economy & Regeneration Services and the Growth Point Team service plans 2018/19

2. that the Council should aim to boost resilience of the local economy and develop a self-sufficient economy as much as possible, whilst maintaining an international focus.

***92 Delivery of Axminster Relief Road**

The Service Lead, Planning Strategy and Development Management updated Members on progress with work on the delivery of the Axminster Relief Road and associated master planning of the urban extension allocated in the Local Plan. The report also considered the implications of the successful Housing Infrastructure Fund funding bid for £10 million towards the delivery of the road and options for securing the delivery of the road in full.

In response to the concerns of Mr Libischer, the Service Lead, Planning Strategy and Development Management confirmed DCC and Highways England were looking into the issues concerning Waycroft Bridge and the A35 junctions.

Discussions included the following:

- the North – South relief was a key item on infrastructure

- traffic was getting worse in the town centre due to more HGVs
- this was imperative for delivery to reduce air pollution and unlock the town centre for pedestrianisation
- turning right at the A35 junction was a precarious situation
- the 650 new homes needed jobs therefore it was important for the relief road to go ahead as well as appropriate infrastructure
- agreement that the employment element to the scheme was just as important

RESOLVED:

1. that progress that was being made towards the delivery of the Axminster Relief Road and urban extension,
2. agree in principle to borrowing the shortfall in funding for the relief road (currently estimated at £6.7 million) on the basis that this would be repaid through developer contributions,
3. that detailed arrangements with Devon County Council for EDDC to work in partnership with DCC on the future tender of a contract for the construction of the road, oversight of the construction works etc. be agreed, and
4. a detailed proposal be compiled with a programme for the borrowing and repayment of funds and presented to Members at a future meeting, be agreed.

REASON:

The recommendation was considered to be both the best and the only viable way of delivering the Axminster Relief Road, unlocking the Axminster eastern expansion site and securing the spend of the previously committed £10 million of Housing Infrastructure Funds.

93 **Transformation Strategy and Financial Plan (2019-2029)**

The Strategic Lead Finance presented the update of two key documents for approval, the Transformation Strategy and Financial Plan 2019 – 2029. Details of the documents were debated by the Budget Working Party on 17 October 2018 who agreed in principle with the proposed direction being outlined.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the Transformation Strategy and Financial Plan (2019 -2029) be approved, and
2. £200,000 be allocated from the Transformation Fund to meet one off costs associated with the “fit for purpose” strategic theme in the Transformation Strategy.

REASON:

It was good practice in managing the finances of the Council to produce a Financial Plan looking at the future direction of the Council’s budgets. To consider the implications of spending plans and the level of resources likely to be available. It was only by looking at the Council’s budget over a longer period, that action could be taken that would influence the direction and shape of future service delivery within a balanced budget.

The Transformation Strategy identified key strategic themes that underpin the Council’s transformational activity to help achieve savings/efficiencies and to help continue to protect front line services

*94 **Budget Monitoring Report for Month 6**

The report gave a summary of the Council's overall financial position for 2018/19 at the end of month six (30 September 2018).

Current monitoring indicated that:

- The General Fund Balance was being maintained at or above the adopted level.
- The Housing Revenue Account Balance was being maintained at or above the adopted level.

RESOLVED:

that the variances identified as part of the Revenue and Capital Monitoring process up to Month 6 be acknowledged.

REASON:

The report updated Members on the overall financial position of the Authority at set periods and included recommendations where corrective action was required for the remainder of the financial year.

*95 **Viewpoint Survey 2018.**

The Portfolio Holder Corporate Services and the Strategic Lead Organisational Development and Transformation reported the findings of the Viewpoint Survey for 2018. A new media presentation was shown to highlight the key findings.

The Chairman wished to pass on his thanks to Karen Jenkins and her team for the in-house and more engaging presentation.

RESOLVED:

1. That Members welcome the findings of the survey and work with officers to ensure that these results were taken into consideration during the Service Planning process for 2019/20, and
2. that the Council's Overview Committee consider the report and its findings with a view to making further recommendations.

REASON:

That the survey findings assist in the pursuit of continuous improvement.

*96 **Monthly Performance reports – September 2018**

The report set out performance information for the 2017/18 financial year for September 2018 was supplied to allow Cabinet to monitor progress with selected performance measures and identify any service areas where improvement was necessary.

There were two indicators showing excellent performance:

1. Days taken to process changes to Housing Benefit claims
2. Percentage of planning appeal decisions allowed against the authority's decision to refuse

There were two performance indicators showing as concern for the month of September:

1. Days taken to process new Housing Benefit claims – the team was currently working through a transition period to Universal Credit which was impacting on performance.

2. Working days lost due to sickness absence - there had been a significant increase this year in employees who have been absent for two months or more as a result of surgery and serious health issues for 2 or months. These cases were being proactively managed through HR and referenced to Occupational Health advice to facilitate a return to work as soon as possible. The Council continued to train its managers in this difficult area and worked closely with them to facilitate return to work.

RESOLVED:

that the progress and proposed improvement action for performance measures for the 2017/18 financial year for September 2018 be noted.

REASON:

the performance reports highlighted progress using a monthly snapshot report; SPAR report on monthly performance indicators and system thinking measures in key service areas including Development Management, Housing and Revenues and Benefits.

Attendance list

Present:

Portfolio Holders:

Ian Thomas	Leader
Phil Skinner	Deputy Leader / Economy
Dean Barrow	Finance
Iain Chubb	Transformation
Alan Dent	Corporate Services
Paul Diviani	Strategic Development
Jill Elson	Sustainable Homes and Communities
Marcus Hartnell	Deputy Portfolio Holder Environment
Tom Wright	Environment

Cabinet apologies:

Geoff Pook Asset Management

Non-Cabinet apologies:

Mark Williamson
Tim Dumper
Eileen Wragg
Simon Grundy
Matt Booth
John O'Leary
Eleanor Rylance
Brenda Taylor
Brian Bailey
Peter Burrows
Douglas Hull

Also present (for some or all of the meeting)

Councillors:

Bruce de Saram
Pauline Stott

Ian Hall
David Barratt
Mike Allen
Paul Carter
Rob Longhurst
Cathy Gardner
Roger Giles
Cherry Nicholas
Peter Faithfull
Ben Ingham
Megan Armstrong
Andrew Moulding
Graham Godbeer
Maddy Chapman
Marianne Rixson
Steve Gazzard
Geoff Jung
Mike Howe
Steve Hall

Also present:

Officers:

Mark Williams, Chief Executive
Richard Cohen, Deputy Chief Executive
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing
Karen Jenkins, Strategic Lead Organisational Development and Transformation
Ed Freeman, Service Lead Planning Strategy and Development Management
Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Amy Gilbert-Jeans, Acting Service Lead Housing
Alison Hayward, Senior Manager, Regeneration and Economic Development
Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer

Chairman Date.....

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Forward Plan of Key Decisions - For the 4 month period 1 January 2019 to 30 April 2019

This plan contains all **the (i) important decisions that the Council and (ii) Key Decisions that the Council's Cabinet** expects to make during the 4-month period referred to above. The plan is rolled forward every month.

Key Decisions are defined by law as “**an executive decision** which is likely:–

- (a) to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the Council's area

In accordance with section 9Q of the Local Government Act 2000, in determining the meaning of “significant” in (a) and (b) above regard shall be had to any guidance for the time being issued by the Secretary of State.

A public notice period of 28 clear days is required when a Key Decision is to be taken by the Council's Cabinet even if the meeting is wholly or partly to be in private. Key Decisions and the relevant Cabinet meeting are shown in bold.

The Cabinet may only take Key Decisions in accordance with the requirements of the Executive Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of the Constitution and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Meetings and Access to information)(England) Regulations 2012. A minute of each key decision is published within 2 days of it having been made. This is available for public inspection on the Council's website <http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk>, and at the Council Offices, Knowle, Sidmouth, Devon. The law and the Council's constitution provide for urgent key decisions to be made without 28 clear days' notice of the proposed decisions having been published. A decision notice will be published for these in exactly the same way.

This document includes notice of any matter the Council considers to be Key Decisions which, at this stage, should be considered in the private part of the meeting and the reason why. Any written representations that a particular decision should be moved to the public part of the meeting should be sent to the Democratic Services Team (address as above) as soon as possible. **Members of the public have the opportunity to speak on the relevant decision at meetings (in accordance with public speaking rules) unless shown in italics.**

Obtaining documents

Committee reports made available on the Council's website including those in respect of Key Decisions include links to the relevant background documents. If a printed copy of all or part of any report or document included with the report or background document is required please contact Democratic Services (address as above).

Decision		List of documents.	Lead/reporting Officer	Decision maker and proposed date for decision	Other meeting dates where the matter is to be debated / considered	Operative Date for decision (assuming, where applicable, no call-in)	Part A = Public meeting Part B = private meeting [and reasons]
1.	Recycling & waste container charging for new developments		Service Lead - StreetScene	Cabinet 2 January 2019	Recycling & Waste Partnership Board 7 November 2018	10 January 2019	Part A
2.	Beer Pilot		Deputy Chief Executive	Council 27 February 2019	Asset Management Forum 6 December 2018 Cabinet 2 January 2019	28 February 2019	Part A
3.	Seaton Seafront		Deputy Chief Executive	Council 27 February 2019	Asset Management Forum 6 December 2018 Cabinet 2 January 2019	28 February 2019	Part A
4.	Commercial Property Investment Framework		Deputy Chief Executive	Council 27 February 2019	Special Asset Management Forum (TBA) Cabinet 6 February 2019	28 February 2019	Part A
5.	Corporate Management of Assets		Deputy Chief Executive	Council 27 February 2019	Special Asset Management Forum (TBA) Cabinet 6 February 2019	28 February 2019	Part A

Decision		List of documents.	Lead/reporting Officer	Decision maker and proposed date for decision	Other meeting dates where the matter is to be debated / considered	Operative Date for decision (assuming, where applicable, no call-in)	Part A = Public meeting Part B = private meeting [and reasons]
6.	Delivery of Cranbrook Town Centre		Deputy Chief Executive	Council 24 April 2019	Cabinet 6 March 2019	25 April 2019	Part A

Table showing potential future important / key decisions which are yet to be included in the current Forward Plan

Future Decisions		Lead / reporting Officer	Consultation and meeting dates (Committees, principal groups and organisations) To be confirmed	Operative Date for decision To be confirmed
1.	Drill Hall update	Deputy Chief Executive	Council 24 April 2019 Cabinet 6 March 2019	Council 25 April 2019
2.	HotSW Joint Committee		Heart of the South West Productivity Strategy	

The members of the Cabinet are as follows: Cllr Ian Thomas (Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Cabinet), Cllr Paul Diviani (Strategic Development Portfolio Holder), Cllr Iain Chubb (Transformation Portfolio Holder), Cllr Philip Skinner (Economy Portfolio Holder), Cllr Tom Wright (Environment Portfolio Holder), Cllr Marcus Hartnell (Deputy Environment Portfolio Holder), Cllr Dean Barrow (Finance Portfolio Holder), Cllr Jill Elson (Sustainable Homes and Communities Portfolio Holder), Cllr Alan Dent (Corporate Services Portfolio Holder), Cllr Geoff Pook (Asset Management Portfolio Holder). Members of the public who wish to make any representations or comments concerning any of the key decisions referred to in this Forward Plan may do so by writing to the identified Lead Member of the Cabinet (Leader of the Council) c/o the Democratic Services Team, Council Offices, Knowle, Sidmouth, Devon, EX10 8HL. Telephone 01395 517546.

December 2018

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Arts and Culture Forum held at the Beehive, Honiton on 10 October 2018

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00am and ended at 12.30pm.

***1 Chairman's welcome**

The Chairman welcomed everybody to the meeting and invited those present to introduce themselves.

***2 Appointment of vice chairman**

Sally Twiss was appointed vice chairman of the Forum for the ensuing year.

***3 Minutes**

The minutes of the Arts and Culture Forum meeting held on 14 March 2018 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

The Service Lead – Countryside and Leisure updated the Forum on minute 19 – EDDC what's on website. He reported that the Council had recruited a new digital communications officer who had been tasked to review and revise the best format for the 'what's on guide'. This would go beyond arts and culture in East Devon. It was suggested that the officer be invited to the next meeting of the Forum to discuss these proposals.

RESOLVED: that the Council's new digital communications officer be invited to the next meeting of the Arts and Culture Forum to discuss proposals for a what's on guide/website.

***4 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

***5 Queen's Drive Exmouth – a cultural regeneration**

The Service Lead – Countryside and Leisure introduced and welcomed EDDC's Senior Manager – Regeneration and Economic Development, and Exmouth Town Council's Arts Manager to discuss Exmouth events summer 2018, which included Queen's Drive Space and Exmouth Festival.

The Senior Manager – Regeneration and Economic Development explained and outlined the Queen's Drive regeneration area. The site, which had been branded 'Queen's Drive Space', was split into three zones:

- A children's play area.
- A seating area with food and drinks beverage.
- An events space area for temporary uses.

There had been a multi team approach across EDDC to delivering these areas and the 'active' zones were visible from the roadside. It was noted that 'play and leisure' was not just about children. There was a good pop up food offer with approximately 8 or 9 local food outlets, which varied and changed. There was relaxed informal seating, which had been built out of old pallets, and the existing kiosk had become a bar, run by Oddfellows.

A stage had been built for music and theatre events and the first event held at the space was a live screening of Swan Lake, which 240 people attended.

Lessons learnt from the first season included:

- The need for strong partnerships.

- Advertising and promotion of Queen's Drive Space and events – more signage.
- Managing ticket sales and ticket pricing.
- Housekeeping.
- Range of foot outlets and their offer – more in the future.
- Positive feedback, people want similar in the future.
- Type of entertainment, location, timings.
- Encouraged by the level of support – offers of help to promote.
- Actions speak louder than words.
- Engaging a relatively younger audience.

The lack of Box Office in Exmouth was a problem. There had been no venue in the town to take cash for bookings. It was noted that Streetscene, when running events at other spaces across the district had experienced similar problems.

Overall, the area had been very successful. The total budget for the area was £300,000, which included site clearance, infrastructure, staffing and events. It was that thought that this year the area had broken even, which was very encouraging and would be in a much stronger position the following year. Sponsorship had been obtained from some private sector businesses, including Stagecoach, Clinton Devon Estates, Dyball and Butler, as well as from Exmouth Town Council.

***6 Exmouth festival 2018 – review and plans for the future**

Exmouth Town Council's Arts Manager explained that Exmouth Festival had been on at the same time as the launch of Queen's Drive Space. She went on to give some background information about the Exmouth Festival, which had been going for approximately 20 years. The festival was a Town Council initiative but was very much community led. It had initially been held in Manor Gardens, but then grew and moved to Imperial Recreation Ground. Now approximately 6,000-7,000 people a day attended, with over 40,000 people attending over the whole event. The festival worked so well and was so popular because it was free. There was a huge amount of good will around it and it was used by the community to show case what it was doing all year. It provided for meaningful engagement and services such as the Thelma Hulbert Gallery and the Countryside Service also encouraged people in through their activities.

The event cost around £70,000 to run. £10,000 was provided by the town council and £5,000 from the district council. The Arts Manager applied for Arts Council funding every year, but this could not be relied up. Neither could the £10,000-£13,000 received from donations in buckets. The remaining £25,000 was generated from the festival, for example through the fair and food.

The Arts Manager organised the festival annually, with approximately 30 volunteers. More information was now provided on the website, with a smaller printed programme produced. It was hoped to move the West Country traditions event, which was held the weekend after the festival as there were so many events going on beforehand people tended to be fatigued. It was suggested that this could be combined into a traditions and food weekend and held in September.

It was noted that local businesses benefited from the festival week, but that this was difficult to quantify as the event was also held over the May bank holiday weekend. The Arts Manager reported that she would like to use a quantifier to demonstrate the value of the festival to the town. To evaluate the benefit of the festival would help with raising funds long term. The Senior Manager – Regeneration and Economic Development advised that

the aim for regeneration in Exmouth was to increase the economy and level of spend in the town.

On behalf of the Forum the Chairman thanked the Senior Manager – Regeneration and Economic Development and Arts Manager for very interesting presentations.

***7 Manor Pavilion Theatre summer season 2018 review and plans for improving the future**

The Service Lead - Countryside and Leisure introduced the Manor Pavilion Theatre Manager who had attend the meeting to report on the 2018 summer season and plans for the future. He reported that he had found the Exmouth presentation fascinating, with many cross over areas for the theatre.

The 12 days in 12 weeks summer season at the Manor Pavilion Theatre had just finished. Paul Taylor Mills had been operating the summer season for the past 6 years and had produced 72 plays. The Paul Taylor Mills name had given the theatre great credibility. The summer season 2018 had been the best season ever, with ticket sales and audience figures up on previous years. There had been a launch night in May, with an invited audience of 252. The next day ticket sales were open to the public, with people queuing outside the box office from 7:30am waiting to buy tickets. The Theatre Manager reported on the shows that had been particularly popular, as well as those that had not worked so well. Some nights and performances had been sold out. It was thought that the theatre had been hugely successful with the weather as there were more holiday makers around looking for something to do.

It was noted that the summer season ticket prices had remained the same but audience figures had increased. In 2015 the box office had made £157,000, in 2016 it had made £167,000, in 2017 it had made £196,000 and in 2018 the box office had made £203,000.

The Manor Pavilion Theatre Manager circulated the 'what's on guide' for the autumn season. He reported that there was a great programme ahead for next year, with stand up comedy in the autumn season and a new show for Christmas. Bookings were already being taken for 2021.

The Theatre Manager advised that consideration was being given to internet ticket sales. He did not want to rush into anything, but the demand and need was there and online ticket sales would be in place for next year.

Councillor Faithfull asked for the profit figures for the Manor Pavilion car park. The Service Lead – Countryside and Leisure reported that to the end of August (month 5) £10,000 had been collected. He would ask for the car parks team to provide Cllr Faithfull with the net figure. The income was already being used to improve the customer experience as the money was being reinvested into the theatre. The Manor Pavilion Theatre Manager advised that the introduction of the pay and display car park had caused no adverse effects whatsoever for the theatre goers/audience. People understood and supported it and there had been none of the previous problems of people being blocked in and the car park being used by non-users of the theatre. In addition to this, even when there was no event being held in the theatre, the car park was now generating extra revenue for the premises.

On behalf of the Forum the Chairman thanked the Manor Pavilion Theatre Manager for his report and was pleased that online ticket sales would soon be going ahead.

***8 Thelma Hulbert Gallery's projects update and plans for 2019**

The Chairman welcomed the Marketing and Fundraising Officer from the Thelma Hulbert Gallery (THG) to the meeting. She explained that she would be focusing on one project during her presentation and went on to outline the 'Experiencing the Landscape: Art on the East Devon Way', which was a collaborative project between THG and East Devon AONB to celebrate 25 years of the East Devon Way. This was the first time that the THG had been working outside the gallery space.

Some of the reason behind the project were:

- Raise public awareness of the EDW and celebrate its 25-year anniversary.
- Combine the natural environment and art to promote health and wellbeing.
- Recognise the strengths that the arts bring to rural economies and tourism.
- Pave the way for ambitious ongoing creative activities, placing East Devon's AONB on the region's cultural map.
- Bring high quality diverse art to new audiences, redefining where and how art can take place.
- Support the practice of artists working in rural areas.
- Strategically develop these partnerships.

Project funding partners were:

- Arts Council England
- East Devon AONB
- The Northbrook Community Trust
- Parishes Together funding
- (Beer, Colyton and Honiton)
- Tesco Bags of Help
- The Elmgrant Trust
- Arts Council England (via THG)
- As well as some anticipated workshop income

The project involved:

- 18 artists
- 11 East Devon schools
- 24 public workshops across East Devon
- 3 new commissioned artworks
- Over 80 creative sessions in total
- A project exhibition at THG
- A celebratory community event at THG, a museums at night party on 27 October 2018, 5pm – 7pm.

The project involved the THG partnering with seven local and national festivals and events:

- East Devon Heath Week
- Dorset Arts Week
- Devon Artists Network Open Studios
- Sidmouth and East Devon Walking Festival
- LED Walking for Health
- The Big Draw
- Museums at Night

Overall the project involved reaching greater audiences and meeting the needs of surrounding rural communities. EDDC's Senior Manager – Regeneration and Economic

Development commented that she found the presentation fascinating and how important creativity was for people's well-being and mental health. She hoped that in the future the THG could link up with the Queen's Drive Space to offer things such as arts workshops, or wildlife walks run by the Countryside Service, starting at Queens Drive.

On behalf of the Forum the Chairman thanked the Marketing and Fundraising Officer for her presentation and thanked the team at THG for all their hard work.

***9 EDDC Countryside water vole recovery project and local charcoal produce initiative**

The Chairman introduced the Countryside Service's Team Leader for EDDC's local nature reserves, who explained two different and exciting commercial ventures. Both initiatives demonstrated how the Countryside team was looking to increase important wildlife and also how to grow an income from the nature reserves that would support these types of wildlife projects.

The first project was the water vole recovery project, which involved a two year phased introduction of water voles to the Seaton Wetlands area. Mink control was the great threat to this project, although there had been far fewer mink sightings this year and otters had also returned to the area and were the best natural form of minx defence. This meant that the habitat was more sustainable for the water voles. There were four key locations and technology was being used to monitor the sites. Volunteers were now being utilised in more proactive ways. 213 water voles were released in the first release, with a similar number planned for the following year. It was hoped that the water voles would become a positive attractive feature for visitors of the wetlands. It was noted that the Seaton Wetlands had a passive ask for donations and that weekly site income donation income represented a roughly 50/50 split between refreshment offer and donation post in car park.

The second project involved a mobile charcoal making kiln. The Countryside Service had invested in the Exeter retort, a charcoal making kiln. The arising from the woodlands the service managed would be converted into high quality barbeque charcoal, which were much more environmentally friendly than using briquettes and other charcoals. The Countryside Team Leader explained the robust process involved in using the retort, which took seven hours to produce 180 kilos of charcoal. It was a very effective for use on the dispersed local nature reserves and could also be hired out to other organisations.

The Countryside Service would be the exclusive supplier of locally produced charcoal for Darts Farm next year. It had been decided to use just one outlet and Darts Farm was a good, high quality brand to be associated with. There were three types of charcoal; woodland, hedgerow and heathland and these would be branded and include the badge 'made on East Devon nature reserves'. There would also be a tag giving more information about the area where the charcoal was made and how and where to visit it. Over a 26 week season it was expected to provide an income of £2,860, based on 20 bags per week being sole at £5.50 per bag. This was from core work and materials that would otherwise have been bonfired.

On behalf of the Forum the Chairman thanked the Countryside Team Leader for presenting these commercial approaches to the countryside. The Service Lead – Countryside and Leisure explained that these were examples of how the council was looking at ways to generate revenue to support service areas and meet budgetary challenges.

***10 Any other business**

The Chairman informed the Forum that a request had been received from Wendy Urqhart, the Beehive's events programme coordinator to join the Forum as an independent member. He reported that Wendy had a long experience in helping to deliver cultural activities in East Devon with her involvement in Villages in Action within Stockland and supporting all forms of performing arts within East Devon. She would bring passion, enthusiasm and as well as a wealth of experience to the Forum that would highlight the needs and opportunities for East Devon's arts venues.

RESOLVED: that Wendy Urqhart be invited to attend the next meeting of the Arts and Culture Forum to introduce herself and explain how she would help develop the aims and ambitions of the Forum.

***11 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Arts and Culture Forum would be held during early 2019, with a date to be confirmed in due course.

Attendance list

Present:

EDDC Councillors:

Cllr John O'Leary – Culture Champion (Chairman)

Cllr Peter Faithfull

Community representatives:

Sally Twiss

Town representatives:

Cllr Bruce de Saram - Exmouth

Cllr John Dyson - Sidmouth

Cllr Duncan Sheridan-Shaw - Honiton

Officers:

Charlie Plowden, Service Lead – Countryside and Leisure

Alethea Thompson, Democratic Services Officer

Graham Whitlock, Manor Pavilion Theatre Manager

Also present:

James Chubb – Countryside Team Leader

Alison Hayward – Senior Manager, Regeneration and Economic Development

Carla Hiley – Exmouth Arts Manager

Emma Molony - Marketing & Fundraising Officer, Thelma Hulbert Gallery

Apologies:

Cllr Sarah Gunn – Cranbrook Town Council

Cllr Andrew Moulding – Axminster Town Council

Cllr Elli Pang – Ottery St Mary Town Council

Cllr Tom Wright – Budleigh Salterton

John Golding, Strategic Lead - Housing, Health and Environment

Chairman Date.....

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Notes of a Meeting of the Budget Working Party held on Wednesday 17 October 2018

The meeting started at 2.30pm and ended at 3.39pm.

12. Notes from last meeting – 28 June 2018

The notes of the previous meeting held on 28 June 2018 were received and noted, with the addition of apologies from Councillor Peter Burrows.

13. Declarations

Councillor Peter Burrows: personal interest minute 14.

14. Medium Term Financial Plan and Transformation Strategy 2019 - 2029

The Party were asked to consider the current position of the MTFP and the preparations to preparing balanced budgets. The Transformation Strategy had also been refreshed from the adopted version in October 2017.

The Strategic Lead – Finance highlighted from his report key areas for the Party to take into consideration:

- The current position showed a shortfall of £1,952,088 for 2020/21. This was based on a no growth budget, with no additional requests;
- Assumption that the £5 increase in council tax will remain in place for 2019/20 with an inflation increase applied for future years;
- Business rate income has been assumed under the existing scheme of 50% retention;
- New Homes Bonus (NHB) has been maintained at a level of £1.5m. The scheme is expected to continue for 2019/20, with an estimated income of £3.6m in total, with the balance being used for capital projects.

The transformation strategy approach has been to maintain a viable workforce, moving away from traditional approaches to budget reductions to innovation and generation of income. The refresh of the strategy introduced two changes to the strategic themes of the approach, now including **digital by design** and **fit for purpose**.

The transformation strategy has delivered the framework for a debate on efficiency costs and increasing income, which is now embedded in the culture of officers. It was key now to continue to deliver messages to residents on how the Council is funded in this way.

Specific questions were asked and detail given, on individual elements, such as income from car parks, and the predicted income from the Green Waste scheme. The events officer post still had to be explored further in terms of a corporate approach and the expectation of what the post will provide. The Housing Company had explored some opportunities, but was keen to ensure that any opportunity taken could be delivered.

In discussing the service risks not currently included in the MTFP, Exeter's recent decision to pull funding from the Growth Point Team was highlighted. The Strategic

Management Team would explore how much they wanted to fund partnership working in light of this, or consider a re-focus on this authority – such as reallocating the resource to the Enterprise Zone.

The Chairman asked for further consideration of items for the later years in the MTFP, as no items were yet listed for 2025 – 2029.

Further discussion covered:

- Clarity for budget discussion at the joint meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees – the budget presented will show no growth, other than some specific requirements. Specifically, there will not be a list of “special items” to offer to Members to decide if they should be added to the budget – this budget does not have scope for any further additions;
- Scope of increase in Council Tax;
- Succession planning for play inspector was necessary because of the need for continuous inspection of play areas for insurance purposes;
- A factsheet on Cranbrook would be helpful.

Attendance list

Present:

Councillors:

Ian Thomas, Leader (Chairman)
Dean Barrow, Portfolio Holder Finance
Paul Diviani, Portfolio Holder Strategic Development
Jill Elson, Portfolio Holder Sustainable Homes and Communities
Alan Dent, Portfolio Holder Corporate Services
Marcus Hartnell, Deputy Portfolio Holder Environment
John Dyson
Peter Burrows
Megan Armstrong

Officers:

Mark Williams, Chief Executive
Richard Cohen, Deputy Chief Executive
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead – Finance
John Golding, Strategic Lead – Housing and Environment
Karen Jenkins, Strategic Lead – Organisational Development and Transformation
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

Apologies:

Tom Wright, Portfolio Holder Environment
Geoff Pook, Portfolio Holder Asset Management

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Notes of a Meeting of the New Homes Bonus Panel held at Knowle, Sidmouth on Thursday 25 October 2018

Present: Councillors:
Dean Barrow (Chairman)
David Barratt
Paul Diviani
Simon Grundy
Tom Wright

Also Present: Councillor Phil Twiss, Devon County Council

Apologies: Councillors:
Mike Allen
Douglas Hull
Geoff Jung
Christopher Pepper

Officers:
Ali Eastland, Locality Development Officer, DCC

Officers: Jamie Buckley, Community Engagement and Funding Officer
Chris Lane, Democratic Services Officer

The meeting started at 10:00am and finished at 10.45am.

*1 Minutes

The notes of the previous meeting of the New Homes Bonus Panel held on 14 May 2018 were confirmed as a true record.

*2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

*3 Communities Together Fund Application Form and Guidance Notes for 2018/19

Members received the Communities Together Fund application form and guidance notes for 2018/19

4 Communities Together Draft Scoring Template

Members received the Communities Together Fund Draft Scoring Template for 2018/19 which was for discussion.

During discussion the following points were highlighted:

-) There is £194,000 available in 2018/19, in addition there is £30,905.60, which is ring-fenced for Exmouth and this funding would be distributed by a 'Dragons Den' style event.
-) In response to a question, it was confirmed that contributions in kind could be considered as match funding on a case by case basis.
-) Crowdfund East Devon had been agreed by Council the previous evening.
-) There is expected to be considerable interest in this year's round of funding, with a large number of applications for funding received.

-) There was the possibility of Devon County Council providing additional funding for schemes through their Community Chest on Crowdfund UK.

RECOMMENDED: that the draft scoring template as presented in the report be approved.

Recommendations for Cabinet that will resolve in an action being taken:

Overview Committee on 15 November 2018

Minute 21 Digital Strategy

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet:

That the Digital Strategy be recommended to Council for approval, for reason of continuing to improve how customers transact with the Council, whilst maintaining the availability of human interaction for vulnerable groups and other sectors of the community that require help.

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview Committee held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 15 November 2018

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 8.12pm.

***17 Public speaking**

There were no public speakers at the meeting.

***18 Minute confirmation**

The minutes of the Overview Committee held on the 27 September 2018, were confirmed as a true record.

***19 Declarations of interest**

No declarations were made at the meeting.

20 Transformation Strategy and Financial Plan 2019 - 2029

The Chairman welcomed the Strategic Lead Transformation and Organisational Development, the Strategic Lead Finance, and the Portfolio Holder Finance to the meeting.

The Transformation Strategy approach has been to maintain a viable workforce, moving away from traditional approaches to budget reductions, to innovation and generation of income. The refresh of the strategy introduced two changes to the strategic themes of the approach, now including **digital by design** and **fit for purpose**. Each of the seven themes were explained to the committee, with some illustrative examples.

The transformation strategy has delivered the framework for a debate on efficiency costs and increasing income, which is now embedded in the culture of officers. It was key now to continue to deliver messages to residents on how the Council is funded in this way.

The Strategic Lead – Finance highlighted from his report the following key areas:

- The current position showed a shortfall of £1,952,088 for 2020/21. This was based on a no growth budget, with no additional requests;
- Assumption that the £5 increase in council tax will remain in place for 2019/20 with an inflation increase applied for future years;
- Business rate income has been assumed under the existing scheme of 50% retention;
- New Homes Bonus (NHB) has been maintained at a level of £1.5m. The scheme is expected to continue for 2019/20, with an estimated income of £3.6m in total, with the balance being used for capital projects.

The committee were taken through the Medium Term Financial Plan in detail, and how the innovations brought through the Transformation Strategy had helped over previous years, and continued to deliver for future years, to provide additional income and savings. There was still further work to be undertaken to deliver enough to produce a balanced budget for future years.

In discussing the MTFP and the projects set out in the Transformation Strategy Monitor, the committee raised the following issues:

- Clarification on the decrease and cease of the rate support grant – Members were reminded of the three year settlement, which ends in 2019/20;

- Concern raised by Councillor Allen on the staffing levels for economic development being reduced when there was a demand to increase those skill sets to help deliver more economic development, as well as a need to increase commercial skills as the Council looks to increase income from commercial assets. The Strategic Lead Finance confirmed that the savings identified at an operational level with posts did not affect the objectives of seeking efficiencies. The agreed additional resource to help deliver economic development previously was still retained in the draft budget for 2019/20. The Strategic Lead Transformation and Organisational Development outlined the vacancy management process currently in place, and the work already underway in examining the workforce as a whole. Once the new Councils priorities were known after the May election, a report would come forward with recommendation on changes to the workforce for delivering those priorities;
- Care in monitoring the details of expenditure as well as the larger budgets – the Strategic Lead Finance assured the committee that all detail is scrutinised, and that full detail is published in the Budget Book on each service;
- Street trading licence income changes, now confirmed by the Chairman of Licensing and Enforcement Committee as back in place and looking to increase for future years, following a suspension of charges whilst a number of issues were resolved;
- The “Ocean” in response to a question was clarified as a separate company from the Council and therefore any loss would be the liability of LED;
- Spend for “fit for purpose” was an operational spend to cover redundancy costs that would bring about savings in future years;
- Important to implement the strategy to help protect front line services.

The Vice Chairman welcomed the approach of the Transformation Strategy, in looking to continue to improve efficiencies of the Council, including increasing the skills matrix of staff so that they had the flexibility to meet demands as they changed over coming years.

The Chairman thanked the Strategic Leads for their clarity on explaining the financial pressures on the authority.

RECOMMENDED to Council:

To approve the Transformation Strategy and Financial Plan 2019 – 2029 and note the Overview Committee’s specific support for the Transformation Strategy looking to protect the delivery of front line services.

RESOLVED:

To receive an update at a future meeting with an outline of plans for delivering a “fit for purpose” structure for the Council.

21 Digital Strategy

The Strategic Lead Transformation and Organisational Development presented the draft Digital Strategy for debate by the committee. Many elements set out in the Strategy were already in place or underway – the strategy sought to define a clear intention of digital by design.

Attention was drawn specifically to:

- The increasing number of transactions online and continued demand for such transactions to not only be available, but simple and straightforward to use;

- Changing the platform used to enable each customer to log into their own portal and choose to transact with the Council across a whole range of services;
- Improvements to the East Devon mobile app;
- Applying the GDS government principles to all transactions – for example delivering a service that works as effectively as applying for car road tax or passport renewal;
- Improvements to technology does not detract from the human interaction that is still required and continues to be provided across services.

During debate, the committee raised issues including:

- Concern that vulnerable, elderly and the blind or partially sighted could be disadvantaged by the increasing demand to transact online. In response, the committee were reminded that all services were acutely aware of the need to continue to serve customers in the way that suited the customer. A Member gave an example of undertaking a transaction online with the help of a customer service advisor at Exmouth Town Hall;
- Investigate the process used by East Anglia in transacting permitted development applications online;
- In response to a question, the committee were informed of the work of the web editors across the services and the use of clear guidelines to ensure uniformity of message and style. The communications team also oversee the content as a whole to ensure that the site is relevant and clear to understand;
- Most searches were undertaken by the public from a search engine such as Google rather than drilling down through the site itself.

The Vice Chairman commented that the continued improvement to online transactions empowered the public to help themselves during their busy lives. He also welcomed that the need for human interaction was still, and will continue to be, available to those who needed it.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet:

That the Digital Strategy be recommended to Council for approval, for reason of continuing to improve how customers transact with the Council, whilst maintaining the availability of human interaction for vulnerable groups and other sectors of the community that require help.

RESOLVED

That the Overview Committee receive an update on progress of implementation at a future meeting.

***22 Viewpoint Survey**

The Portfolio Holder Corporate for Corporate Services presented the findings from the latest Viewpoint Survey. The committee watched a short video on the key messages from the findings. The Portfolio Holder felt that using more visual means of communicating key messages was much more effective, and could be shared across multiple media platforms. This method of communication could be utilised for a number of issues, including the Council Plan.

The media format provided a means of informing and educating the public in a digestible way.

Comments from the committee included:

- The video shown could be refined further to include infographics and made shorter, in order to increase the number of people who would watch it;
- The format could be applied to other areas of the council, such as promoting what services are available to local businesses to aid them. The Communications Team had already assisted with the production of a business magazine;
- Messages communicated to the public must also acknowledge that not all the Council's customers are satisfied, and what actions are being taken to try to resolve those issues;
- The format would be applied to the next Council Plan, which will be drafted after the next election in May. An example of good practice of communicating a Council Plan could be found on the website of South Norfolk Council;
- The software used to create the video is available online. A suggestion was made that such software could be utilised locally for communicating neighbourhood plan key messages.

RESOLVED

that the Overview Committee endorses the format of communicating the results of the Viewpoint Survey and asks that comments made are taken into account as the format is developed and refined.

***23 Overview Forward Plan**

The Chairman outlined forthcoming work for the committee. Requests were made to timetable in work on business development, specifically small businesses in food who want to expand, and the impact of Brexit on their ability to export.

Attendance list

Councillors Present:

Graham Godbeer (Chairman)
Ian Hall
Mark Williamson
Peter Faithfull
Mike Allen
Mark Evans Martin
Steve Hall
Rob Longhurst
Tim Dumper
Geoff Pratt

Councillors Also Present:

Dean Barrow
Alan Dent
Brian Bailey

Officers

Karen Jenkins, Strategic Lead Transformation and Organisational Development
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance
Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

Councillor Apologies:

Douglas Hull
Andrew Moulding
Jill Elson
Pauline Stott

Chairman

Date.....

Recommendations for Cabinet that will resolve in an action being taken:

Housing Review Board on 22 November 2018

Minute 41 Chairman's welcome

RECOMMENDED by the Housing Review Board:

that Pat Gore and Cat Summers be co-opted on the Housing Review Board as tenant/leaseholder representative members.

Minute 45 Revision to the tenancy agreement

RECOMMENDED by the Housing Review Board:

1. that Cabinet approve the revised tenancy agreement, and
2. that Cabinet agree the next steps and timescales detailed in section 2 of the report,
3. that delegated authority be given to the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes and Communities and the Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment to make minor amendments to the tenancy agreement following the consultation process.

Minute 46 Fire safety in blocks of flats (compliance with statutory regulations)

RECOMMENDED by the Housing Review Board:

1. that Cabinet note the progress made in relation to fire safety in blocks of flats and agree the priority of future works to address property issues related to fire,
2. that members be aware of the significant budget required to bring all blocks of flats up to a fully compliant fire safety standard.
3. that Cabinet approve the extension of the employment of the additional Programme Works Officer (Fire Safety) for a further 12 months.

Minute 47 Renewal of Advantage South West subscription

RECOMMENDED by the Housing Review Board:

that Cabinet approve continuing to pay the annual subscription to maintain the membership to Advantage South West.

Minute 50 Home Safeguard system upgrade

RECOMMENDED by the Housing Review Board:

that Cabinet approve the business case for the upgrade of the Home Safeguard call handling system.

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Housing Review Board held at Exmouth Town Hall, Exmouth on 22 November 2018

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 2.30pm and ended at 4.45pm.

***40 Public speaking**

There were no questions raised by members of the public

41 Chairman's welcome

The Chairman welcomed tenant Pat Gore to the meeting. Pat had attended interviews, along with another tenant, Cat Summers, on 14 November, for the two vacant tenant/leaseholder representative posts on the Board. Subject to Board approval, both tenants would be formally co-opted by Full Council on 12 December 2018 and become members of the Housing Review Board.

RECOMMENDED: that Pat Gore and Cat Summers be co-opted on the Housing Review Board as tenant/leaseholder representative members.

***42 Minutes**

The minutes of the Housing Review Board meeting held on 20 September 2018 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

***43 Declarations of Interest**

Pat Gore: Personal interest - housing tenant.

Peter Sullivan: Personal interest – housing tenant.

Alek Williams: Personal interest – housing tenant.

***44 Forward plan**

The Strategic Lead, Housing, Health and Environment presented the forward plan and advised Members that the forward plan acted as a reminder of agenda items to come forward to future meetings. Members were reminded that they could add further issues to the next forward plan by informing either himself or the Democratic Services Officer.

During the meeting the following items were added to the forward plan:

- Draft housing service plan.
- Draft Housing Revenue Account budget.
- Update on the integrated asset management contract and the work taking place on mobilising the contract.
- Update on the impact of Universal Credit.

RESOLVED: that the forward plan be noted and updated.

45 Revision to the tenancy agreement

The Housing Project Officer's report updated members on progress made in the development of a revised tenancy agreement. The report contained the final draft of the revised tenancy agreement, along with an explanation of the changes made and sought approval of the revised tenancy agreement. With this approval, it was planned to enter a seven week statutory consultation with tenants from 12 December 2018.

The report also recommended that the Strategic Lead for Housing, Health and Environment, and the Portfolio holder be given the authority to make any minor amendments to the tenancy agreement following the statutory consultation.

In September 2017, a project group, consisting of housing service managers and officers and legal representation, with Mobile Support Officer consultation, was set up to revise the tenancy agreement to ensure that it reflected changes in policy and legislation implemented since the previous revision of the agreement in 2015. The HRB were notified of this in September 2017. Tenants were also updated on progress through the Tenant Involvement Forum and suggested amendments were received through the Tenant Readers Panel.

Running concurrently with the tenancy agreement revision, housing teams had been reviewing and updating their housing policies, making sure that the revised tenancy agreement would be consistent with them. Following the updating of policies, the project group members were given a last chance to suggest amendments to the tenancy agreement.

Following approval of the revised tenancy agreement a preliminary notice letter would be sent to all tenants, along with a document detailing the changes that had been made to the tenancy agreement. The statutory consultation would run for six weeks from 12 December 2018 until 31 January 2019.

Any further amendments arising from the consultation period would be incorporated into the tenancy agreement before the final agreement is presented to HRB on 28 March 2019 for approval. This would then go to Cabinet and Full Council for ratification. The formal Notice of Variation and tenancy agreement would then be sent to all tenants on 25 April 2019. The new tenancy agreement would then come into effect from 10 June 2019, six weeks after the Notice of Variation was issued.

During the meeting the Vice Chairman raised a number of issues queried by the Tenant Involvement Forum (TIF). The Solicitor reminded the Board that the draft tenancy agreement had been considered by a barrister, but suggested that officers go through the concerns raised by the TIF and amend the wording of the clauses where necessary.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that Cabinet approve the revised tenancy agreement, and
2. that Cabinet agree the next steps and timescales detailed in section 2 of the report,
3. that delegated authority be given to the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes and Communities and the Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment to make minor amendments to the tenancy agreement following the consultation process.

46 Fire safety in blocks of flats (compliance with statutory regulations)

The Senior Technical Officer's (Asset Management and Compliance) report updated the Board on the current position in relation to fire safety in blocks of flats, and set out a proposed way forward.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 set out requirements in relation to general fire safety precautions that landlords must adhere to. The basis of the legislation was centred on the completion of Fire Risk Assessments (FRA). By adopting a fire risk assessment approach, there was the need to look at how to prevent fire from occurring in the first place, by removing or reducing hazards and risks (ignition sources) and then looking at the precautions to ensure that people were adequately protected, if a fire were

still to occur. FRAs were updated every two years. Any urgent recommendations were implemented urgently. Non-urgent recommendations were packaged up and tendered. FRAs were confined to communal areas and means of escape in accordance with the guidance. FRAs were in place for all of the properties that required one.

Throughout the period in which fire safety work had been carried out EDDC had established a very close working relationship with Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service. They had provided an expert level of guidance and support throughout and were extremely satisfied with the manner in which EDDC had approached and were addressing fire safety, so much so that EDDC were held up as a flagship for other housing providers to aspire to.

The emphasis on fire safety had resulted in a detailed review of the fire safety policy, which was carried out in 2017. The policy:

- gives clarity in the main statutory regulations/legislation that applied and needed to be followed,
- defined the roles and responsibilities within housing, particularly in relation to upgrading/maintaining the buildings and managing the buildings.

The Strategic Lead – Housing, Health and Environment explained that there was a number of options in terms of spend, depending on the degree of urgency given to the fire safety works. The works highlighted in the report were essential and future FRAs would be done on a similar basis to that already done. The housing accountant advised that in the budget fire safety works could be prioritised over the new housing development fund, but this would mean that it was not possible to provide so many new properties. The three options for the delivery of outstanding fire safety works outlined in the report were:

1. Provide the complete budget to carry out all the work in the next financial year, approximately £3million.
2. Carry out the work over two financial years, approximately £1.5million per annum.
3. Carry out the work over three financial years, approximately £1million per annum.

It was noted that considerable resource would be required from the Property and Asset team to deliver the required work to prepare documentation to procure the work, whichever option was selected. It was therefore proposed to extend the employment of the Fixed Term Programmed Works Officer (Fire) beyond the initial twelve months.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that Cabinet note the progress made in relation to fire safety in blocks of flats and agree the priority of future works to address property issues related to fire,
2. that members be aware of the significant budget required to bring all blocks of flats up to a fully compliant fire safety standard.
3. that Cabinet approve the extension of the employment of the additional Programme Works Officer (Fire Safety) for a further 12 months.

47 Renewal of Advantage South West subscription

The Housing Review Board noted the report of the Senior Technical Officer (Asset Management and Compliance) which set out the benefits of membership of Advantage South West and recommended continuing membership to the organisation.

Advantage SW was a limited liability partnership owned by Live West, North Devon Homes, Ocean Housing Group and Yarlinton Housing Group. The organisation was created in 2004, and its purpose was to improve homes and lives through collaboration and innovation. The three parts to Advantage SW were:

- New build properties; Advantage SW owned the rights to a number of house type designs. In 2017-18 they finalised a new range of designs to meet the current size aspirations of its members.
- The Procurement Consortium, started in 2008 and improved value for money for its members in the products used in new build, planned and responsive maintenance. The procurement consortium had saved its members over £36m in cashable savings and RPI avoidance.
- EnergySW; the resident energy brand provided in partnership with OVO Energy that was launched in November 2015.

During 2017-18 the procurement consortium had 12 members who between them owned over 100,000 properties. Each member paid an annual subscription that was calculated dependent on its size. EDDC's subscription for 2017-18 was £13,708, excluding VAT. Since 2010 EDDC had saved £740,981 and a further £521,303 of RPI avoidance through its membership of Advantage SW.

Advantage South West had established and were delivering a programme of accredited Continuous Professional Development (CPD) sessions on topics relevant to members' staff. EDDC staff were in the process of enrolling onto various CPD courses. Membership of Advantage SW also brought benefits in terms of access to the formal network of members that provides valuable advice and guidance, as well as the specific procurement expertise that Advantage SW itself had.

The report stated that membership of Advantage SW continued to be beneficial for East Devon District Council and that membership of the group should continue for 2019/20 at a cost of approximately £15,000 excluding VAT. Through the efforts of all involved, Advantage SW delivered:

- sharing of information and good practice
- access to procurement knowledge and technology
- value for money
- good products
- an increasing range of multi-supplier frameworks
- opportunities for resident involvement
- methods to reduce fuel poverty

The Board agreed that the housing service received excellent value from the subscription to Advantage South West.

RECOMMENDED: that Cabinet approve continuing to pay the annual subscription to maintain the membership to Advantage South West.

***48 Housing Revenue Account update, to October 2018**

The Housing Accountant's report provided the Board with the current position to October 2018 and details of the year end forecast of the draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for 2018/19. The HRA showed the main areas of anticipated income and expenditure on landlord activities for the year ahead. Producing a HRA business plan had been a statutory requirement for Councils who manage and own their own stock for some time, and therefore a key document for the Board to influence.

The notable items of budget variance were:

- Lower than expected employee costs as recruitment progressed.

- Increased forecasted expenditure on compliance related items such as works resulting from fire risk assessments.
- Higher than budgeted prices for the Air Source Heat Pump programme.

The report also provided the position of the HRA capital programme for both affordable housing and other capital items outside of the HRA. The business plan included a programme of expenditure to replace properties lost through Right to Buy sales and ensure that Right to Buy receipts were invested and not returned to central government. It was noted that if Right to Buy sales declined this would have an impact on capital expenditure in future years.

The housing accountant asked the Board for a steer about the length of time the money for Fire Risk Assessments and fire safety works should be spread (1 to 3 years). It was suggested that all remaining property purchases (excluding the current house of multiple occupation) be put on hold for the remainder of the year. The accountant agreed to bring budget setting scenarios back to the next Board meeting. It was also suggested that the Garage Task and Finish Forum be revisited.

RESOLVED:

1. that the Board note the Housing Revenue Account update to August 2018 report.
2. that the housing accountant present various budget setting scenarios to the next meeting of the Housing Review Board.

***49 Housing research study update: Your wellbeing your home**

The report of the Information and Analysis Officer provided the Board with an update on the first stage of a joint three year project with the University of Birmingham and LiveWest, exploring the relationship between housing and wellbeing and landlord satisfaction. The results would support service improvement.

The Chairman welcomed Laura Rychlewski, from LiveWest to the meeting. The Information and Analysis Officer presented the research findings so far, which centred around what mattered about a home, and why. It was noted that in comparison to the previous year's STAR satisfaction survey the figures had decreased slightly. The 'your wellbeing your home' research put the tenant at the heart, rather than EDDC as the landlord. The research considered:

- financial wellbeing – over 65 year olds and women and households with children were the most likely to struggle financially.
- health and wellbeing – mental health was a high concern.
- wellbeing and experience of home – there were general themes for what the role as landlord should be.
- top problems reported – those on the housing register, LiveWest tenants and EDDC tenants.
- reasons for wanting to move or stay in current home – the most important reason reported was a desire for long-term security in the home. Other important reasons given were quality of life, affordability and suitability.

The research demonstrated that respondents in social housing had better wellbeing than those on the housing register. Having a good home mattered for overall life satisfaction. It showed that social housing was not the cause of lower quality of life, but there was a need to understand the importance of the right home for the right person. The importance of emotional and physical security for a positive wellbeing that came with having a stable home was what mattered.

The Information and Analysis Officer reported that more data would come forward over the course of the three year longitudinal study. The research so far demonstrated how important the housing service was to the people of East Devon and how it should become more holistic about delivering housing services. It was important to educate all people that it was the home that mattered, not the tenure, as there was still a stigma attached to social housing.

On behalf of the Board the Chairman thanked the Information and Analysis Officer for her powerful and interesting presentation.

RESOLVED: that the Board note the first year's results of the 'your wellbeing your home' study.

50 Home Safeguard system upgrade

The Board considered a report that would be presented to Cabinet on 28 November seeking approval for the expenditure necessary to upgrade the Home Safeguard call handling system, as outlined in the business case attached to the report. The upgrade was a necessity for the continuation of the Home Safeguard Service, which in addition to the alarm for private, sheltered and corporate customers, provided the out of hours service for EDDC and Teignbridge District Council, plus lone working services for both authorities.

Councillor Brenda Taylor thanked Home Safeguard for the excellent service it provided.

RECOMMENDED: that Cabinet approve the business case for the upgrade of the Home Safeguard call handling system.

***51 Dates of the forthcoming Housing Review Board meetings**

The Board noted the dates of the HRB meetings for the forthcoming civic year:
Thursday 24 January 2019 – 2:30pm, Council Chamber, Exmouth Town Hall
Thursday 28 March 2019 – 2:30pm, Council Chamber, Exmouth Town Hall

Attendance list

Present:

Cllr Pauline Stott (Chairman)
Cllr Megan Armstrong
Cllr Helen Parr
Cllr Brenda Taylor

Co-opted tenant members:

Mike Berridge
Peter Sullivan
Alek Williams

Independent community representative:

Christine Drew

Officers:

Graham Baker, Senior Technical Officer, Property and Asset Management
Natalie Brown, Information and Analysis Officer

Sue Bewes, Landlord Services Manager
Michelle Davidson, Compliance Surveyor
Amy Gilbert-Jeans, Property and Asset Manager
John Golding, Strategic Lead - Housing, Health and Environment
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead – Governance and Licensing
Tim Laurence-Othen, Housing Projects Officer
Andrew Mitchell, Housing Needs Manager
Giles Salter, Solicitor
Alethea Thompson, Democratic Services Officer
Rob Ward, Housing Accountant

Also present:

Cllr Jill Elson, Portfolio Holder – Sustainable Homes and Communities
Cllr Steve Gazzard
Pat Gore, tenant
Laura Rychlewski, LiveWest

Apologies:

Cllr John O’Leary
Mike Berridge, tenant
Julie Bingham, independent community representative
Josie Ireland, tenant
Jim Kelleher, tenant
Sylvia Martin, tenant
Pat Riley, tenant
Cat Summers, tenant

Chairman Date.....

Report to: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 28 November 2018
Public Document: Yes
Exemption: None
Review date for release: None



Agenda item: 13

Subject: Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20

Purpose of report: To consider and approve the working age Council Tax Reduction Scheme (known as Council Tax Support) for 2019/20 which remains unchanged from 2018/19.

Recommendation: **That Cabinet recommend to Council:**

- 1. The Council Tax Reduction Scheme for working age customers is approved for 2019/20 (unchanged from 2018/19).**
- 2. For Officers to start scoping and developing a 'banded discount scheme' for 2020/21 with any associated costs being met from the specific reserve set aside for this purpose.**

Reason for recommendation: Each year the Council is required by law to decide whether to revise or replace its scheme. There have been no significant national benefit changes that we need to reflect in our scheme and most authorities in Devon are not proposing to change their scheme for 2019/20. However, we will probably need to consider changes for 2020/21. This is because our scheme is very much aligned to Housing Benefit rules and as more customers move onto Universal Credit, we will need to shape our scheme differently in order to simplify the administration process. We will no longer be dealing with these as a combined claim.

Officer: Libby Jarrett, Service Lead – Revenues & Benefits 01395 517450.

Financial implications: The proposal is for no change to be made to the scheme in 2019/20 so there are no significant financial implications expected. The report recommends that work is started on redesigning the scheme for 2020/21 to be able to deliver a scheme which is administratively more cost effective, this accords to the Council's Transformation Strategy where the reduction of Housing Benefit Administration grant will require efficiencies to be made in administration without effecting the essential support this scheme provides to claimants. The Council received burden funding from Government to introduce a localised council tax support scheme and a balance remains in a specific reserve of £172,463.93 which should cover the necessary costs involved in implementation a revised scheme for 2020/21; software, consultation, communication etc.

Legal implications: Schedule 1A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires that the Council must decide, for each financial year, whether to revise its

scheme or to replace it with another scheme. The recommendation of the finance team is to confirm the existing scheme without revisions. The finance team carried out a detailed equality impact assessment (see background links) in respect of the changes to last year's scheme; members should consider and take into account this assessment and officer conclusions before approving the continuation of the existing scheme – as there are no changes proposed there is no need to revise the assessment nor to consult. Further, the officers responsible for implementation are aware of the need to comply with council tax statute, regulations (and, where appropriate, guidance) in implementing the scheme.

Equalities impact: Low Impact

As we are not recommending any changes to our scheme for 2019/20 the impact has been considered low. A full equality impact assessment was carried out last year when changes were being recommended. As the changes introduced for 2018/19 did not have an adverse impact, the previous impact assessment carried out still remains relevant. See background papers.

Risk: Low Risk

The scheme and process may be subject to legal challenge but as we are not proposing any changes to our scheme then the risk has been considered as low.

Links to background information:

- [Council Tax Support scheme for 2019/20](#)
- [Equality Impact Assessment for 2018/19](#)
- [Exceptional Hardship Fund](#)

Link to Council Plan: Continuously improving to be an outstanding Council.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Council Tax Reduction (known as Council Tax Support) was introduced from 1 April 2013. It is a means tested reduction/discount for council tax payers who are on a low income.
- 1.2 For working age applicants the scheme is determined by local policy and for pension age applicants it is a national scheme prescribed by legislation.
- 1.3 Local Schemes must take account of:
 - Support work incentives and in particular avoid disincentives for those moving into work
 - Our duties to protect vulnerable people (these duties already exist under the Equality Act 2010, Child Poverty Act, the Housing Act and responsibility to protect those that are disabled).
 - Armed forces covenant
- 1.4 East Devon's Council Tax Support (CTS) current scheme for working-age retains the main elements of the former national council tax benefit scheme but with the following changes that has previously been approved and adopted by Council:
 - Liability limit (maximum support) of 80%. This means that all customers have to pay the first 20% of their Council Tax bill.
 - Capital limit of £8,000
 - Limits to a Council Tax band D charge
 - No second adult reduction
 - An Exceptional Hardship Fund
 - Annual up-ratings in line with those used in Housing Benefit and/or pension age Council Tax reduction scheme.

- A Vulnerability and Incentivising Work Statement which sets out the various protections within our scheme for children, disabled, carers, war pensioners
- Earnings disregards aligned for Universal Credit claims
- Housing Benefit alignment, such as the changes to remove the family premium for all new claims, backdating to one month, temporary absence rules for absence from Great Britain,
- Minimum Income Floor for self-employed applicants and their partners.
- Full disregard of Bereavement Support Payments
- Full disregard of the We Love Manchester Emergency Fund & the London Emergencies Trust
- The way we administer notifications received by Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) in respect of Universal Credit Claims

2.0 Reviewing our scheme

- 2.1 Every year the Council must decide for each financial year, whether to revise its scheme or to replace it with another scheme. Members must review and agree a CTS scheme by 11 March of the preceding financial year.
- 2.2 The following changes were incorporated into the CTS scheme from April 2018:
- Full disregard of Bereavement Support Payments
 - Full disregard of the We Love Manchester Emergency Fund & the London Emergencies Trust
 - The way we administer notifications received by DWP in respect of Universal Credit claims
- 2.3 The first two changes were introduced in order to keep our scheme aligned with changes made by the Government to Housing Benefit. At the time we did not expect that we would have many claims, but due to the sensitive nature of these payments it was only appropriate that our local working age scheme mirrored these. We currently only have 2 cases where we are disregarding the bereavement support payments.
- 2.4 The third proposed change was in preparation for Universal Credit Full Service, which started in East Devon in July 2018. Universal Credit replaces Jobseekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit, Income Support and Housing Benefit. A separate claim for Council Tax Reduction needs to be made directly to EDDC.
- 2.5 Universal Credit is paid monthly in arrears and depending on earnings and other income received the payment may vary each month. With these varying payments this could lead to recalculating CTR each month. Unless there was a significant change we wouldn't want to recalculate entitlement monthly as this could lead to sending customers numerous Council Tax bills and changes to instalment plans. The aim of this change was to only action information when it is relevant and use an average of Universal Credit payments in the Council Tax Reduction calculation. This was an administrative change to the way we would handle the data being passed to us from DWP.
- 2.6 Since going live with Universal Credit (July 2018) we have seen a reduction in our Housing Benefit caseload (as at 30 October 2018) of 418 cases, 6.21%.

3.0 Scheme Costs/Caseload

	Working Age	Pension Age	Total
2016/17	£2,627,635 (3,763)	£4,565,875 (4,462)	£7,193,510 (8,229)
2017/18	£2,628,427 (3,402)	£4,455,577 (4,274)	£7,084,004 (7,676)
2018/19*	£2,769,863 (3,368)	£4,452,651 (4,060)	£7,222,514 (7,428)

(Caseload) *As at 5/11/18 projected annual amount

4.0 Retaining our 2018/19 scheme for 2019/20

- 4.1 To date, the changes made to our scheme do not appear to have had an overall adverse impact. As the changes made to our 2018/19 scheme did not financially disadvantage customers it was not expected that there would be an adverse financial impact on customers. Our collection rate remains high and for 2017/18 was 98.9% which is very similar to the previous year. Our collection rate for this financial year is on par with expected performance.
- 4.2 The precepting authorities are not asking for savings to be made from the scheme costs. It has to be recognised that making further cuts to the scheme could have a detrimental impact on collection performance.
- 4.3 There has been no significant national welfare changes that we need to reflect in our scheme for 2019/20.
- 4.4 There are no changes being proposed for 2019/20. Our scheme allows for the annual uprating of allowances in-line with the prescribed requirements legislation.

5.0 Going forward 2020/21

- 5.1 We have always been aware that we will need to significantly change our working age scheme as more of our customers move onto Universal Credit. This is because our scheme is very much aligned to Housing Benefit rules and whilst we administer both, we are able to assess these through one claim process. However, once we lose Housing Benefit then it becomes extremely administratively burdensome to retain this type of scheme for CTS only although we will still be required to retain the pension age scheme (as prescribed in legislation). Currently we receive admin subsidy for both Housing Benefit and CTS but each year we have seen this funding being cut. We are also expecting to see our HB subsidy being cut from next April to reflect our reducing caseload because of customers moving onto UC. In order to address this issue Councils are starting to replace their CTS schemes with a 'means tested discounted banded scheme' that is much simpler to administer. There are a number of authorities across the country that have already introduced income banded schemes and we expect more to follow over the next couple of years. Much of this will be linked to when Authorities went live with Universal Credit. It is recognised across all the Devon authorities, (officer level), that we will need to move to a banded scheme. Most Devon authorities are looking to do this from April 2020. There are two authorities (South Hams and West Devon) that are looking to introduce a banded scheme from April 2019 and are currently out to consultation on the changes that they are proposing to make. We will be able to draw from their experiences and lessons learnt from those that have already migrated.
- 5.2 In order to replace our scheme with a banded scheme will require a significant amount of work. It will involve:
- Modelling various options and fully assessing the financial impact of any changes being proposed (including understanding the equality impact against protected characteristics)
 - Consulting with our major preceptors
 - Public consultation which is a legal requirement when making changes to our scheme.
 - Scoping and determining the end to end process to make sure that any scheme being proposed is cost effective to administer
 - Procuring/ developing new software or changes to software which ideally will have full integration with online forms & back office systems.
 - Documentation, new procedures, staff training, etc.
- 5.3 Across Devon we have always worked closely in relation to our Council Tax Support schemes and our aims for a 'discounted banded scheme' would be to keep these schemes closely aligned but that allow the flexibility to reflect local needs. As Teignbridge, Exeter and

ourselves all use Strata services then this provides an opportunity to take this a step further by exploring ways to converge the administration (software, online forms, resources, etc).

- 5.4 When the Government localised Council Tax Support in 2013, Billing Authorities were given new burdens funding. Not all of this funding was used at the time and some of this was put into reserve for when we would need to significantly change our scheme. If Members agree to the recommendation to start developing a banded discount scheme to implement for 2020, then we can draw on this specific reserve to support the additional costs in introducing a new scheme.
- 5.5 The main aim of changing to a 'discounted banded scheme' is to simplify the administration process and isn't necessarily about cutting the amount of Council Tax Support given to claimants. It needs to be recognised that these are people on low incomes and there is a tipping point at which people will then not be able to pay their council tax. Since CTS was introduced from April 2013 we have made a number of changes to the scheme that has reduced the level of funding available to customers.
- 5.6 Making changes to our scheme will require consultation with the major preceptors because they take a share in the Council Tax we collect.

Report to: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 28 November 2018
Public Document: Yes
Exemption: None
Review date for release: None



Agenda item: 14

Subject: Council Tax – Long Term Empty Homes Premium

Purpose of report: Legislation has recently been passed that will allow Billing Authorities to increase the long term empty homes premium (currently an additional 50% on the full charge) for properties that are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished and have been for more than 2 years. The Government's aim is to help encourage owners to bring their properties back into use.

Recommendation: That Cabinet recommends to Council to raise the premiums being charged on long term empty properties as follows:

- From April 2019 onwards to increase the premium up to the maximum of 100% for properties that have been empty for more than 2 years
- From April 2020 onwards to increase this to 200% for properties that have been empty for more than 5 years
- From April 2021 onwards to increase this to 300% for properties that have been empty for more than 10 years

Reason for recommendation: Raising the premium could help to bring empty homes back into use which will benefit the local community as detailed in the report.

Officer: Libby Jarrett, Service Lead – Revenues & Benefits

Financial implications: The financial implications are outlined in the report.

Legal implications: The legal position is detailed in the report and no further observations are required.

Equalities impact: Low Impact
This reform could have a positive impact because it may help to bring more properties into use.

Risk: Low Risk
There is a risk that home owners may not be able to pay the additional council tax if the Council increases the premiums to the maximum provided for in legislation.
May not achieve the aim of bringing more properties into use.

Links to background information: [Rating\(Property in Common Occupation\) and Council Tax \(Empty Dwellings\) Act 2018](#)

Link to Council Plan: Encouraging Communities to be outstanding – Returning empty homes to beneficial use.

1.0 Background

1.1 Since 1 April 2013, local authorities in England have been able to charge a premium of 50% on long term empty properties (empty for more than 2 years). This is in addition to the full council tax charge. In the 2017 Autumn Budget, the Government announced to legislate to give local authorities the power to increase this further. The legislation allowing this to happen became law on 1 November 2018 and is contained in the Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018.

1.2 The Government is keen to encourage owners of empty properties to bring their properties back into use. This is because:

- there are currently 200,000 properties standing empty in England
- empty properties attract squatters, vandalism and anti-social behaviour; can be a blight on the local community; and can affect the value of the properties around them.
- when 1.6 million households are on social housing waiting lists, long term empty properties are a wasted resource.

1.3 An empty property for council tax purpose is defined as a property that is ‘unoccupied and substantially unfurnished’.

1.4 The Government have introduced the following incremental increases that can be applied to reflect the length of time that properties have been empty for:

Financial year beginning	Properties that have been empty for more than 2 years	Maximum % premium that can be charged
1 April 2019	For more than 2 years	100%
1 April 2020	For more than 2 years but less than 5 For more than 5 years	100% 200%
1 April 2021	For 2 years but less than 5 years For 5 years but less than 10 years More than 10 years	100% 200% 300%

1.5 It is for each Billing Authority to determine the percentage level up to the maximum amounts as outlined above.

1.6 Within the existing legislation there are certain classes of properties where a premium cannot be applied, these are:

- Dwelling which would be the sole or main residence of a person residing in armed forces accommodation (Class E)
- Annexes forming part of the main dwelling (Class F)

It is expected that the Government will legislate for two further classes of properties where the premium will not apply:

- Dwellings being marketed for sale (one year only)
- Dwellings being marketed for let (one year only)

1.7 In East Devon we currently have 82 properties that are subject to the empty homes premium.

- 1.8 In 2017/18 the 50% premium generated £68,987 in council tax. East Devon receives approximately 8% of this (our share of council tax).
- 1.9 The number of properties that would fall into the three categories, based on current data of 82 long term empty properties is as follows:

Council Tax Band	2-5 years	5-10 years	10 years +	Total
A	17	4	2	23
B	13	4	8	25
C	8	5	2	15
D	6	1	1	8
E	3	3	0	6
F	0	1	0	1
G	2	1	0	3
H	0	1	0	1

Based on current data

- 1.10 Assuming the maximum percentages are adopted, the additional council tax that could be generated based on these properties is as follows:

Year	Additional council tax	East Devon's share
2019/20	£59,449	£4,756
2020/21	£110,323	£8,826
2021/22	£127,663	£10,213

Above figures have been calculated based on 2018/19 average council tax charge

- 1.11 The additional income is relatively small in relation to the overall council tax raised but is significant from a relatively small number of properties. However, the overarching aim of this isn't to levy the premium but to bring more properties back into use.
- 1.12 When the premium was first introduced in 2013, the Council had 212 long term empty properties. It is evident from these figures that there has been a reduction in the number of long term empty properties. What we can't assume is that all of those properties are now lived in, as some owners may have added furniture to the property which would mean for council tax purposes they would be classed as a 'second home' (furnished but not someone's sole or main residence) and therefore wouldn't be liable to the empty homes premium or they could fall under one of the exempt categories.
- 1.13 Increasing the premiums will provide additional leverage to bring empty homes back into use which is one of the Council's actions in meeting our priority of 'Encouraging Communities to be outstanding'. The Environmental Health Manager (Private Sector Housing) who is responsible for bringing empty homes back into use is very supportive of the Council adopting this recommendation.
- 1.14 There is a risk that some of these homeowners may struggle financially to pay additional amounts of council tax. However, this could provide an opportunity for working jointly with the Private Sector Housing team to start engaging now with these owners who will be affected from April 2019 regarding how the property could be brought back into use.
- 1.15 The recommendation is to increase the premiums to the maximum prescribed level in order to encourage bringing more properties back into use.

Report to: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 28 November 2018
Public Document: Yes
Exemption: None
Review date for release: None



Agenda item: 15

Subject: Heart of the South West Joint Committee - Council Update

Purpose of report: This report includes the recommendation to delegate responsibility for the local authority input into the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) to the Joint Committee and it is important that this delegation is in place across the councils by the time of the Committee's next meeting on the 25 January 2019 which, will be a key formal date in the development of the LIS.

The report also refers to the budget position of the Joint Committee and includes an update on the 2018/19 position as well as referring to an indicative budget requirement for 2019/20. At this stage the constituent authorities are being asked to plan for a level of contribution which at least matches the 2018/19 budget contribution. However, this is an early indication and final figures will be dependent on: the outcome of the review of the Joint Committee's role, function and management support arrangements (alongside the LEP); the level of underspend from the current year's budget which will be available to carry forward (currently around £40k); and the Committee's likely work programme for 2019/20 which is yet to be developed.

Recommendation: That Cabinet recommends Council to:

- (a) Note the progress report setting out the work of the Heart of the South West (HotSW) Joint Committee since its establishment in March 2018;
- (b) Agree to delegate the development and endorsement of the HotSW Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) to the HotSW Joint Committee (noting that final approval of the HotSW LIS rests with the HotSW Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Government);
- (c) Note the Budget statement for 2018/19 set out in Appendix B and that in accordance with the decisions taken at the time the Committee was established the Council will be asked to make an annual budgetary provision to meet the support costs of the Joint Committee in line with the 2018/19 contribution. Final clarification on any additional 2019/20 budget requirement will be provided following the completion of the review of the Joint Committee's role, function and management support arrangements and development of its work programme for 2019/20.
- (d) To agree the Budget and Cost-sharing Agreement set out in Appendix B to this report.

Reason for recommendation:	To update the constituent authorities on the HotSW Joint Committee and the recommendation to delegate responsibility for the local authority input into the LIS to the Joint Committee.
Officer:	Mark Williams, Chief Executive: Email mwilliams@eastdevon.gov.uk
Financial implications:	The recommendation requests a budget in line with this Council's 2018/19 contribution (£1,400). This sum will be included in the 2019/20 draft budget for members consideration. Should a further request come forward for additional funding this would need Council approval.
Legal implications:	The recommendations in respect of budget allocation and giving delegated power to the Joint Committee are within Council's remit and therefore acceptable. Otherwise there are no legal implications requiring comment.
Equalities impact:	Low Impact
Risk:	Low Risk
Links to background information:	.
Link to Council Plan:	Developing an outstanding local economy

Report in full

1. Introduction and summary

1.1 In January 2018, the HotSW Joint Committee was formally established by the councils and organisations involved since 2015 in the devolution partnership. The Committee is tasked with improving productivity across the HotSW area in collaboration with the HotSW LEP and other organisations as necessary.

1.2 The Committee has met formally three times in 2018, in March, June and October. In addition to this the management structure that sits behind the Committee and involves Chief Executives and senior officers from across the partnership has met regularly to drive the business of the Committee. The Committee is chaired by Cllr David Fothergill, Leader of Somerset County Council and the Vice-Chair is Cllr John Tucker, Leader of South Hams District Council.

1.3 This report summarises the progress made by the Committee over recent months in key areas of activity and sets out actions proposed in the coming months. As part of this report there are specific recommendations for the constituent authorities to consider.

2. Key achievements

2.1 At each of our meetings the Committee has been briefed on recent inward investment successes achieved through the work of the local authorities and the LEP and it is these successes that we wish to add to through the work of the Joint Committee.

(a) Influencing government

The partnership's original focus in 2015 was to explore opportunities on offer through devolution to improve productivity. Since the Committee was created the influencing role has continued to be central to the work of the Joint Committee and recent months have seen successes in this area. Government policy changes and Brexit have required the

partnership to be flexible to present a united front to Government and respond to the changes. As an example, the Government has increasingly moved away from its devolution policy approach of 2015 and the partnership is now engaged in more flexible and targeted dialogues with Government. This approach is proving successful so demonstrating the benefits of presenting a single compelling partnership vision between the business and public sectors. The Committee is keen to demonstrate its ability to deliver Government objectives as well as local priorities so accessing help beyond our boundaries is critical to the success of the partnership. It is already apparent that the Joint Committee / LEP Partnership carries a critical mass that the Government is responding to through policy announcements and on-going dialogue with Government officials. The most significant announcement is the recent inclusion of the HotSW LEP area in wave 2 of developing Local Industrial Strategies (LIS). This success is due in large part to the close alignment of the Joint Committee and the LEP on the Productivity Strategy [see (b) below]. Much of the activity detailed below has resulted directly from discussions with Government.

(b) Approval of the HotSW Productivity Strategy

- (i) In March the Committee and the LEP Board agreed a challenging HotSW Productivity Strategy which set an ambition of “Doubling the size of the Heart of the South West’s economy over 20 years” with a vision of “Productivity and prosperity for all”.
- (ii) The Strategy identifies three strategic themes to improve productivity by strengthening and developing:
 - a. the leadership and ideas within businesses in our area
 - b. the housing, connectivity and infrastructure our people and businesses rely on for living, moving goods, accessing jobs and training, and exploiting new opportunities.
 - c. the ability of people in our area to work, learn and improve their skills in a rapidly changing global economy, and to maximise their economic potential.
- (iii) In addition, there are three cross-cutting themes, referred to throughout the Strategy:
 - a. Inclusive growth for our people, communities and places
 - b. Capitalising on our distinctive assets
 - c. Maximising the potential from digital technology

The Strategy can be viewed at:

<https://heartofswlep.co.uk/about-the-lep/how-we-work/productivity-strategy/>

- (c) Endorsement of the Delivery Plan. This document is key to the delivery of the Productivity Strategy and will be further developed as explained below. It is a live action plan that will be used to track performance locally and may also form the basis of annual progress reports to Government, as required under the recent national review of LEPs. It is broadly divided into two sections – a ‘core offer’ focussing on programmes that deliver Business Support and Employment and Skills, as well as ‘enablers’ including housing delivery, transport, and other infrastructure that is essential to support economic growth. These activities apply across the whole of the HotSW area. A further section focuses on programmes of activity linked to the agreed set of ‘opportunities’ that are specific to the HotSW area. The Plan incorporates current as well as future, planned activity, and is being produced in stages depending on how well developed the programmes of activity for each theme are. The current version features the opportunities that are at the most advanced stage, namely: Digital (Photonics); Advanced Engineering (marine and nuclear); High Value Tourism;

Farming, Fishing and Food. By spring 2019 it will be expanded to include: Healthy Ageing; further Digital (Creative and Big Data); Advanced Engineering (aerospace); Construction; and Defence. Place markers have also been included for inclusive growth and natural capital to be developed as part of the next phase of work. The current version of the Delivery Plan can be viewed at:

<http://www.hotswjointcommittee.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/HotSW-Draft-Delivery-Plan-October-2018.pdf>

- (d) An Opportunities Prospectus has been extracted from the Delivery Plan and will be used with local MPs, Ministers and senior Government officials as part of continuing to raise the profile of the HotSW area at a critical time ahead of the 2019 Spending Review and the anticipated launch of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund towards the end of 2019. The document will be circulated to MPs prior to the Chancellor's autumn statement as part of the influencing approach. To ensure that the Prospectus document has some longevity, the key strategic 'asks' of Government have been set out in a covering letter, jointly signed by the Chairs of the Joint Committee and the LEP. As we develop the Delivery Plan, further asks will emerge and be submitted to Ministers. The list of asks submitted in October is attached as Appendix A to this report. The Prospectus document can be viewed at:

<http://www.hotswjointcommittee.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/HotSW-Prospectus-November18.pdf>

- (e) Housing is a key enabling opportunity for the Joint Committee. Following a housing audit to gauge Local Plan progress on targets and delivery rates, a HotSW Housing Summit was held in September with key agencies including Homes England. The outcome of this successful event was an agreement to work closely with Homes England to develop a bespoke package of offers and asks with Government which will help us to successfully deliver the ambitious housing programmes we have across our area. A Housing Sector Task Force of strategic leaders and officers has been established to develop our proposition to Government and to work with Homes England which will report to the Joint Committee.

- (f) National Infrastructure Commission (NIC)

The Joint Committee is seeking to secure a growth corridor study following helpful discussions with the NIC. Initial discussions with the Chair of the Commission were well received and the Joint Committee was encouraged to submit a business case to the Chancellor who will ultimately make a decision as to whether to fund a study. A proposal was submitted to the Chancellor in October. The study would be similar to the one conducted by the NIC for Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford. It would help the HotSW partnership to better understand the constraints to higher levels of productivity by highlighting where investment in strategic infrastructure could unlock faster growth over the long term. The initial focus for the study would be along the A38/M5 transport spine, recognising that investment would have benefits for the whole of the HotSW area and wider south west.

- (g) Brexit Resilience Opportunities Group. The Joint Committee has consistently lobbied Government that any powers that move back from the EU under Brexit must not stop at Whitehall. This senior officer group was established by the Joint Committee to research and advise on the opportunities and risks to the HotSW. The Group has been collating evidence on some of the key risks and opportunities for our unique economy and has conducted research in the following areas: workforce, construction industry, agriculture and land management; food and farming, fisheries and post Brexit funding to support the economy. The Group is also collating the risk and impact analysis of Brexit on local government such as service delivery and community resilience. The Group has fed directly

into the Local Government Association briefing papers and to key Government departments to raise the profile of the area. With the Brexit departure date looming and several 'deal' scenarios still possible, this work has become ever more important. A Brexit Joint Regional Sounding Board event planned, as part of the 12 November LEP Conference, will be an opportunity for business and public sector to engage with Government representatives from Defra, BEIS, and MHCLG on preparedness. The Group is working with Cornwall on issues of mutual interest and concern.

- (h) Sub-National Transport Body. Linked to the Joint Committee's work on infrastructure is the imminent establishment of a South West Peninsula Shadow Sub-National Transport Body (covering Somerset, Devon, Cornwall, Plymouth and Torbay) which will develop a sub-national Transport Strategy to work with Government to deliver investment in our major transport infrastructure. In the short-term this will be an informal partnership, however a current 'ask' of Government is that they endorse the creation of a statutory Sub-National Transport Body for the Peninsula, and a separate body for the South West around the east of the region. These two new transport bodies will provide a platform for strategic discussions with Government on priorities for the region over the long term.

3. **Next steps:**

In addition to what is outlined above, the Joint Committee / LEP partnership will:

- (a) Develop an Investment Framework for the Delivery Plan so that priorities for delivery and project opportunities can be delivered via investment from a range of sources.
- (b) Review the roles and functions of both bodies through a governance review to acknowledge the revised and enhanced focus given to LEPs by the Government. This work will include a review of the management support arrangements. The Joint Committee and the LEP will continue to share responsibilities across the Productivity Strategy and the Delivery Plan with the LEP leading on areas closely linked to the LIS and the Joint Committee leading on other areas such as housing and infrastructure. The need for close collaboration between the two has never been more important as we look to further influence Government policy and actions over the next 12 months and beyond.

4. **Local Industrial Strategy**

4.1 The inclusion of the HotSW LEP area in the second wave of areas to benefit from working with the Government to develop their Local Industrial Strategies (LIS) is a considerable achievement for the Joint Committee and the LEP. The first wave 'trailblazers' were the urban conurbations of Greater Manchester, the West Midlands and Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford. The partnership had been pushing to be in the second wave and had raised the ask with Government Ministers and officials over a number of months. It was therefore very welcome that HotSW was announced in July as being part of wave 2.

4.2 By working closely with Government to develop our Local Industrial Strategy we will be able to jointly agree the long term transformational opportunities that will help deliver the asks specific to our area and influence wider Government policy and delivery.

4.3 Local Industrial Strategies will focus on the foundations of productivity and identify transformational opportunities with partners across Ideas, People, Infrastructure, Business Environment and Place. The Strategy will be led by local people and businesses, allowing local leaders to harness the strengths of their own areas; ensure that the benefits of growth are realised by all; and provide the right conditions for improving the prosperity of communities throughout the area.

4.4 Ultimate approval of the LIS rests with the LEP in collaboration with the Government. The LIS guidance requires the LEP to collaborate on the development of the LIS with a range of stakeholders including the local authorities and other partners.

4.5 The LEP's proposed timetable is to have the final LIS agreed between the LEP and the Government by June 2019. Fortunately, HotSW partners are better placed than many areas to meet this timetable as the work done by the Joint Committee and the LEP to build and test the evidence base for the Productivity Strategy and Delivery Plan has set the foundation; the LIS will be a natural extension of this.

4.6 The Joint Committee is ideally placed to provide both collective and council level input into the development of the LIS, although final approval rests with the LEP. The validity and positioning of the document would be immeasurably strengthened by the involvement and general endorsement of all the constituent authorities, and by other partners including the business community. To enable the development of the LIS to be taken forward at pace, and to demonstrate alignment with partners across the area, it is proposed that local authority input is developed, coordinated and signed off by the Joint Committee. The powers of (and delegations to) the Committee are tightly focussed around the Productivity Strategy under the current governance arrangements, so approval needs to be sought from the constituent authorities to formally delegate the Council's responsibilities for contributing to and signing off the HotSW Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) to the Joint Committee. The recommendations provide the opportunity for the Council to influence and shape the LIS as well as provide content. To ensure that there is wide buy-in to the development of the LIS across the constituent authorities, a portfolio holder engagement event is planned for 23 November 2018.

5 Budget and Cost Sharing Agreement

5.1 The Joint Committee has been kept informed of its budgetary position to provide assurance that it is operating within its budget. This section of the report includes:

- (a) a summary of the Committee's current budget position for 2018/19 – page 11 - Appendix B
- (b) a Budget and Cost Sharing Agreement (B&CSA) which is a development of the Inter-Authority Agreement agreed by the constituent authorities at the time the Committee was established – pages 12 and 13 – Appendix B
- (c) An indicative budget request for 2019/20 to the constituent authorities.

5.2 Page 11 – Appendix B - summarises the position on the operating and support budget of the Committee. It shows a variation of the income for 2018/19 expected at the time of the Committee's establishment with a larger than anticipated underspend carried forward from the work on devolution during the 2015 to 2018 period. This together with the contributions agreed by the constituent authorities have given the Committee a larger than anticipated budget for 2018/19.

5.3 In terms of the anticipated spend for 2018/19 the current position suggests that the Committee will be able to operate within budget and should achieve an underspend to be carried forward to 2019/20 to help offset the future budget requirement for the Joint Committee. The current underspend is around £40k. It should be noted however that not all commitments for 2018/19 have yet been identified.

5.4 At the time of the Committee's establishment the Inter Authority Agreement referred to the development of a B&CSA and included some headings to be included within it. Pages 12 and 13 - Appendix B - set out the draft B&CSA. It is a relatively simple document proportionate to the small size of the budget and the limited financial risk to each constituent authority. It explains the role of

the administering authority as well as the responsibilities of the constituent authorities. The Joint Committee has approved the B&CSA and all Section 151 Officers of the constituent authorities have been consulted on its contents. The document now requires the formal approval of the constituent authorities.

5.5 In terms of the Joint Committee's budget for 2019/20 the work programme is unknown at this stage although a busy year is expected for the Committee to respond to Government policy initiatives and to support the Delivery Plan. To assist the constituent authorities to plan budget commitments for 2019/20, the minimum contribution levels for 2019/20 are set out below and are at the same level as for 2018/19. These contributions will generate sufficient budget to cover the costs of the administering authority to service the Joint Committee and leave a small surplus. Dependent on the underspend carried forward from the current year and the outcome of the review of the management support arrangements, this may not be sufficient to fully cover any additional work, for example secondments, or externally commissioned work. The funding requirements will be clarified, as far as is possible, in advance of the 2019/20 financial year following the governance review and through a costed work programme and applied on a pro-rata basis.

- County Councils - £10,500
- Unitary Councils - £4,000
- District Councils and National Parks £1,400

6. Consultation, communication and engagement

6.1 Under the Communications and Engagement Plan, members of the constituent authorities, partners and the public have been kept informed of developments with the Joint Committee through newsletters published after each formal meeting and press releases on significant issues of interest. As we move towards Christmas, the Committee's engagement plans include seeking the support of relevant Ministers and all local MPs for the Communications document and specifically our 'asks' of Government. This engagement campaign will continue and accelerate as we move into 2019.

6.2 In addition the Committee has a website providing background information, links to latest news and publications and details of the membership. This can be accessed at:

<http://www.hotswjointcommittee.org.uk/>

7. Equality Considerations

7.1 No adverse impact on any protected groups.

8. Public Health Considerations

8.1 There are no direct public health impacts of these recommendations. However, public health considerations will be an important consideration in the development of the LIS recognising that there is a strong correlation between economic prosperity and health of the population.

9. Risk Management Considerations

9.1 Given the participation in the Joint Committee as one of the constituent Local Authorities, the main risks are around failing to participate actively in this or any other related process, thus manifesting a failure of sub-regional or regional awareness of the Council's specific economic and productivity concerns. The risk from failing to participate is most likely to be a loss of the Council's

influence at regional level and an inability to draw attention to the area's economic needs (across such areas as productivity, skills, infrastructure and related inward investment). It would also weaken the wider partnership proposition, so affecting the ability of the HotSW partnership to speak with one voice and influence Government policy for the benefit of the wider area and including our residents, businesses and visitors.

10. Legal considerations

10.1 The HotSW Joint Committee is a Joint Committee of the local authorities across Devon and Somerset that comprise the HotSW area and established under Sections 101 to 103 of the Local Government Act 1972 and all other enabling legislation to undertake the following:

10.2 The key purpose of the Joint Committee is to be the vehicle through which the HotSW partners will ensure that the desired increase in productivity across the area is achieved.

10.3 The Committee is a single strategic public sector partnership providing cohesive, coherent leadership and governance to ensure delivery of the Productivity Strategy for the HotSW area. The specific objectives of the Joint Committee are to:

- Improve the economy and the prospects for the region by bringing together the public, private and education sectors;
- Increase our understanding of the economy and what needs to be done to make it stronger;
- Improve the efficiency and productivity of the public sector;
- Identify and remove barriers to progress and maximise the opportunities/benefits available to the area from current and future government policy.

11. Financial considerations

11.1 The direct costs to the constituent authorities are set out above and in Appendix B. In addition to this the constituent authorities and partners continue to input considerable amounts of officer time into the partnership on an 'in kind' basis. The LEP continues to make a significant contribution to the work of the Committee and has met some direct costs.

11.2 The constituent authorities are reminded that the Joint Committee continues to provide a relatively low-cost option to meet the partnership's objectives compared to the Combined Authority alternative.

12. Reason for Recommendation/Conclusion

12.1 It is essential that the local authorities contribute to the development and approval of the LIS working in collaboration with the LEP. The LIS will be a natural development of the Productivity Strategy and Delivery Plan for which the Joint Committee already has delegated authority, and therefore it would seem appropriate to formally extend this authority to the development and approval of the LIS to the Joint Committee on behalf of the constituent authorities.

12.2 It is important that the constituent authorities are kept up to date on the Committee's budget situation and make provision for the 2019/20 budget commitment. It is also important that the Budget and Cost Sharing Agreement is formally agreed by the constituent authorities as part of the Committee's governance arrangements.

APPENDIX A

Heart of the South West Partnership's key strategic asks of Government

As part of the partnership's increased lobbying with MPs and with reference to the Great South West Partnership several 'policy asks' of Government have been identified to coincide with party conferences and the Autumn Budget. These will be socialised over the next few months and are:

1. Recognition of the Great South West Partnership in the Autumn Budget Statement together with a commitment to co-design a Rural Deal - a 'Rural Productivity Partnership' with GSW following publication of Rural Productivity Commission Report earlier in the year
2. Strategic Connectivity
 - a. Confirmation of Sub National Transport Body/ (ies)
 - b. Peninsula Rail priorities – e.g. commitment for funding Dawlish
 - c. Funding commitment for A303 improvements
 - d. Superfast Broadband and 5G trials
 - e. Joint working with the National Infrastructure Commission on an A38/M5 corridor study to explore how we can unlock our full potential and accelerate growth to transform our region.
3. Transforming Cities and Strength in Places bids agreed
4. EU Fisheries underspend proposal: an offer to work with Government to develop a proposal to utilise the projected underspend in the current EU Fisheries budget.
5. Nuclear Sector Deal (and others specifically Maritime and Defence) to have clear place-based elements/funding, recognising the HotSW opportunities.
6. Local Industrial Strategy specific: encourage joint working with WECA on Wave 2 Local Industrial Strategies particularly around connectivity and Smart specialisations e.g. Nuclear and Aerospace.

APPENDIX B

BUDGET STATEMENT – 2018/19

Costs

At the time the Joint Committee was established it was estimated that its operating and support **costs** for 2018/19 (and to cover the remainder of 2017/18) would be £89,000 - excluding in-kind officer support. This estimate comprised:

1. £25,000 for work the Joint Committee would wish to commission to support the delivery of its work programme
2. £24,000 for the Brexit Resilience and Opportunities Group Secretariat
3. £40,000 for the Administering Authority to undertake its duties.

Budget

Current budget position summary:

18/19 Budget = <u>£117k</u> (an increase of £25k over the original estimate)	18/19 Expenditure - <u>£84.1k</u> (as at 24/10/18)
1. £67k - devolution budget carry forward (as against the estimate of £42k) – transferred from PCC to SCC	1 £40k - for Administrative Authority costs including: direct meeting costs (including refreshments); staffing costs directly relating to HotSW meetings; JC communications and marketing; micro-site development
2. £50k - funding contributions from the constituent authorities	2 £19k - support costs of the Brexit Resilience Opportunities Group (BROG) including seconded part-time officer support (against an original budget allocation of £24k)
	3 £6k – costs of Housing Summit
	4 £9.8k – housing consultancy support
	5 £9.3k – national corridor infrastructure corridor consultancy support

This reduces the level of potential underspend available to take forward to 2019/20 to approximately £33k.

For 2019/20 the CEx Advisory Group has decided at this stage that in relation to the budget for 2019/20 -

- That, in the absence of a work programme being in place for the Joint Committee for 2019/20 at this time, authorities should be asked to plan to repeat their 2018/19 contribution to the Joint Committee's budget for 2019/20. This is in line with the request in the report. This will raise £48.6k (slightly less than in 2018/19 as there will be one less constituent authority in the Joint Committee membership following the creation of Somerset West and Taunton Council) giving a maximum budget of just over £80k if the full current underspend is carried forward. Once the support costs of the Joint Committee are accounted for this would give a budget to fund the Joint Committee's work programme of just over £40k for 2019/20.

- Without a work programme in place it is not known whether this will be sufficient to fully cover the Joint Committee's requirements for procuring, for example secondments, or externally commissioned work. Every effort will be made to contain costs within budget but if work is subsequently identified for 2019/20 which cannot be met within budget or from another source, a further request for funding may be made to the constituent authorities (including in-year in exceptional circumstances) but only against a costed proposal or plan of activity and after all other potential sources of funding have been exhausted.
- That a further update on an indicative work programme and the budget position will be sent to councils immediately after the 25 January 2019 formal Joint Committee meeting to give as much certainty as possible over the budget requirement in advance of the financial year.

BUDGET AND COST SHARING AGREEMENT

As part of the new Joint Committee working arrangements, the following clause was agreed in relation to the costs of operation of the Joint Committee. This clause was in the Inter-Authority Agreement.

4.0 JC Finance

4.1 The JC's budgetary arrangements shall be detailed in a budget and cost sharing agreement to be agreed by all the Constituent Authorities annually on the recommendation of the JC and in advance of the financial year. The only exception to this will be in the JC's first year of operation when the JC shall recommend a budget and cost sharing agreement to the Constituent Authorities for approval at the first opportunity following its establishment.

4.2 The budget and cost sharing agreement shall cover:

- (a) The responsibilities of the Constituent Authorities for providing funding for the JC
- (b) The anticipated level of expenditure for the JC for the year ahead
- (c) The cost sharing mechanism to be applied to the Constituent Authorities
- (d) Details of how the budget will be set and agreed each year
- (e) Who is to be responsible for maintaining financial records on behalf of the JC (the 'accountable body');
- (f) What financial records are to be maintained;
- (g) What financial reports are to be made, to whom and when;
- (h) What arrangements and responsibilities are to be made for:
 - auditing accounts;
 - insurance including ensuring all partners have sufficient cover;
- (i) How any financial assets held by the JC on behalf of the Constituent Authorities will be redistributed to the CAs in the event of the dissolution of the JC or in the event of a CA formally withdrawing from the CA.

How is the budget set and agreed each year?

In the February preceding each financial year, in consultation with the Somerset County Council Finance Advisory Team, the SCC Strategic Manager - Partnership Governance on behalf of the PMO will detail a budget plan for the JC income and expenditure. This will establish estimated amounts for that financial year and the timing of those financial transactions. This will be submitted by the administering authority to the Joint Committee for recommendation to the Constituent Authorities (CA) for approval.

Each CA will pay their agreed contribution to the Administering Authority (AA) in a timely manner on receipt of invoice details.

Who is to be responsible for maintaining financial records on behalf of the JC?

SCC Finance Advisory Team – Ian Tier, Finance Manager.

What financial records are to be maintained?

Financial records, i.e. orders for supplies and services, payments made, invoices raised and receipts, will be kept electronically on the SCC financial system. This incorporates purchase orders, invoice scans, cashiers receipts and sales invoices.

What financial reports are to be made, to whom and when?

SCC Finance Advisory will present a quarterly income and expenditure report to the SCC Strategic Manager – Partnership Governance. This will be reported to the CEx Advisory Group for information. An income and expenditure report will be presented to the JC for information on at least an annual basis.

What arrangements and responsibilities are to be made for?

- **Auditing Accounts:** The AA's accounts and audit arrangements will apply to JC business.
- **Insurance:**
Each CA will ensure that it has sufficient insurance cover in place to provide protection for their members and officers participating in the work of the JC and in their capacity as officers or members of that authority. The AA will ensure that it has sufficient insurance cover in place to cover the AA role.

How any financial assets held by the JC on behalf of the CA will be redistributed to the CAs in the event of the dissolution of the JC or in the event of a CA formally withdrawing from the CA?

Itemised records of contributions made by each of the CAs will be kept over the life of the JC. In the event of the dissolution of the JC or in the event of a CA formally withdrawing from the CA having given the required notice, financial assets will be returned to the CA or CAs on a proportionate basis.

Report to: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 28 November 2018
Public Document: Yes
Exemption: None
Review date for release: None



Agenda item: 16

Subject: Digital Strategy

Purpose of report: To outline our activity in relation to becoming Digital East Devon.

Recommendation: To recommend to Council the adoption of the Digital Strategy.

Reason for recommendation: In pursuit of continuous improvement.

Officer: Karen Jenkins Strategic Lead for Organisational Development and Transformation

Financial implications: As outlined in the report projects will be brought forward under this Strategy and will need to be considered for budget approval where applicable. Council has already agreed and approved a budget for the implementation of Firmstep (£260k from the Transformation Fund, with a total project budget of £300k) as detailed in the report.

Legal implications: There are no legal implications requiring comment.

Equalities impact: Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk

Links to background information: .

Link to Council Plan: Continuously improving to be an outstanding council

Report in full

Digital Strategy

Why Digital?

Internet and digital technologies have transformed lives on a global scale and continue to do so at an ever increasing pace.

9 out of 10 UK households now have access to the internet. 89.8% of 16 or over aged residents in Devon are recent users of the internet. Nationally, internet use is on the increase for those aged 65 and over. In 2018, 86% of households of two adults 65+ have used the internet recently. In 2011, the percentage of internet users 75 and over was just under 20% but this nearly doubled by 2016.

Smartphone uptake in the UK has now eclipsed laptop penetration, with 85% of citizens using smartphones surpassing the 78% with laptops; nearly 8 out of 10 adults access internet 'on the go'.

We face the challenge of providing new improved services whilst coping with reduced funding and changes in expectations and demands. Through effective change management our '**digital by design**' approach will enable us to continue to deliver the priorities in our Council Plan and support our Transformation Strategy.

Following in the footsteps of the Government Digital Service (GDS) and many other councils, we know that digital can help us achieve reductions in the cost of public services through increased efficiency, automation and effectiveness. Just in the way GDS has improved processes such as renewing a passport or taxing a car, we need to focus on designing digital processes and solutions with a strong emphasis on user experience (customer journeys) and ease of use.

Additionally, digitalisation provides the opportunity to deliver vastly improved and accessible data that can be used to support better decision making and to predict and plan both tactically and strategically.

The digital revolution also presents unique challenges and we know that we must understand and prepare for these – these include addressing issues such as cyber resilience and cyber bullying.

We do not underestimate the importance of maintaining human interaction in the services which we deliver. What is key here is understanding the demand for council services and what can be moved onto a digital platform and what still needs to be handled with human interaction. We recognise that moving complex processes online can remove the flexibility of a service driven through effective human interaction; whereas common and simple processes delivered digitally can produce significant cost reductions through standard and repeatable responses. However, we are working towards a Digital East Devon because it will benefit the people of East Devon, develop our district as a place and improve the outcomes that the Council can deliver.

Our digital aims

Our challenge is to provide the right service to the right people where and when they need it and for the best price.

Our services are already embracing the benefits of technology to digitalise our services and yet organisationally we're only touching the surface of what digital by design can achieve. The opportunity of using technology designed around the customer is huge and will continue to transform the way we deliver services.

By making East Devon **digital by design**, we can provide efficient, cost effective services to a growing majority of residents. By designing and commissioning systems which are simpler to use and provide a good customer experience, the aim is to raise residents' confidence to the point where **digital is their first choice**.

Becoming a **Digital East Devon** means that wherever possible, we'll take advantage of new tools and techniques to design and develop services focused on the customer.

The aims of this Digital Strategy are to:

- Set the scene for East Devon District Council and partners for the future direction of digital services, infrastructure and innovation.
- To be an over-arching document that gives a clear direction of where the Council, working alongside Strata Service Solutions Ltd and our partners, wants to be in the next three years – recognising that we will continually adapt and evolve to keep up-to-date with the latest advances in digital technologies.
- To focus our limited financial and people resources on achieving the best digital outcomes across the whole Council, the district and beyond.
- To address the growing demand for digital services and focus on what residents want in order to deliver outcomes that matter to them.
- To enable the Council, residents, businesses and partners to get the most out of digital.
- To ensure that EDDC shares knowledge and that we collaborate for the greater good of local government and the services it provides.

Where are we now?

We have already started our digital journey and currently have 165 online forms. We believe the Firmstep implementation will provide a step change in our delivery of digital services.

In 2017/18, nearly 91,000 people visited our website. There were over 6000 transactions through our existing online forms across a range of services including applying for a parking permit, temporary events notice, collection of bulky items, planning charges, booking an event, pest control services, additional recycling boxes and caddies and applying for licences.

Over 16000 of our customers have now downloaded our mobile app which gives customers information about councillors, waste collections, local news, eating out, planning and the ability to report issues such as animal fouling or graffiti.

We are already working on the introduction of a new set of intelligent online forms which link to the Revenues and Benefits system – this will improve the customer experience and allow for an immediate update of systems to enable a much quicker and efficient service delivery.

We have delivered a new digital call centre solution to help improve our handling of incoming telephone calls. This provides us with the ability to route the calls to the right person and develop a greater insight into call volumes and patterns so that we can ensure the right levels of resourcing.

We have created online forms to support our new income generating Green Waste service and have updated our smartphone app to include the new scheme.

We are working on a project to better support and facilitate mobile working for our teams in Planning, Building Control and Environmental Health. This will provide access to the business application when they are working on various sites across the district.

Through the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan, the Council is working in partnership with the Greater Exeter authorities and consultants CBN Ltd. to explore potential opportunities for investment in and delivery of transformational digital connectivity infrastructure. Such intervention is being considered as a means to stimulate investment from and competition between providers, which in turn should lead to better and faster rollout of fibre connectivity.

Where we want to be:

Our ambition is to be a digitally connected Council and community. Our digital ambition is to become Digital East Devon; a digital council which makes the best use of the opportunities offered by the ever-changing world of technology and to ensure that our mind-set and culture are 'digital by design'.

This means:

- a council that facilitates digital exploitation and innovation;
- a district characterised by a growing digital economy;
- smarter public service.

Our digital approach will be developed to align, support and enable the realisation of our Council Plan and Transformation Strategy and become a common theme running through all of our strategies.

Digital principles for a Digital East Devon

A robust and effective strategy is built on a strong set of principles.

East Devon has signed up for a joint initiative from Government Digital Services (GDS) and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). This initiative aims sets out the following principles and working in partnership with Strata Service Solutions Ltd, the Council will use these to deliver its digital ambitions.

The declaration talks about 'what good digital transformation' looks like and contains five principles that describe what organisations can do to achieve this.

1. We will go further to redesign services around the needs of the people using them – this means continuing to prioritise citizen and user needs above professional, organisational technologic silos.
2. We will 'fix our plumbing' to break our dependence on inflexible and expensive technology that doesn't join up effectively – this means insisting on modular building blocks for the IT we rely on and open standards to give common structure to the data we create.
3. We will design safe, secure and useful ways of sharing information to build trust among our partners and citizens, to better support the most vulnerable members of our communities and to target our resources more effectively.
4. We will demonstrate digital leadership, creating the conditions for genuine organisational transformation to happen and challenge all those we work with to embrace this declaration.
5. We will embed an open culture that values and expects digital ways of working from every member of our workforce, This means working the open wherever we can, sharing our plans and experience, working collaboratively with other organisations and reusing good practice.

For all new IT solutions the declaration states that they must operate according to the Technology Code of Practice. The criteria defined within the code of practice and how we manage this in partnership with Strata, is set out in Appendix One.

Priority outcomes for Digital East Devon

Our Digital Strategy for 2018-2021 sets out how we will use our IT and officer resources to optimise service delivery to achieve the following three priority outcomes. These are consistent with our Council Plan and Transformation Strategy, so that our communities, residents, visitors, partners and businesses are served by an innovative district council – Digital East Devon.

1 Digital by design

This means we will make digital by design our priority so that residents and customers get what they need in the most cost effective way possible.

We will:

- use the principles and priorities articulated in the strategy in all our key IT projects;
- implement Firmstep (digital platform) and work to integrate with key customer facing systems and service teams in line with the project plan;
- put in place a continual process of review and improvement for all our digital transactions based on clear user need;
- change the culture of customer service with more automation and less human interaction where it makes sense, to deliver the very best customer experiences 24/7;
- provide services and information through easy to use digital channels so that these are simple to access and navigate with the same easy experience from their mobile phones as from a desktop, laptop or tablet PC;
- develop communications channels such as Skype for our customers making it easier to engage with the Council;
- ensure that officers and Members of the Council work using the same technology to ensure that we can easily collaborate as ‘one council’;
- make our front line web content more succinct, searching simpler and results more relevant. We will also improve our review and gatekeeping processes to ensure that content is regularly reviewed and kept up to date;
- increase our self-service options by providing information to customers that is consistent, accessible and up-to-date;
- work with Strata to explore the development of an ‘online’ reception service so that documents and photos from walk in customers can quickly and easily be entered into a digital workflow without human intervention;
- use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) wherever possible so we can to continue to make it even easier to request services and let us know when things go wrong;
- work with Strata to pilot emerging technologies that may improve customer experiences and workflow such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) chat bots or voice control;
- develop our business intelligence; new performance reporting capabilities and Power BI to enable leaders, managers and employees to make informed decisions with new knowledge and customer insights previously unavailable;
- use analytics of online user behaviour to ensure there is evidence of user need for new developments and highlight where online solutions are not performing as expected.

2 Digital Community

We will use a digital approach to help people and communities help themselves, ensuring people with different digital needs are appropriately supported and using technology to enable them.

We will:

- develop customer confidence to encourage those who are currently less digitally active to use digital technologies by helping them with assisted access;
- ensure our most vulnerable service users understand cyber harm and basic prevention techniques;
- improve solutions in response to user feedback and evolutions in user behaviour;
- increase self-service options by providing information to customers that is consistent, accessible and up to date;
- develop opportunities to work with our partners in a variety of ways to ensure digital inclusion.

3 Digitally Empowered Workforce

This means we will develop a digitally skilled workforce committed to making the best use of digital technologies and data in delivering services and to making informed decisions on the things that matter most to our customers and communities. We will create digital leaders across the organisation with a mind-set that is forward thinking, innovative, customer-focused and agile.

We will:

- continue to support WorkSmart to facilitate mobile and flexible officers; helping them to streamline their service delivery. This means deploying the right digital tools and systems so they can input data, output data, make decisions in as near real time as possible and collaborate with officers across the district without having to travel;
- explore solutions which support mobile and flexible working such as WhatsApp within emergency planning, instructional and informational film for staff distributed via iPhones and mobile desktop I-pads where appropriate;
- deliver a new mobile friendly intranet with up to date content in advance of our relocation to Blackdown House;
- increase the awareness of cyber threats and Data Protection and the role employees need to play in reducing risks with particular attention being paid to reducing human error, the threat of malicious emails and weak passwords;
- develop and training digital skills in the workforce to skill staff to make the most of available technology, supporting them in the way they work;
- work with managers to continue to improve the digital customer experience through experimenting and iteration. This means the senior management team championing systems thinking reviews and encouraging a digital mind-set – how can old processes be done smarter using automation? The culture of Digital East Devon will be a culture of digital first and constant improvement where staff feel confident to innovate, explore and trial digital solutions;

4 Digital Place

Working with other councils, partners and businesses to develop resilient systems – delivering better focused digital public services in a constantly changing environment by working together.

We will:

- work closely with other councils in Devon to support digital developments;

- participating in projects aimed at collecting data from multiple sources (Big Data projects) that enable the development of the region, supporting smarter decision making and investment;
- work with Strata to ensure that we improve systems resilience, making the best use of spare capacity in any of our resources, reducing our exposure to external incidents and increasing our collective capacity to respond;
- promote Open systems or systems which are scalable/aligned to enable collaboration at the appropriate time;
- support the provision of the infrastructure required for a digital district;
- help to grow digital businesses in our district;
- bring together and analyse data to support regional economic growth and local public sector reform;
- promote ever-faster broadband speeds across the district to assist in crossing the productivity, income, skills and business competitive gaps that exist in East Devon.

Vision beyond 2021

This Digital Strategy highlights what we aim to achieve by 2021. However, transformation is a continuous process and we need to continue to innovate beyond then.

It's difficult to predict how digital will develop, but we know voice recognition will play a key part. However, rather than thinking about how we adopt specific technologies, we'll take action now to become more adaptable to change and respond quickly to rapidly changing circumstances.

We'll work internally, with Strata and with digital partners to make best use of emerging new technologies. We aspire to demonstrate that local authorities can deliver cutting edge digital services to their citizens.

We'll continue to use systems thinking and technology to **focus on the needs of the customer** and continue to be ambitious and lead innovation to achieve our goals.

Appendix One – Technology Code of Practice

Code of practice criteria	What does this mean?	Our response
Define user needs	Understand your users and their needs. Develop knowledge of your users and what that means for your technology project or programme.	We start with a systems thinking approach which means that end to end processes are designed around 'what matters' to our customers.
Making things accessible	Make sure your technology, infrastructure and systems are accessible for users.	Our Firmstep implementation will ensure that customers can access services through a customer portal.
Be open and use Open Source technology	Publish your code and use open source to improve transparency, flexibility and accountability.	Strata use open source applications and code as and when appropriate. As an example, we use Umbraco open source content management system for our internet and intranet sites.
Make use of Open Standards	Build technology that uses open standards to ensure your technology works and communicates with other technology and can be easily upgraded and expanded.	Strata use Application Programming Interface (APIs) to integrate systems with 3 rd party applications, enabling data to be exchanged efficiently and effectively between the systems.
Use Cloud First	Use public Cloud first as stated in the governments cloud first policy.	<p>Strata have developed a shared infrastructure environment (a cloud environment) connected by a Multiprotocol Label Switching – MPLS directs data from one network to the next to deliver high performance telecommunication networks in a way which connects everything together securely. This environment delivers a consistent desktop environment using VMWare.</p> <p>In addition, Strata access traditional hosted cloud services for solutions such as iTrent which is delivered by a 3rd party using AWS.</p>

		<p>Strata's approach is very much a hybrid approach, with a mixture of applications delivered out of Strata's cloud environment and applications delivered via AWS/Azure etc.</p> <p>With over 1000 different applications currently being delivered, it would be impossible for all to be delivered via traditional public cloud.</p>
Make sure things are secure	Keep systems and data safe with appropriate level of security.	Strata takes a security in depth approach, laying protections especially from the internet and also undertakes monthly vulnerability scanning and annual security testing performed by external security specialists.
Making privacy integral	Make sure citizens' rights are protected by integrating privacy as an essential part of your system.	East Devon and Strata work closely together to ensure data protection requirements and principles are embedded throughout the life cycle of systems and projects.
Share and re-use technology	Promote good practices and avoid duplicated efforts by sharing and reusing services, data and software components.	The whole concept of Strata is to share and re-use technology. East Devon is represented at the Joint IT Steering Group by Karen Jenkins and this group is leading to a reduction in the duplication of effort.
Integrate and adapt technology	Your technology should work with existing technologies, processes and infrastructure in your organisation and adapt to future demands.	With a set of common standards now developed across Strata and the three partner councils, it now means that the technical environment is more adaptable and can flex to meet future demands.
Make better use of data	Consider how to minimise data collections and reuse data to avoid duplications of datasets.	Strata are developing a policy of collect once and use many times for data to allow effective re-use as and when required.

Define your purchasing strategy	Your purchasing strategy must show you've considered commercial and technology aspects and contractual limitations.	East Devon has a clear procurement framework and Strata works closely with the Teignbridge District Council framework and procurement team.
Meeting the Digital Service Standard for Digital Services	If you are building a service as part of your technology project or programme you will also need to meet the Digital Service Standard.	East Devon delivered the revised web content and transactions through its Open for Business project and used the standards outlined in the government's digital strategy.

Report to: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 28 November 2018
Public Document: Yes
Exemption: None
Review date for release: None



Agenda item: 17

Subject: Access to information 2017/18

Purpose of report: This report provides information about requests received under the Freedom of Information Act (and Environmental Information Regulations) between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018. The report also looks at steps taken during the last 12 months to improve the accessibility of information.

Recommendation: That Cabinet considers the number and type of requests received under the Freedom of Information Act and the steps being taken to improve access to information

Reason for recommendation: To continue to improve the way we deal with requests for information
Officer: Henry Gordon Lennox – Monitoring Officer

Financial implications: There are no direct financial implications relating to this report

Legal implications: There are no direct legal implications arising from the report.

Equalities impact: Low Impact

Risk: Medium Risk

Potential criticism, deterioration of reputation and failure to improve.
Lack of credibility in the process for handling requests

Links to background information: [FOI Publication Scheme](#)

<https://ico.org.uk/>

[EDDC published requests](#)

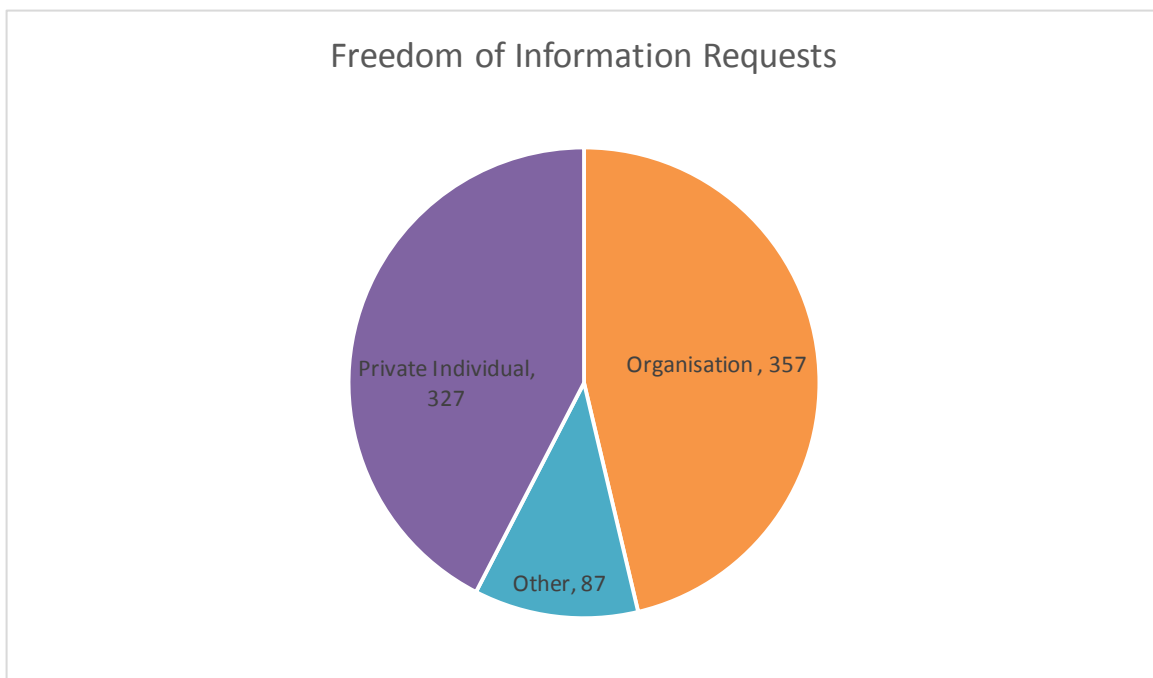
Link to Council Plan: Continuously improving to be an outstanding council

1 Summary of requests received

1.1 771 requests have been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act (Environmental Information Regulations) during the year 2017/18.

1.2 This figure has risen from 658 in 2016/17.

- 1.3 There continues to be a trend for requests originating from commercial organisations asking questions relating to Council contracts; information pertaining to businesses and their payment of business rates; and topics of general news interest like the impact of changing legislation.
- 1.4 The service areas receiving the highest number of requests are Council Tax, Environmental Health and Housing.
- 1.5 The pie chart below shows the origin of requests received during the year. The “other” category includes MPs, academic institutions and requests received through public archive websites.
- 1.6 Requests received from organisations include news agencies and press enquiries which tend to centre around national news topics such as welfare reform, council income streams and legislative changes.



2 Request handling

- 2.1 Our current average response time is 7.34 working days – well within the statutory deadline of 20 working days.
- 2.3 During 2018/19 we are continuing to actively monitor response times to ensure continuous improvement.

3 Customer satisfaction

- 3.1 If a customer feels dissatisfied with the way we have responded to their request for information, they have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner (ICO).
- 3.2 There were no decision notices issued by the ICO during 2017/18.

4 Access to information

- 4.1 We are continuing to be proactive in making information available to the public in a timely way and to only hold documents as confidential in exceptional circumstances. Very few reports are considered under Part B now. We completed a review of all our old Part B (confidential) reports going back to 2010 and made available the majority of them on our website – some 168 have been released in total and for Cabinet 124 have been released with 25 still determined to be confidential. For those that have been determined to still be confidential there is now a process of reviewing confidential reports (both historic and current) on a yearly basis to determine whether they should be released or not.

- 4.2 We are currently looking to make improvements to information which is requested on a regular basis by commercial organisations, such as business rate datasets and information relating to national assistance burials, to ensure that requestors can be easily signposted to this information, without the need to make formal requests for information.

Report to: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 28 November 2018
Public Document: Yes
Exemption: None
Review date for release: None



Agenda item: 18

Subject: Home Safeguard System Upgrade

Purpose of report: To gain approval for the expenditure necessary to upgrade the Home Safeguard call handling system as outlined in the attach Business Case. The upgrade is a necessity for the continuation of the Home Safeguard Service, which in addition to the alarm for private, sheltered and corporate customers, provides the Out of Hours service for East Devon District Council (EDDC) & Teignbridge District Council (TDC), plus lone working services for both Authorities.

Recommendation: That the contents of the attached business case for the upgrade of the Home Safeguard call handling system be approved.

Reason for recommendation: To continue to provide an outstanding service and honour existing contracts. The upgrade will enable us to offer a digital solution with the ability to offer a wider range of telecare equipment, and to expand the service.

It will also enable us to remain competitive in the current market, and contribute to the Council's income targets and Transformation Strategy.

Officer: Sue Bewes

Housing Landlord Services Manager

sbewes@eastdevon.gov.uk 01395 516551 X2200

Financial implications: This is a request for a capital sum of £55,000 and an annual increase in licence/maintenance cost of £27,000. This request will be consider by the Capital Strategy and Allocation Group as part of the review process and they will make their recommendation to Cabinet as part of the overall Capital Programme recommendation. However as this project is an ICT project and as it is not a Strata Convergence Project this has not been assessed or approved by the Joint Executive Committee of Strata, it therefore seems appropriate that a full report should be considered by this Council's Cabinet. Although the request incurs additional annual costs the business case to ensure this service continues to operate effectively is outlined and members should bear in mind this service does contribute nearly £400,000 net income into the General Fund. Part of the capital outlay (approximately a third) can be recovered from the Housing Revenue Account for tenants who benefit from this system.

Legal implications: There are no legal implications requiring comment.

Equalities impact: High Impact

Risk: Low Risk

Links to background information:

Link to Council Plan: Continuously improving to be an outstanding council.

1. Background

- 1.1 Home Safeguard's current operating system PNC 6 was installed by Tunstall back in 2010. We are now two versions behind their system currently being marketed. It is crucial to our business that our system is up to date and is in line with latest technology in call handling, but also a system that enables us to use technology (devices, sensors and apps) putting people in control of their own health, wellbeing and support, keeping them safe, well and independent.
- 1.2 A call handling system is a database where all customer data (name, address, medical information and contact details) is held plus telecare equipment installed (alarm, falls detectors, smoke, heat sensors, etc.). When an individual activates or a sensor detects an issue the equipment generates a call through to the control centre, and all data relating to the customer, and the device activated, will automatically be displayed. This enables the call handler to take the appropriate action, whether it be contacting a personal contact of the customer or calling one of the emergency services directly. Built into the system is call priority which ensures the most urgent call is actioned first, so that a smoke detector will automatically be given higher priority than an out-of-hours call.
- 1.3 Also built into any call handling system will be monitoring of the equipment in the customer's home, such that the system and devices are checking in with each other constantly so that any failure will be highlighted. Examples of this would be low battery on a device or mains failure in the customer's home.
- 1.4 The scale of the changes to our population that will take place over the next ten to fifteen years will put huge strain on health and social care services financially and also in terms of the workforce and informal carer support availability. Further increased efficiencies and cash savings expected from both Councils and the NHS mean urgent changes are needed leading to whole system redesign. It is important the council makes a commitment to expanding its telecare service, as it can enable a way of supporting individuals to live independently in their own homes, which could also assist with management of the financial pressures.
- 1.5 Telecare can sustain people with a wide range of conditions in their own homes, and offer support to their carers, so that resources which would otherwise be spent on hospital, residential or nursing care can be allocated elsewhere in the health and social care system. More specifically an effective telecare service can help vulnerable people achieve:
 - Increased choice and independence;
 - Reduce risk and make them feel safer;
 - Early intervention and prevent a crisis.

2. Existing call handling system

- 2.1 The system currently in place, PNC6, is analogue based, therefore one of the reasons for upgrading is the imminent action by Government to move all call handling from analogue to a digital network by 2025.
- 2.2 The upgrade is a necessity for the continuation of the Home Safeguard Service, which in addition to the alarm for private, sheltered and corporate customers, provides the Out of Hours service for East Devon District Council (EDDC) & Teignbridge District Council (TDC), plus lone working services for both Authorities.
- 2.3 Technology Enabled Care (TEC) is a fast growing, national drive, which is part of the adult and social care initiative to help people stay living at home, while detecting changes in their personal wellbeing and needs as early as possible. Currently we are very reactive as our system has limited ability to add new telecare equipment, but we need to be able to use more advanced monitoring equipment that PNC6 will not support. In this way we will be able to act on an individual's needs before they cause a more debilitating issue for them.
- 2.4 With our current system we hold a stock register that we manage manually which means a member of staff having to programme equipment as well as enter it onto the system. New systems allow a more sophisticated stock control such as scanning bar codes making all of this activity automatic. Direct input will mean that new service user installations will not be as paper based with numerous forms for staff to fill in, as the system will enable direct input so that any potential data protection issues will also be reduced, as staff will no longer be carrying the paperwork with them around the district. A more automated system would be in line with our systems thinking priority of reducing waste and risk from our activities.

3. Reasons for upgrade

- 3.1 Tunstall PNC6 lacks the features to enable the authority to generate a number of performance indicator reports, such that we currently manually extract data to populate spreadsheets we devise to give us the performance data required for our own in-house performance monitoring and also by the Telecare Standards Association (TSA). Available reports are limited; only standard reports are available and there is no facility to run bespoke reports to meet the specific needs of the Home Safeguard call centre.
- 3.2 A new lone worker solution is required for EDDC and TDC as PNC6 is not compatible with new lone worker devices currently on the market. These would provide GPS location, emergency SOS/panic activation.
- 3.3 PNC6 is not GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) compatible as we currently have to manually extract data to know which records we have to delete. This is important as we cannot hold records for more than one year after someone has left the service, so we have to run frequent reports to tell us which records must now be deleted. New systems provide automatic record deletion ability so that records will be managed in a more business-like fashion.
- 3.4 A new system, in being compatible with a greater range of devices, will enable more mobile working and programming of equipment on site, rather than having to return to base to manually programme devices and then re-visit the customer for installation.
- 3.5 As a business, it is also imperative that we are able to compete with other local providers within the market and offer a wide range of services that meet the needs of service users. System upgrade will enable growth of the service.

3.6 Other considerations include the Uninterruptable power supply (UPS) batteries for the current system need to be replaced. The cost of replacement would be around £4,700. Also to offer a full 24/7 Disaster Recovery for the alarm and out of hours, the reciprocal arrangement currently with Exeter supports only the alarm service.

4. Vision for the service

- 4.1 In order to grow, Home Safeguard requires a digital platform with the capability of offering full assistive technology, and having a new call handling system is the first stage of this commitment. Investment in this market is entirely consistent with the ageing population and demographic of the district, and its continuing appeal as a popular retirement area.
- 4.2 The current location of Home Safeguard at Lymebourne Park in Sidmouth is not suitable to meet our long term business needs as there are multiple problems with the building itself and its lack of suitability for expansion. This gives us the opportunity to relocate to two locations; to Exmouth Town Hall where the new equipment and the existing hardware can be located while providing an improved and updated office working environment alongside the rest of the Housing Service, and maintaining a presence in Sidmouth to provide our disaster recovery arrangements. The latter can be achieved via our support service cluster office located at 90 Lymebourne Park which will also continue to house Mobile Support Officers for this part of the district.
- 4.3 Within the telecare industry there are strict standards and codes of practise that apply. To achieve our ambitions to expand or grow the service, and still to recognise the Telecare Services Association (TSA) standards, we will need to review our staffing levels, having more than one call handler on shift at all times rather than just during the busier periods as at present. To accomplish this we will need more operator terminals, which can be achieved at our new locations with the additional of workstations, but not at Lymebourne House, our current location.
- 4.4 Customer feedback tells us that a responder service would be valued in the district. Emergency services are unable to prioritise calls to help someone who has fallen, for example, but needs no medical treatment or other specialised intervention, and where there is no other local contact to summon. This service is market driven and there are several examples of where it has been operating effectively in parallel with the telecare service in other parts of the country.
- 4.5 For Home Safeguard it would provide income generation, fill an identified gap in the market that is not currently being provided in East Devon and give us the second call handler on shift who would then become the first responder as and when required. In this way initial costs would be contained, then as demand grows it may be necessary to recruit more specialised responders. This way of working helps us to work on a 'case management' basis, seeing the actions through for a customer ourselves from initial call to successful outcome, therefore not needing to involve emergency services in many cases.
- 4.6 Having a secondary location will enable us to operate from either location at times of emergency or inclement weather/staff sickness/increasing call volumes. Currently our disaster recovery arrangements are with Exeter City Council who are able to call handle our alarms for us, but only one at a time, and do not have the ability to handle the other out of hours or business calls. As Exeter City are not upgrading their call handling system at this time we are committed to continue to provide the disaster recovery provision for them, but this will no longer be a reciprocal arrangement. Greater resilience and business continuity can be gained by establishing our own disaster recovery arrangements at 90 Lymebourne Park, so that in times of emergency we are able to provide our own call handling service, at our normal or increased volumes, and for all types of call rather than just for alarm calls.
- 4.7 Looking at other income based business opportunities there are a great variety of diverse services that a 24/7 call centre can provide. There are many examples emerging across

the sector, and these will be something for us to consider in the medium term, such as a handyman service, car park payment machine monitoring or carer attendance monitoring.

- 4.8 Our ambition to increase our market presence with more advertising, vehicle logos, working with partner agencies, improved website and social media coverage is already underway. Moving forward our Marketing Plan will be refreshed within the Home Safeguard Strategy, which is currently under development. Initially there will have to be some investment into the business in order for Home Safeguard to play its part in the Council's Transformation Strategy.

5 Cost of system upgrade

- 5.1 Our proposal is to procure through the Northern Housing Consortium's framework agreement as this is specialist hardware/software.
- 5.2 Further details are contained within the Home Safeguard System Upgrade Business Case (annex 1), which shows costs provided by the framework which are estimates only, as accurate figures could not be provided at this stage of the process. Costings are unique to each service provider and our own will emerge if/when we get further along the tender process.
- 5.3 The business case describes an increase in support and maintenance charges from £17,751 to £45,000 annually. This is due in part to an increase in call handling terminals from 3 to 8, and the figure provided by the consortium is an estimate at the 'top end' based on either a cloud based system or a hardware system. It is impossible for us to be more precise at this stage of the process. The same applies to the initial set up cost of £44,000 which, again, is an estimate based on the costs of other organisations of varying sizes.
- 5.4 If this report is agreed at Cabinet, a capital bid will be submitted for the sum of £55,000 which will include a contingency of £11,000.
- 5.5 This business case has been considered and agreed by the authority's Strategic Management Team.
-

Business Case

Call Handling upgrades – Home Safeguard (EDDC)

Author:	David Sercombe
Date:	18 th September 2018
Business Owner:	Sue Bewes
Version:	0.3

Current Situation and Issues

Both East Devon District Council (Home Safeguard) and Exeter City Council (Home Call) are currently using the same community alarm solution – Tunstall PNC6. Both councils, through coincidence, replaced their previous systems early in 2010.

As both organisations are operating as businesses it is important that their IT systems are kept current and we are aware that technology in this field has moved on a long way in the past couple of years. Although functional, the existing systems are proving to lack the functionality and flexibility that the councils and the customers expect. We are also looking to achieve improved service resilience and more robust disaster recovery arrangements with a system upgrade.

Tunstall PNC6 lacks the features to enable the authorities to achieve the Telecare Standards Association (TSA) standards. Although neither council are pursuing TSA accreditation at this time, it is something that the Department of Health are working with the TSA to ensure the entire telecare industry complies with key quality and safety standards. This potentially means that all call centres will need to be accredited in order to continue offering the service in future.

The IT equipment is completely separate from the rest of the Council IT infrastructure, and is maintained by current supplier Tunstall. Each Council however still need to provide and maintain the physical space, cooling, power and battery backup solutions. Since the last replacement in 2010 the industry is now offering hosted solutions, which will remove the reliance on Council systems in order to function. A hosted solution needs to be considered as is our preferred starting point.

Since 2016 East Devon and Exeter have offered each other a reciprocal disaster recovery (DR) service. There is an ECC Tunstall server based in East Devon and an EDDC server based in Exeter. Should there be a failure at either site, there is the ability to operate from the other site.

East Devon District Council are relocating offices and as a consequence there is now dedicated space available to run the Home Safeguard service from the new Exmouth Town Hall offices. The council therefore wants to free up the existing office space in Lymebourne House, currently occupied by Home safeguard.

In addition to the relocation, the existing hardware used to provide the call monitoring service is over 8 years old. This is at the limit of the expectation for server hardware, and as a result there is

now an increasing risk of a hardware failure. This is mitigated by having a full support contract with Tunstall, however given the nature of this service, any outages caused by hardware failure however brief, could have significant impact on customers.

Other issues

The current system lacks some of the functionality expected of a modern system. Such as:

- The need to be compliant with current Telecare Standards Association (TSA) standards;
- A system compatible with the wide variety of Telecare and Telehealth equipment;
- Availability to diverse groups of customers to enable service users with cognitive or sensory impairment or speech defects to receive the service;
- SMS facilities, which is now becoming standard practice between control centre and service user;
- GPS and location devices with the ability to use anywhere and not restricting service users to home devices (avoiding isolation);
- A Lone Worker solution;
- A wider range of performance reports that are easy to access;
- The flexibility to login in and call handle from any location, e.g. during bad weather conditions or if faced with a Disaster Recovery situation.
- The battery backup capability for the current system has been reported by the supplier as only 3 hours and needs replacing. This is present a current risk to operations.

Proposed Solution

It is proposed that a tender exercise is undertaken to choose a new system to address the concerns and short fallings of the current offering.

The quickest route to procure will be via a framework. One such framework, the Technology Enabled Care Services Framework. If the business case is approved then it is recommended that we procure through this framework.

Discussions with Exeter City Council have concluded that ECC are not yet in a position to upgrade or replace their existing system. There a 2 separate contracts with the existing supplier, Tunstall, which means that Exeter can remain on their contract whilst East Devon undertake a procurement exercise independently of Exeter. The DR arrangement for Exeter, whereby EDDC host an ECC server will continue, however full costs for moving the server from its current location in Lymebourne House to the new location will need to be understood and borne by the project. East Devon's DR arrangement will be considered as part of the procurement.

Due to the nature of the system and the service it provides it is essential that the system is available 24/7/365 and supported at all times. Therefore in line with current arrangements, it is recommended that Strata do not host any of the hardware or equipment and that the supplier has full responsibility for this. This could either be in a fully supported, on premise solution that is

completely independent from the Strata Infrastructure, or a similarly independent cloud hosted solution. If any of the system were to be managed or supported by Strata, a different level of support arrangements would be required so that Strata would have full 24/7 support service in place. This level of support is not possible within current resource levels and budget.

Scheduling & Resources

The headline tasks required for procurement and implementation are outlined below. These are indicative only and based on previous time scales estimated by Sue Bewes.

Task	Responsibility	2018			2019				
		Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	...
BC Sign Off	EDDC								
Finalise Specification	EDDC/ Strata								
Prepare Tender Docs and issue	EDDC								
Receive Responses, evaluate and award	EDDC, Strata								
Standstill	-								
Implementation	EDDC, Strata, supplier								

Other Options that were Considered and Dismissed

Do nothing:

This option of not upgrading the system was considered. However due to issues outlined above this was not an option

High-level Risks of Proposal

Risk	Impact	Mitigating actions
Full costs for Business case not available. These are based on indicative costs from the Framework	M	Highest costs provided in the Business Case with
Telephony requirements not fully understood at this time	H	Requirements will be included in specification prior to procurement.
Lack of resource from EDDC to implement system	H	Assurances that resource will be fully committed prior to commencement of project.

Strategic Benefits

Item	Benefit
1	Supports the home safeguard business
2	Ensures ongoing support of key business system
3	
4	

5	
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Other Standard Considerations

Item	Benefit	Impact (High, Med, Low, None)
1	Systems Administration	Medium
2	Equality & Diversity	None
3	Data Protection	Medium

Quality Assurance

	Comments	Name and Date
Business Systems Manager		
Infrastructure & Support Manager		
Security & Compliance Manager		
Strata Accountant (Finance)		
Data Protection Officer		
Procurement		
Legal		

Costs and Savings

Current Costs	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
EDDC Support and Maintenance	£17,751	£17,751	£17,751	£17,751	£17,751
Total Current Costs	£17,751	£17,751	£17,751	£17,751	£17,751

Direct Costs of Proposal	Capital	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Hardware	£26,000					
Support and Maintenance		£45,000	£45,000	£45,000	£45,000	£45,000
Installation	£13,000					
Penetration Test	£5,000					
Total Direct Costs	£44,000	£45,000	£45,000	£45,000	£45,000	£45,000
Yearly Costs / Savings(-ve)	£44,000	£27,249	£27,249	£27,249	£27,249	£27,249
Cumulative Costs / Savings(-ve)	£44,000	£71,249	£98,498	£125,747	£152,996	£180,245

Other Costs of Proposal	Capital	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Costs of borrowing						
Contingency 25 %	£11,000	£11,250	£11,250	£11,250	£11,250	£11,250
Total Other Costs	£11,000	£11,250	£11,250	£11,250	£11,250	£11,250

Total Proposed Costs	£55,000	£56,250	£56,250	£56,250	£56,250	£56,250
Total Yearly Costs / Savings(-ve)	£55,000	£38,499	£38,499	£38,499	£38,499	£38,499
Total Cumulative Costs / Savings(-ve)	£55,000	£93,499	£131,998	£170,497	£208,996	£247,495

Note 1: This costs are based on indicative figures from the Framework. More detailed figures are not available at time of writing business case

Business Case Approval – Authority to progress to procurement

Strata

Position	Name	Signature	Date
IT Director	Laurence Whitlock		

East Devon

Position	Name	Signature	Date
Finance Director	Simon Davey		
Client Lead	Karen Jenkins		
Service Lead	John Golding		
Key Officer 1.	Sue Bewes		
Key Officer 2.	Sue Hodges		

Report to: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 28 November 2018
Public Document: Yes
Exemption: None
Review date for release: None



Agenda item: 19

Subject: Monthly Performance Report October 2018

Purpose of report: Performance information for the 2017/18 financial year for October 2018 is supplied to allow the Cabinet to monitor progress with selected performance measures and identify any service areas where improvement is necessary.

Recommendation: That the Cabinet considers the progress and proposed improvement action for performance measures for the 2017/18 financial year for October 2018.

Reason for recommendation: This performance report highlights progress using a monthly snapshot report; SPAR report on monthly performance indicators and system thinking measures in key service areas including Development Management, Housing and Revenues and Benefits.

Officer: Karen Jenkins, Strategic Lead – Organisational Development and Transformation

kjenkins@eastdevon.gov.uk

ext 2762

Financial implications: There are no direct financial implications

Legal implications: There are none arising from the recommendations in this report

Equalities impact: Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk

A failure to monitor performance may result in customer complaints, poor service delivery and may compromise the Council's reputation.

Links to background information:

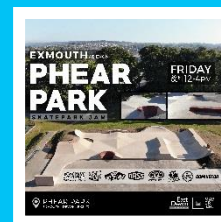
- [Appendix A – Monthly Performance Snapshot for October 2018](#)
- [Appendix B - The Performance Indicator Monitoring Report for the 2017/18 financial year up to October 2018](#)
- [Appendix C – System Thinking Reports for Revenues and Benefits, Development Management for October 2018](#)

Link to Council Plan: Continuously improving to be an outstanding Council

Report in full

1. Performance information is provided on a monthly basis. In summary most of the measures are showing acceptable performance.
2. There are two indicators showing excellent performance:
 - Days taken to process changes to Housing Benefit claims
 - Percentage of planning appeal decisions allowed against the authority's decision to refuse
3. There are two performance indicators showing as concern for the month of October
Days taken to process new Housing Benefit claims - We are currently working through a transition period to Universal Credit which is impacting on our performance. More detail can be found in Appendix C.
Working days lost due to sickness absence - There has been a significant increase this year in employees who have been absent for two months or more as a result of surgery and serious health issues for 2 or months– these cases are all being proactively managed through HR and reference to Occupational Health advice to facilitate a return to work as soon as possible. We continue to train our managers in this difficult area and work closely with them to facilitate return to work.
4. Monthly Performance Snapshot for October is attached for information in [Appendix A](#).
5. A full report showing more detail for all the performance indicators mentioned above appears in [Appendix B](#).
6. Rolling reports/charts for Revenues and Benefits and Development Management report appear in [Appendix C](#).

Monthly Performance Snapshot – November 2018



This monthly performance snapshot shows our performance over the last month:

- An estimated **60%** of all waste collected was recycled in September
- **94%** of invoices received by us are paid within 10 days
- At the Thelma Hulbert Gallery visitor figures are up for October with 935 visitors. Up +36% on last month

Latest headlines:

- Thelma Hulbert Gallery's Halloween event celebrating the national Museums At Night and The Big Draw Festivals welcomed over 400 visitors.
- Construction of new office building for Streetscene East at Manstone Depot is now complete and staff due to move in at end of November.
- Seaton wetlands has made it to the finals of the South West Tourism Awards, Small Attraction of the Year – the results will be announced on Thursday 22 November.
- In October the Countryside rangers conducted a record breaking Dormice survey at Holyford woods. They found 10 woodmice and 8 dormice during their monthly check.
 - Queen's Drive Space - Feedback from visitors to Exmouth's new temporary Queen's Drive Space has been overwhelmingly positive, with 77% of users saying their expectations of the site were 'exceeded'. Headline results include:
 - Queen's Drive Space was the main reason for visiting Exmouth for 58% of all users. 59% of day visitors said it was the main reason for their visit. The quality of the free children's play area and overall enjoyment of the site received the highest satisfaction scores amongst users.
 - Nearly all visitors said they would use a similar type of site at Queen's Drive Space if it was provided again next year.
- The council has now submitted a planning application to continue the temporary uses on the site until March 2020. It is expected to go before the councils Development Management Committee early next year. The big wheel will also be coming back for the summer as well.
- Feedback received includes: "...absolutely perfect use of the space....different feel to Exmouth seafront....new pride in the town....better image for residents and visitors....seeing my disabled daughter having fun....best improvement to the seafront for many years....multi purpose, multiage appropriate and brings a high trade to Exmouth....what young families have been begging for... safe for kids to have an awesome time....children loved the seating area....accessibility for autistic children....make special trips from outside town to take our kids there....huge asset to Exmouth seafront....feels like you're on holiday with live music and choice of food and events...."

- Support for new Exmouth start up scheme - East Devon's Economic Development team has led on a successful application for business rate relief to support [Propeller Exmouth](#) establish itself in the town. In return, Propeller will deliver a series of unique events, support and an education programme that will facilitate the growth of new and existing businesses and provide new, well paid jobs in the developing local tech sector. Propeller is a group of Exmouth-based tech entrepreneurs who have established a collaborative workspace at Victoria Road. The agreed business rate relief is for a period of two years and will save Propeller around £30,000.
- New business support programme launched - East Devon is funding an intensive productivity focussed business support programme worth £30,000 which will run until the end of the financial year. The partnership of [Business Information Point](#) (BIP) and [Cosmic](#) have been appointed by the Economic Development team via Devon County Council's procurement framework. BIP and Cosmic will deliver a series of workshops and 1:1 support to existing and pre-start local businesses with the aim of enhancing productivity and encouraging the use of mobile technology and online activity.
- East Devon Business Centre - We welcomed 538 visitors in October (compared to 334 last year).
- The Contractor's Programme Rev 11 advising of an updated Completion Date of 21 December 2018 has been formally issued by the Contractor for acceptance. On the basis of this revised date, Blackdown House our new HQ will be "Open for Business" on Monday 11 February 2019.
- The new link road has been fully completed with the incorporation of new streetlighting.
- At the new Manstone Depot Office the building has been completed with occupation planned for mid-November
- PegasusLife continue to carry out pre-commencement non-intrusive surveys in the Knowle grounds.

Report to: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 28 November 2018
Public Document: Yes
Exemption: None



Review date for release None

Agenda item: 20

Subject: Response to the Payhembury Neighbourhood Plan Submission

Purpose of report: To agree the response by this Council to the current Regulation 16 submission consultation for the Payhembury Neighbourhood Plan.

Recommendation:

1. That Members note the formal submission of the Payhembury Neighbourhood Plan and congratulate the producers of the plan on the dedicated hard work and commitment in producing the document.
2. That this council make the proposed representation set out at paragraph 5.2 in this report in response to the consultation.

Reason for recommendation: To ensure that the view of the District Council is recorded and informs the consideration of the Neighbourhood Plan by the independent Examiner.

Officer: Phil Twamley, Neighbourhood Planning Officer,
ptwamley@eastdevon.gov.uk (01395 571736)

Financial implications: No specific financial implications.

Legal implications: The legal implications are fully set out within the report. It is important that EDDC comment on the content of the Neighbourhood Plan (given that it will form part of the Development Plan and therefore help guide decision making on planning applications) to ensure it sits within the strategic requirements of the East Devon District Council's Local Plan.

Equalities impact: Low Impact
The Neighbourhood Plan has gone through wide consultation with the community and has been advertised in a variety of formats to increase

accessibility. Neighbourhood Planning is designed to be inclusive and extensive consultation is a fundamental requirement. All electors are invited to vote in the referendum.

Risk:

Low Risk

There is a risk that the Neighbourhood Plan could fail the examination if it is considered to conflict with the Basic Conditions.

Links to background information:

- [The Localism Act](#)
- [Plain English Guide to the Localism Act.](#)
- [National Planning Policy Framework: \(2012 version applies for the examination of this plan based on submission date\).](#)
- [Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.](#)
- [East Devon Neighbourhood Planning.](#)

Link to Council Plan: Neighbourhood planning helps to deliver the priorities identified in the Council plan by:

Encouraging communities to be outstanding

Developing an outstanding local economy

Delivering and promoting our outstanding environment

1.0 Report Summary

1.1 Payhembury Parish Council submitted their Neighbourhood Plan to the District Council and the Regulation 16 submission consultation commenced on 10 October 2018. The District Council is required to formally consult on the Plan for a minimum of 6 weeks before appointing an independent Examiner to inspect the Plan against a series of conditions that must be met in order for it to proceed to a referendum.

1.2 During this consultation the District Council has the opportunity to comment on the Neighbourhood Plan. This report is brought before Members with a request that they endorse the Officers' observations, which are set out at the end of this report, as the formal representation on the plan.

2.0 Background to the Payhembury Neighbourhood Plan

2.1 Payhembury Parish Council commenced work on their Neighbourhood Plan following their Neighbourhood Area being designated on 31 March 2016.

2.2 Since then, the Parish Council and volunteers from the local community have spent considerable time and effort consulting with residents of the parish and producing a plan which reflects the aspirations of the community with regards to the use of land until 2031.

- 2.3 The Payhembury Neighbourhood Plan contains 6 policies designed to protect and enhance the special qualities of the Parish of Payhembury. The Plan aims to secure a sustainable future for the area in environmental, economic, and social terms.
- 2.4 Prior to submitting the Plan to East Devon District Council, Payhembury Parish Council have held their own 6 week public consultation on a draft version of the plan; a step which is also required by the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (Regulation 14). The group took comments made during this stage into account and updated the plan for submission to East Devon District Council.

3.0 Submission of the Payhembury Neighbourhood Plan

- 3.1 The District Council has received a Neighbourhood Plan from Payhembury Parish Council. [The Plan and its supporting documents are available to view.](#)
- 3.2 This is the seventeenth neighbourhood plan to reach submission stage in the District. The Parish Council has received regular support from the District Council and additional financial support from MHCLG.
- 3.3 The statutory regulations require that the District Council organise and undertake a consultation on a plan when it reaches this stage. This is commonly referred to as the submission or 'formal' 6 week consultation. The consultation period commenced on 10 October and is due to finish on 30 November 2018. The Plan proposal has been publicised through notices on the District Council website and an email sent to all the bodies mentioned in the consultation statement, including adjoining authorities and the statutory consultees of Devon County Council, Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency.
- 3.4 One of the statutory roles of the District Council is to consider whether the Plan meets, in production process terms, the legislative requirements. Cabinet has previously endorsed a protocol for District Council involvement into neighbourhood plans and in accordance with this protocol an officer review has been completed. Officer assessment is that legislative requirements are met.
- 3.5 Anyone may comment on a neighbourhood plan. It is particularly important that the District Council comments, given that the Payhembury Neighbourhood Plan (if adopted) will form part of the Development Plan, and should conform to the strategic policies of the Local Plan. This report provides the recommended representations on the Plan, made by officers of this authority, to be submitted to the Examiner undertaking the Plan examination.

4.0 Neighbourhood Plan Examination and Referendum

- 4.1 Following the consultation the District Council must appoint an 'appropriately qualified and independent Examiner' agreed with Payhembury Parish Council. All responses from the six week consultation (including any made by this council) will be forwarded to the Examiner who will consider them, either by written representations or at an oral hearing (if s/he decides one is necessary). The District Council is responsible for paying the costs of the examination although the District Council can recoup these expenses by claiming funding

from Central Government of £20,000 once a date has been set for referendum following a successful examination.

- 4.2 The Parish Council have not indicated that they have a particular preference as to who to appoint to conduct the examination. Previous examinations in East Devon have been conducted by a variety of Examiners, all very experienced and well qualified and, whilst a decision has yet to be made, it is likely that we will use one of these Examiners again.
- 4.3 The Neighbourhood Plan examination is different to a Local Plan examination. The Examiner is only testing whether the plan meets the Basic Conditions and other relevant legal requirements – they are not testing the soundness of the plan or looking at other material considerations. The Examiner will be considering whether the plan:
- has appropriate regard to national policy and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State
 - contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
 - is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the local area.
 - is compatible with human rights requirements.
 - is compatible with EU obligations.
- 4.4 As part of the Development Plan used in future planning decisions, it is in the interests of the District, Town and Parish Councils to produce high quality neighbourhood development plans.
- 4.5 Following the examination, the Examiner's Final Report will set out the extent to which the draft plan proposal meets the Basic Conditions and what modifications (if any) are needed to ensure it meets the Basic Conditions. The Examiner has 3 options for recommendation:
- A. That the Plan proceeds to referendum as submitted.
 - B. The Plan is modified by the District Council to meet Basic Conditions and then the modified version proceeds to referendum.
 - C. That the Plan does not proceed to referendum.

If the Examiner chooses A or B above they must also consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the boundaries of the Plan area (this could be applicable if plan proposals could impact on a larger area). The report must give reasons for each recommendation and contain a summary of its findings. It is the responsibility of the District Council decide what action to take in response to the recommendations of the Examiner.

- 4.6 Once the Plan has been modified it will be subject to a referendum where everyone on the electoral roll (for the defined area) will have a right to vote for or against it. If at least half of votes cast support the Plan then it can be brought into legal force.

5.0 The Payhembury Neighbourhood Plan Response

5.1 During the current 6 week consultation the District Council can comment on the Plan. In terms of meeting the Basic Conditions, the Parish Council has produced a statement setting out how the Plan complies with the conditions which the Examiner will assess.

5.2 **After reviewing the Neighbourhood Plan contents, it is recommended that the following representation of East Devon District Council be submitted to the Neighbourhood Plan consultation. It should be noted that comments we make at this stage are primarily restricted to land use planning policy matters rather than background text/reasoned justification or the community policies and are made on the basis of:**

- **Do Payhembury Neighbourhood Plan policies comply with strategic policies in our adopted Local Plan and have appropriate regard to National Planning Policy?**
- **Do we have concerns about policy given the wider objectives of the council?**
- **Are the policies workable and enforceable - could they be reasonably applied through the Development Management process? and**
- **Are they otherwise appropriate or desirable?**

EDDC Cmmt No	Reference / Policy No.	Comment
1.	Policy PNP1	<p>Final sentence - In relation to exception sites, this policy is more restrictive than the Local Plan because it limits such development to brownfield sites whereas the Local Plan does not.</p> <p>We suggest that the reference to brownfield is removed to avoid limiting the development of exception sites supported by the Local Plan.</p> <p>We suggest a reference back to the relevant property size criteria (max 93m2) is included in the final sentence, supporting Strategy 35, to promote the delivery of the identified housing need for smaller properties.</p>
2.	Policy PNP3	We suggest the policy is includes clear guidance that marketing must be for the existing or similar use (ie. not residential).
3.	Policy PNP4	<p><i>'Further development of existing buildings or within their curtilage to include renewable energy...'</i></p> <p>It is unclear what type of development this policy applies to as it is written.</p> <p>We suggest the policy is amended as follows:-</p> <p>'Proposals for individual and community scale renewable energy projects, and other forms of green technology, will be supported</p>

EDDC Cmnt No	Reference / Policy No.	Comment
		<p>subject to the proposed development not creating an unacceptable adverse impact on:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the character and the appearance of the area; and • the amenity of local residents; and • the local biodiversity and natural environment' <p>Reference in the proposed policy to 'neighbouring residents' is changed to 'local residents' as renewable energy schemes can affect residents beyond the neighbouring properties (through glare / shadow / noise etc).</p>
4.	Policy PNP5	<p>We suggest the policy references the protection afforded by designation:</p> <p>Paragraph 101 of the NPPF states: Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.</p>

Report to: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 28 November 2018
Public Document: Yes
Exemption: None



Review date for release None

Agenda item: 21

Subject: Warren View Sports Ground Investigation

Purpose of report: For Cabinet to consider an increase of £20,000 in the project budget.

Recommendation: East Devon commit a further £20,000 for geoenvironmental and geotechnical investigations at Warren View Sports Ground

Reason for recommendation: To help give reassurance to Exeter City Community Trust (ECCT) regarding the risks relating to the ground so that they can continue to proceed with their proposed development of the site

Officer: Dave Turner, Engineering Projects Manager

Financial implications: There is currently a budget approved in the current year of £40,000; this report asks for additional £20,000 to be added to the budget sum for reasons outlined in the report. This will have to be met from the General Fund Balance.

Legal implications: Legal Services have no particular comment to make at this time, clearly all statutory provisions need to be adhered to and we are happy to advise further if there are any specific queries.

Equalities impact: Low Impact

Risk: High Risk

There is a risk that elements of the proposed development outside of East Devon's control are not progressed in sufficient time to obtain grant funding, therefore putting the project at risk.

The investigations being undertaken are in response and tailored to the proposed development, and wouldn't be required in the normal course of owning and using the land.

Links to background information: .

Link to Council Plan: Delivering and promoting our outstanding environment

1 Background

1.1 East Devon own the Warren View Sports Ground Exmouth which lies to the North East of Mudbank Lane.

1.2 In the late 1800's the site became a brick and tile works (later renamed East Devon Brick and Tile Works) with excavation of clay across the site, with the brick works itself occupying the Westernmost area of the site. The brickworks appears to of ceased production sometime in the late 1950's/early 1960's.

- 1.3 The clay pits appear to of begun being used as a refuse tip in the 1950's whilst the brick works was still in operation, with use a refuse tip continuing into the late 1970's.
- 1.4 Historic mapping shows the site as restored, and in use as sports pitches from the early 1980's, with the present day access road and pavilion in place by 1988.
- 1.5 Capping of the Southernmost pitch was undertaken in 2007 by East Devon to improve the pitch, and reduce leaching of contaminants into the nearby Withycombe Brook.
- 1.6 In recent years the tenant at the site breached the terms of the lease on a number of occasions and fell into arrears. The previous lease was terminated in 2016.
- 1.7 The site was marketed to potential tenants early in 2017, with Exeter City Community Trust (ECCT) a charitable partner of Exeter City Football Club identified as the preferred tenant, with heads of terms agreed in the summer of 2017. A key part of the offer from ECCT was the development of all-weather pitches and other facilities to maximise the use of the site, and make it economically viable. A plan of the proposed development is included in Appendix A.
- 1.8 During due diligence for the site, ECCT reviewed East Devon's existing information for the site including extensive investigations, monitoring and assessment of the material beneath the site. ECCT subsequently asked that East Devon commission further investigation and assessment of their development proposals in order to provide reassurance regarding the geotechnical and geoenvironmental risks.
- 1.9 £40,000 was allocated in the 2018/19 budget for this work.

2 **Work to date**

- 2.1 East Devon have recommissioned and commenced gas monitoring (constituents/flow) of the existing boreholes at the site. To date, this monitoring has shown nothing of concern and is continuing.
- 2.2 In parallel all the pre-existing information for the site has been reviewed by Pell Frischmann against the proposed development plan from ECCT (Appendix A) , who have produced a contaminated land desk study, in summary:
 - 2.2.1 The assessment has identified several potential risks to human health, buildings/structures and controlled waters.
 - 2.2.2 However it is unlikely the site would be classified as Contaminated Land.
 - 2.2.3 The variable fill under the site gives a risk of differential ground settlement which could affect the proposed development
 - 2.2.4 A combined Phase 2 land contamination site investigation and geotechnical investigation is recommended to further understand the site and to supplement existing ground investigation data from 2002-3.
- 2.3 Pell Frischmann have put together a specification for the ground investigation which has been tendered by EDDC via Supplying the South West.

3 **Costs**

- 3.1 Costs to date including gas monitoring, Phase 1 assessment and reporting have totalled £5.1k.
- 3.2 A further £20.6k has been committed to complete the gas monitoring, to supervise the ground investigation, undertake surface water sampling, interpret the ground investigation and produce the Phase 2 report.

- 3.3 The lowest tendered price for the site investigation and ground investigation is £33.7k.
- 3.4 This gives a total cost to completion of £59.4k excluding any risk or contingency.
- 3.5 The site investigation was originally estimated at a cost of £17.5k. The tendered costs have come back higher due to an underestimate of the length of time to complete some tasks, and strong demand at present for GI contractors means that prices aren't as competitive as they might normally be.
- 3.6 Pell Frischmann are reviewing the ground investigation scope, to see where efficiencies can be made. For example, it was envisaged that one day of trial pitting would be sufficient but all tenderers have come back allowing for 2.

4 **Issues**

- 4.1 ECCT wish to obtain grant funding for their development, it is understood there is a limited window for this and that the last window for this is in the New Year.
- 4.2 At the last meeting with ECCT in August 2018, ECCT agreed to progress a planning application and signing of the lease so that they could apply for funding. There appears to have been little progress by ECCT with regard to those matters since then. As a result it is unknown whether ECCT could still feasibly obtain grant funding and progress their planned development.
- 4.3 It is understood that ECCT are progressing a funding application for £1.5M for the proposed development via Devon Football Association, but no further update has been available at the time of writing.
- 4.4 East Devon's contaminated land officer has confirmed the ground investigation and Phase 2 assessment is not required to obtain planning permission as the site is low risk.
- 4.5 Given the above issues, there is a risk that the ECCT development does not proceed due to issues outside of EDDCs control despite the investment and best efforts by East Devon.
- 4.6 In those circumstances, there is risk that the work undertaken by EDDC is of limited value as it is being carried out in response to, and tailored to the proposed ECCT development. It is not work which would normally be undertaken as a matter of course as a responsible land owner, and it is not necessarily of use if alternative plans for the site were brought forwards.

5 **Recommendations**

- 5.1 In order to continue to help progress ECCT's proposed development of the site, it is recommended that the budget for the works is increased to £60k.
- 5.2 It is understood that completion of these investigations and analysis would give ECCT sufficient understanding of these risks, and the reassurance to redevelop the site with all-weather pitches and other facilities to ensure its future sustainability.
- 5.3 ECCT's designers and contractors will still need to manage risk associated with the ground during the development, as they would for any other site, or element of the proposed ECCT development.