

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held at Knowle, Sidmouth, on Wednesday, 21 October 2015**

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

The meeting started at 6.30 pm and ended at 7.55 pm

#### **\*31 Public Speaking**

The Chairman welcomed those present and invited members of the public to speak to the Council.

Denis O'Day spoke as a member of Save Exmouth Seafront. Mr O'Day questioned a perceived lack of progress being made and the chosen developer's financial record and ability to meet deadlines. He asked the Council to ensure that it practised due diligence throughout the process. Mr O'Day advised that Exmouth Beach was the Number One attraction according to Trip Advisor and asked the Council to guard against over development.

Annie MacAllister spoke on behalf of Save Exmouth Seafront. She said that the development plans would not meet the needs of children. Why use a splash park when there was the sea? The town already had a cinema. Annie said that she liked the seafront as it was and that the development plans would not match up to what was already there. She asked the Council to listen to the views of children.

In response, the Chief Executive referred to the Council's press release in June which set out the proposals and processes for the Queen's Drive redevelopment which was still in its infancy. More work would be carried out with the community and chosen developer to make sure that the needs of all interest groups were taken into account. The Council was currently in a legal process with the existing tenants on the Queen's Drive site and so it was not appropriate to make further comment at this stage.

Anna Roderick spoke of the Syrian refugee crisis. She said that she was aware that EDDC was working behind the scenes in its role within the Government's plans to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees throughout the UK over the next 5 years under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Scheme (SVPS). She appreciated that there was much effort and energy needed to provide a co-ordinated and practical response. She referred to the significant will amongst ordinary local people to respond to the crisis and asked that this be born in mind. She asked how many refugees had EDDC committed to resettle under SVPS.

In response, the Chief Executive advised that the Council was working through Devon County Council as lead social services provider in the county. It was anticipated that the majority of Syrian refugees within Devon would be settled in Exeter and Plymouth but there would be 4 or 5 families homed within East Devon annually over the next 5 years. He confirmed the significant co-ordination work being put in place behind the scenes; support was not just about housing provision but included cultural orientation, benefit entitlement, primary and secondary medical care, education and social provision. Agencies and authorities were working together to ensure that the package of essential support was in place.

The Chief Executive agreed that the crisis was not just a council responsibility; local people would also play a crucial part. The church network was already involved and members of the public willing to help should supply their contact details to the co-ordinators.

Councillor Jill Elson, Portfolio Holder – Sustainable Homes and Communities confirmed the work being carried out ‘across the board’ to ensure that a full package of support was available for the most vulnerable refugees who would be coming to Devon over the next few years.

**\*32 Minutes**

The minutes of the Extra Ordinary meeting of the Council and of the Ordinary meeting of the Council – both held on 29 July 2015 - were confirmed and signed as a true record.

**\*33 Declarations of interest**

Councillor Phil Skinner – Minute No.36

Type of interest – Personal

Reason – Member of National Farmers Union

**\*34 Chairman/Leader notices/announcements**

- a) The Chairman had extended sincere condolences on behalf of the Council to Councillor Brenda Taylor whose husband had recently died. The Chairman advised of the funeral arrangements.
- b) The Leader was pleased to announce that the Council had won the South West Councils Local Authority Challenge 2015. Although most teams were from individual authorities, our team had chosen to have the extra challenge of being a joint team with Exeter and Teignbridge Councils. Ed Freeman and Amy Gilbert were the EDDC members on this successful team.
- c) The Leader congratulated the Growth Point Team for its recent success. Cranbrook had been entered into the Inside Housing’s Top 60 awards in the Best Affordable Housing Development category. Cranbrook had won both the Affordable Housing Development of the Year award and the Best Overall Scheme award.
- d) The Leader also referred to the breaking news about a signed agreement between edf energy and China Nuclear Power Corporation for nuclear power provision at Hinkley Point, Somerset. This would create 25,000 new jobs.

**\*35 Long Service Awards**

The Chairman said that it was always a pleasure to present service awards to long-serving staff; it was an ideal opportunity to thank them for their valued contribution. The Chairman highlighted the achievements of the members of staff who were then awarded their certificates by the Vice Chairman.

Karen Arnett:	Environmental Health Technical Officer	10 years
Rodney Brooks:	Building Cleaning Team Leader	10 years
David Clode:	Environmental Health Technical Officer	47 years -23 for EDDC

\*36 **Presentation – National Farmers’ Union (NFU)**

Andrew Butler, Devon County Advisory South West NFU gave a presentation on the current agricultural position and potential for growth. The presentation included statistical information on current trends, challenges (including increased market volatility and decline in self-sufficiency), and why the industry was vital to the national and local economy. Growth within the industry meant that farmers could reinvest and diversify. A strong farming sector had a positive impact on the wider supply chain (including consumers, retailers and businesses built around, and reliant, upon agriculture). British farmers had an enviable worldwide reputation for maintaining high standards of produce, traceability, and animal welfare.

Mr Butler said that EDDC could help by:

- Promoting the Back British Farming message
- Ensuring the new Local Action Group – Make it Local, delivers real benefit to farming businesses
- Promoting the farming sector through to the Local Enterprise Partnership
- Ensuring that the needs of the farming industry are fully recognised within the upcoming Local Plan. Importantly, recognising that in order to stay competitive the industry must continue to adapt and invest.
- Through the wider planning regime, supporting good applications that deliver jobs and growth to the economy (either direct agriculture or diversified businesses)
- Continuing to push for increased broadband provision in rural areas

Members were invited to ask any questions. Issues raised included:

- Agriculture was within the remit of the Economy Portfolio Holder – it was important that the Council was aware of the connectivity between farming and the wider economy. Farmers also help to protect the countryside.
- There was a challenge of land-use between food and energy production. This was an old challenge - traditionally hay was grown for working farm horses. The modern equivalent was use of anaerobic digesters and solar farms, which helped to support the energy mix. Farmers had to balance their land use to ensure the viability of their business.
- Young people were being encouraged to return to agriculture as a career – it was now regarded as a high-tech industry requiring highly qualified workers.
- The Farm-wise initiative run by Devon Farm Estates to educate school children on farming and food production could be widened to educate the wider community.
- The proposed Local Plan included opportunities to include dwellings on existing farms to house the next generation of farmers as a way of keeping young people on the land.
- Farm theft and security continued to be a problem. The Police were now taking rural crime much more seriously, recognizing this as a business crime. Those within agriculture were working with the Police but the reduction in Police resource would have a negative impact on this work.
- One of the challenges to the British Farming industry was cheap imported food. British farmers continued to maintain high welfare standards despite the competition and had built a worldwide reputation for its produce. However, British produce would never be the cheapest due to cost of production.

The Chairman thanked Mr Butler for his informative presentation.

**\*37 Questions (Procedure Rules 9.2 and 9.5)**

Three questions had been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 9.2 - the printed [questions and answers](#) were circulated at the meeting. Councillors submitting questions are entitled to put a related supplementary question (Procedure Rule 9.5). The responses to the supplementary questions are set out below.

- a) Question 1 – In response to a supplementary question, the Leader said that he had not been inundated with emails about beach hut arrangements.
- b) Question 2 – In response to a supplementary question about potential transfer of Windsor Gardens to the Seaton Town Council, the Leader advised that he would investigate and respond in writing.

**\*38 Minutes of Cabinet and Committees**

**RESOLVED**

1. that the under-mentioned minutes be received and the recommendations approved

**Cabinet**

Minutes 58-73, 74-89, 90-106

**Development Management Committee**

Minutes 23-27, 28-33, 34-43

**Standards Committee**

Minutes 1-8

**Audit and Governance Committee**

Minutes 15-24

**Licensing and Enforcement Committee**

Minutes 6-12

**Licensing and Enforcement Sub Committee**

Minutes 1-6, 7-12, 13-15, 16-18, 19-20

2. that the under-mentioned minutes be received.

Cabinet (minutes 65, 98, 99, 100) had noted or accepted the following Overview/Scrutiny Committees' recommendations with or without amendment.

**Overview Committee**

Minutes 6-13

**Scrutiny Committee**

Minutes 8-16, 17-24

**Housing Review Board**

Minutes 17-33

Arising from consideration of the above minutes:-

**a) Exmouth Regeneration (Cabinet Minute 102)**

Speakers raised a number of issues in respect of:

- the loss of two popular local businesses on Exmouth Seafront
- public concern as evidenced during public speaking at the start of the meeting.
- Request that the Council undertake an independent consultation exercise before any further regeneration is carried out.
- the reputation of the proposed developer of the Queen's Drive site was questioned - to achieve due diligence, the proposal and associated issues should be referred to Scrutiny Committee.
- The aim of the regeneration now seemed to be to bring money to the Council to bridge funding gaps and not for the wider community benefit.
- Exmouth beach was not just important to Exmouth residents – the Council needed to find a way to achieve improvements without destroying its appeal.

The Leader noted the wide-ranging comments raised and advised that a written response would be given.

The Chief Executive noted comments and suggested that Councillors should take note that there will be future consultation around planning for Exmouth Seafront. He referred Members to the Council's press release and reminded Members of the need to respect the legal processes currently going through.

**b) Scrutiny Committee – 17 September 2015**

Councillor Peter Burrows to be added to the list of Councillors present.

**c) Housing Review Board – 10 September 2015**

In presenting the minutes of the meeting, the Chairman, Councillor Pauline Stott asked Councillor Jill Elson, Portfolio Holder – Sustainable Homes and Communities to update Members on action taken in respect of the Government's proposed reduction in rents (1% for 4 years).

Councillor Elson confirmed that a deputation including herself, the Strategic Lead – Housing, the two local MPs and Councillor and Officer equivalent representatives from Mid Devon District Council had now met with the Minister for Housing to argue the case – but with little success. Consideration was now being given to putting the argument to the Public Bills Committee. The visit gave both Councils a useful opportunity to speak with the Local MPs – John Golding, Strategic Lead – Housing had given an excellent briefing. The most positive and immediate outcome was that the local MPs were now fully informed and would be kept in the picture to use their influence within Parliament whenever possible.

Councillor Douglas Hull applauded Councillor Elson for her strong backbone and for standing up for the rights of ordinary people.

**d) Audit and Governance – 24 September 2015**

In presenting the minutes, the Chairman, Councillor Mark Williamson, drew Members' attention to the very positive report from the external auditors and the auditor's praise for this Council for being innovative in identifying ways to ensure it had a strong future. Councillor Williamson extended credit and appreciation to Simon Davey, Strategic Lead – Finance and his colleagues.

**\*39 Member Champion - Leader appointment**

**RESOLVED**

that Councillor David Chapman be appointed Member Champion for Sport and Recreation.

**\*40 Committee Vice-Chairman appointment**

Councillor Mike Allen had resigned as Vice Chairman of the Overview Committee but would remain as a Committee member.

**RESOLVED**

that Councillor Graham Godbeer be appointed Vice Chairman of the Overview Committee for the remainder of the civic year.

**Attendance list**

**Councillors present:**

Stuart Hughes (Chairman)  
Helen Parr (Vice Chairman)  
Mike Allen  
Megan Armstrong  
Brian Bailey  
David Barratt  
Dean Barrow  
Susie Bond  
Matthew Booth  
Colin Brown  
Peter Burrows  
Paul Carter  
David Chapman  
Maddy Chapman  
Iain Chubb  
Alan Dent  
Paul Diviani  
Jill Elson  
Peter Faithfull  
Cathy Gardner  
Steve Gazzard  
Roger Giles  
Graham Godbeer  
Pat Graham  
Alison Greenhalgh  
Simon Grundy  
Ian Hall  
Mike Howe  
Douglas Hull  
Ben Ingham  
Geoff Jung

David Key  
Jim Knight  
Rob Longhurst  
Andrew Moulding  
Bill Nash  
Cherry Nicholas  
John O'Leary  
Christopher Pepper  
Geoff Pook  
Val Ranger  
Marianne Rixson  
Philip Skinner  
Pauline Stott  
Ian Thomas  
Phil Twiss  
Mark Williamson  
Eileen Wragg  
Tom Wright

**Honorary Aldermen:**

Christine Drew  
Stephanie Jones  
Ann Liverton  
Graham Liverton  
Frances Newth  
Tim Wood

**Officers:**

Mark Williams, Chief Executive  
Richard Cohen, Deputy Chief Executive  
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead – Legal and Democratic Services  
Diana Vernon, Democratic Services Manager

**Councillor apologies:**

Peter Bowden  
Matt Coppell  
Roger Giles  
Maria Hale  
Marcus Hartnell  
John Humphreys  
Dawn Manley  
Brenda Taylor

**Honorary Aldermen apologies:**

Trevor Cope  
Bob Peachey  
Ken Potter  
David Scott

Chairman ..... Date .....