

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held at Knowle, Sidmouth, on Wednesday, 24 October 2018

Attendance list at the end of document.

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 8.27pm.

***28 Public speaking**

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

Jack Rowland had submitted a question in advance of the meeting, asking: "EDDC has recently decided not to list Seaton Community Hospital as an asset of community value citing that it does not meet the definition of "social wellbeing". EDDC has now declined requests from 3 community hospitals in the district giving the same reason each time. Please explain why other district councils in Devon have agreed to list community hospitals as assets of community value e.g. Tyrell Community Hospital in Ilfracombe, Moretonhampstead Community Hospital, Bovey Tracey Community Hospital and Teignmouth Community Hospital.

Why is EDDC interpreting the definition differently to neighbouring district councils on this important issue where our community hospitals may be under threat of being fully closed and sold in the future by NHS Property Services?"

In response, the Chief Executive said:

'In this case the recorded reason is as follows:

The main use of the property is the 'care element' which may be considered as furthering the social wellbeing or social interest of the community, however, this does not come within the scope of the Localism Act.

A plain English guide to the Localism Act, states:

"Every town, village or neighbourhood is home to buildings or amenities that play a vital role in local life. They might include community centres, libraries, swimming pools, village shops, markets or pubs. Local life would not be the same without them, and if they are closed or sold into private use, it can be a real loss to the community."

In this case the nominated asset does not fall into the category of a Community Asset under s88 of the Localism Act and therefore should not be listed.

The Council believes that this interpretation of the law is correct as there is no evidence to suggest that community hospitals were in the mind of the legislator when the law was enacted. This is reinforced by the definition of 'social interests' in Section 88(6) of the Localism Act 2011 which states that it is, in particular, cultural, recreational or sporting interests. In addition there certainly appears to be no reference to community hospitals for example on any relevant websites. Had it been the intent of the legislator to include health care then one would have expected it to be listed in the relevant definition. It has also been confirmed that religious observance in a building does not fall within 'social well-being' and our view is that this is analogous to circumstances surrounding health care provision.

In the Case of North Devon Council they have helpfully published their reasoning for deciding that Ilfracombe hospital was an appropriate site to be registered under

the community right to bid: <https://www.northdevon.gov.uk/media/378607/decision-notice-tyrrel-hospital.pdf>

In particular, considerable emphasis is put on the fact that Ilfracombe is an area of high deprivation and low car ownership in a rural locality. This justification has been used to justify a departure from the original legislative intention.

Teignbridge Council have not published any of their decisions but looking at the location of the relevant properties it would appear that the assets are similarly located in areas which experience the worst levels of deprivation in Devon: <http://www.devonhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/jsna/overview/archive/socio-economic-deprivation/indices-of-deprivation-2015/>

The same cannot be said to be the case in either Axminster, Honiton, Ottery St Mary or Seaton. In the circumstances therefore there is no justification for departing from the correct legal interpretation and any consequential risks’.

Jack Rowland asked a supplementary question relating to the guidance which he suggested did not provide an exhaustive list of possible community assets, and stated that many town councils such as Seaton are trying to create health and well-being centres in their communities. He was of the view that EDDC was out of step with the rest of the country.

In response, the Chief Executive stated that he had done research into other areas and could refer to examples in Derbyshire, Essex and Worcestershire where following legal advice, councils had taken a similar interpretation as EDDC. In terms of the threat to community hospitals, the NHS are keen to work with local communities on sustainable solutions in locations where community hospitals are currently located, for example in Budleigh, which demonstrates that there is an expectation that if communities can come together and work with the NHS, it is the best way to protect locations and local assets.

David Daniel wanted to ask a question about housing need in Devon. He had recently attended a Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) symposium on Housing needs in Devon which had not been as well attended as an event in March on the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP). At the CPRE event, independent studies had shown that too many houses were being planned for Devon over the next ten years. It estimated that 4,300 were needed as opposed to 5,800 being planned, which was a 35% uplift. Also that two thirds of these would be occupied by inward migration. Vacant and second homes were a problem across the county and East Devon was taking a disproportionate share of development. Only Plymouth was building more than East Devon. The district was failing to build the right type of homes in the right location for locally generated populations. The Government uses a formula for calculating housing targets which will be open to challenge, but which are still lower than in the East Devon Local Plan. Sir Hugo Swire MP will be taking a message back to Government from the event and stated that we should ‘Follow the facts and build the appropriate number of houses for local need’.

The Chief Executive responded by stating that EDDC are awaiting a copy of the CPRE report, which will be assessed by officers and a report will go to the Strategic Planning Committee in November. He pointed out that the figures in the Local Plan came about as a result of going through the statutory process and the

original figure was influenced by the CPRE. The Council is interested in what the CPRE have to say as well as the Government's view.

***29 Minutes**

The minutes of the [Extra ordinary Council meeting](#) and [Council meeting](#) held on 25 July 2018 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

Councillor Tom Wright wanted to raise a point from the last Council meeting when there was a debate about the Drill Hall in Sidmouth. Councillor Booth had taken part in the debate and stated that he had no interest to declare on the matter when asked by Councillor Wright, but subsequently apologised when he found out that this was not the case. Councillor Booth explained that he had formerly been a Director in a company associated with the Drill Hall but it was his belief that this had ceased to be the case in 2017. He had thought that he had no need to declare an interest accordingly, but on checking with Companies House after the July Council meeting, he established that he had not been removed as a Director as expected. He discussed this matter with the Monitoring Officer and offered an apology to the Council.

***30 Declarations of interest**

Councillor Geoff Pook – Minute *28, Public speaking – Question on Seaton Community Hospital

Type of interest – Personal interest

Reason – Vice Chair, Seaton Health Matters

Councillor Graham Godbeer – Minute *35, Appointment of a non-voting Parish Council representative to the Standards Committee

Type of interest – Personal interest

Reason – Councillor Nelson once purchased a puppy from Councillor Godbeer

Councillor Geoff Jung – Minute *37, Motion – Future housing provision in the East Devon District Council area

Type of interest – Personal interest

Reason – Member of CPRE

Councillor Geoff Pook – Minute *37, Motion – Future housing provision in the East Devon District Council area

Type of interest – Personal interest

Reason – Involved in construction industry

Councillor Matt Booth – Minute *37, Motion – Future housing provision in the East Devon District Council area

Type of interest – Personal interest

Reason – Member of CPRE

Councillor Peter Faithfull – Minute *37, Motion – Future housing provision in the East Devon District Council area

Type of interest – Personal interest

Reason – Member of CPRE

Councillor Skinner asked the Monitoring Officer for future reference if those Councillors who were members of the CPRE would be able to take part in debates about housing provision at future Council meetings. The Monitoring Officer, Henry

Gordon-Lennox, confirmed that they would be able to and should declare their membership as a Personal Interest.

*31 **Chairman/Leader notices/announcements**

The Chairman had several announcements, starting with obituaries for former Councillors.

Geoffrey Chamberlain – sadly passed away in May 2018.

Geoff Chamberlain, was elected Vice-Chairman of the Council for two years in 2005 and as a Liberal Democrat, was the only person from outside the ruling majority conservative group to have been appointed to that position.

He was also Chairman of Exmouth Town Committee in 1995 before becoming the

council's first Mayor following its formation in 1996, and guiding the new council through its difficult early years with skillful diplomacy.

He was made an Honorary Alderman of East Devon District Council in 2015, having been first elected in 1980, and was affectionately recognised as 'Father of the House'.

He was most interested in Planning but served on a huge range of Committees during his terms of office – including Tourism, Amenities, Transportation, Manpower Services, Policy, Planning, Property services, Performance Review, Environmental Planning, Overview, Standards, Licensing, as well as getting involved in many other things at a District and Town level.

He witnessed and participated in many changes to Local Government during his time in public service.

As a member of the Exmouth Pavilion Advisory Committee, his efforts to prevent the closure of the Pavilion played an 'important part' in securing its future when considerable investment was required.

He was a keen sportsman and was instrumental in bringing the East Devon Indoor Tennis Centre to Exmouth.

Geoff was chairman of Exmouth's Britain in Bloom committee, Commodore of the Exe Powerboat and Ski Club, and chairman of governors at Bassett's Farm School, as well as being a founder of the twinning arrangements between Exmouth and Langerwehe.

Colleagues described Geoff as a thoroughly likeable and friendly man, proud and soundly principled, and a reliable friend to many. His loss will be keenly felt across the district. His service to the community of Exmouth and East Devon was exemplary and unblemished and it was a privilege to have known him.

The Chairman invited further comments from colleagues who knew Geoff Chamberlain.

Councillor Eileen Wragg stated that he was a man of honour and dignity, and that despite his age, he always offered advice to colleagues in providing a service to the town and various organisations. She said that his loss would be felt.

Honorary Alderman Trevor Cope also wanted to reiterate how good it was to work with Geoff because of his vast knowledge.

Councillor Jill Elson said that she had worked closely with Geoff over many years.

Councillor Tim Dumper said that although Geoff had often operated in a non-party political manner, within the Liberal Democrat group he had been very supportive when Councillor Dumper was a parliamentary candidate on two occasions.

The Chairman asked the Council to rise in memory to Geoff Chamberlain.

Martin Gammell – sadly passed away on 12th August 2018

Martin was elected as the Liberal Democrat Councillor for Whimble in May 2011.

During his term in office, he served on a number of Committees – Development

Management; Planning Inspections; STRATA Joint Scrutiny and Employment Appeals.

He was also a member of the Economy Portfolio Holder's Think Tank, and was on the Broadclyst Sports Hall Advisory Forum.

A notable highlight of his political career at East Devon was when the students at Sidmouth College declared him 'King of the EDDC political speed dating event in 2013' and crowned him accordingly. This event of course has continued and will take place this year on November 23rd.

Martin will also be remembered for moving into the Old Station House at Whimble and attempting to restore the building to its former glory as a former railway station, writing articles for the 'Whimble News' about his progress.

The Chairman invited further comments from colleagues who knew Martin. Councillor Philip Skinner said the Martin Gammell had been a neighbour of his in the Talaton ward, and had been a thoroughly approachable and lovely man to know.

The Chairman asked the Council to rise in memory to Martin Gammell.

Geoff Pratt

The Chairman was pleased to welcome Councillor Geoff Pratt to EDDC. Cllr Pratt is an Independent Councillor who won the by-election to be elected to East Devon District Council in the Ottery St Mary rural ward on 20th September. He was one of five candidates contesting the vacant seat and was elected with 59 per cent of the vote.

Awards – The Chairman was delighted to announce that the multi-award winning partnership between EDDC's Recycling Team and SUEZ has had another success.

In 2017 the team was awarded a green apple environmental award by the Green Organisation for its improvements to recycling in the district. The Green Organisation then nominated the team for a further award this year on the world stage and the partnership had been successful. The team are now designated as Green World Ambassadors for 2018 for their work in Helping Others to Help the Environment.

The partnership are currently planning further improvements to recycling in East Devon in 2019.

Councillor Tom Wright stated that in view of the recent controversy and interest in plastics, he wanted to confirm that plastics in East Devon were recycled in Warrington and processed into pellets which could be used to make other products. Black plastic and film were the only items which could not be recycled and were removed at source.

***32 Questions (Procedure Rules 9.2 and 9.5)**

15 questions, some with several parts to them had been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 9.2 - the printed [questions and answers](#) were circulated prior to the meeting. Councillors submitting questions are entitled to put a related supplementary question (Procedure Rule 9.5). The response to the supplementary question asked is set out below.

- a) Question 1 – The supplementary question queried whether EDDC would be writing to local MPs to press the Government for revised borrowing guidelines.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes & Communities, Cllr Jill Elson, stated that she had already written to MPs for this purpose.

- b) Question 2 – The supplementary question queried that given the rise in anti-social behaviour and vandalism in parks and gardens, what EDDC would do to ensure effective patrolling of areas by the police at no additional expense to the Council.

In response, the chief Executive stated that the answer provided to the original question pertained to costs incurred to the Council to secure its own buildings. In relation to other issues in the District, EDDC has employed security for specific occasions, such as Britain in Bloom, to protect gardens against vandalism before they are judged. In relation to issues such as anti-social behaviour they are handled by the Local Area Groups when EDDC works closely with the police to ensure the police are aware of all local issues.

- c) Question 3 – The supplementary question queried how the team at EDDC ascertained the need for workshops in different areas across the District.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Economy, Cllr Philip Skinner stated that there was a push to identify suitable sites across the District.

The Portfolio Holder for Asset Management, Geoff Pook, stated that a much more commercial approach was now being taken. This was done through use of investment monies, but the first priority of this was to create an income for the Council, and also through looking for opportunities within the District utilising council land or land owned by others. EDDC had an open mind about sites and wanted to deliver what was needed, where it was needed.

- d) Question 4 – The supplementary question queried whether EDDC has asked further questions in relation to Grant Thornton in the light of negative reports about auditors.

In response, the Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee, Cllr Mark Williamson, stated that the Government's Business Secretary had commissioned a report into the four big audit firms, and Grant Thornton was not amongst them. He advised that Price Waterhouse Cooper (PWC) are doing a forensic analysis of these firms over the last two years and that EDDC should wait for the PWC report before drawing conclusions too early. He also pointed out that the Audit & Governance Committee were not there to listen to Grant Thornton, but to interrogate them, which is what happens.

- e) Question 5 – The supplementary question focussed on whether EDDC were using the three local MPs effectively to achieve quality developments in the District.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development, Cllr Paul Diviani, stated that we had ploughed our own furrow in East Devon by successfully securing advance funding from Government for infrastructure developments at Cranbrook. There had also been opportunities to secure other funding, such as through Cllr Diviani's work with the Local Government Association. It was clear that MPs are the best conduit for ensuring that information travels up and down the chain within government, and that they are in a strong position to help EDDC to achieve what is wanted in East Devon.

- f) Question 6 – The supplementary question asked was in two parts. Cllr Ranger asked if she could be referred to any previous reports on the topic of an East Devon and Dorset National park, and whether it would be fed into the Strategic

Planning Committee in November. And further with reference to the GESP, whether EDDC were taking on board how growth was impacting on the AONB and outlying areas of the District effected by the spread of Exeter.

In response, the Chief Executive stated that the previous report on this issue was at least ten years old, but that a full report was going to the Strategic Planning Committee in November. In relation to the AONB, requirements of its statutory designation meant that these had to be taken into account by the GESP team in any future proposals.

Cllr Graham Godbeer, as Chair of the East Devon AONB Partnership, challenged the question originally put to Council in terms of stating that the East Devon AONB Partnership strongly supports the presence of a National Park, because this was not the case. It was debated last year and there was no support for this development.

Cllr Diviani confirmed that view was shared by Devon County Council who would wait to hear from the areas concerned and were taking no action currently, as EDDC was also not taking any action. He informed members that he would be attending the National AONB conference in London on 29 November. He pointed out that AONB parks separately are highly regarded and were considered as part of the countryside to be kept intact. Attempts to alter this would be likely to cause AONBs to fight it strongly.

- g) Question 7 – The supplementary question concerned whether the Communications Team could be involved in this issue since EDDC is being blamed rather than Network Rail for not dealing with what is a grave concern in Feniton and an issue arising continuously on the Quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports of the Council as being of concern.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for the Environment, Cllr Wright, reiterated his concern that they had been led to believe that the necessary work would be under way by now. He was meeting with Neil Parish MP on 16th November to discuss environmental issues and had asked Cllr Bond to join him in putting pressure on the MP to take action.

- h) Questions 8 – 14. In the absence of Cllr Rylance there were no supplementary questions.
- i) Question 15 – The supplementary question queried why it took so long to repair a clock in Seaton.

In response the Chief Executive stated that all assets of the Council have a schedule of maintenance and repair and that in the opinion of officers it must have been a case of now being the right time to do the repairs.

There was a query about whether all of the questions being put in the Chamber needed to be asked when most work done by Councillors goes on outside the Chamber, and usually involves approaching the relevant officers and/or portfolio holders.

A view was expressed that in the interests of transparency, questions were to be asked and answered before moving on, but there seemed to be a tendency recently to have a general debate.

RESOLVED

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

Cabinet

Minutes 39-58, 59-76

Scrutiny

Minutes 14-21, 22-28

Overview

Minutes 6-10, 11-16

Strategic Planning Committee

Minutes 8-14, 15-21

Development Management Committee

Minutes 9-12, 13-16, 17-21

Audit & Governance Committee

Minutes 1-14, 15-24

Licensing and Enforcement Committee

Minutes 5 - 8

Licensing and Enforcement Sub Committee

Minutes 11-15, 16 – 22, 23- 25, 26-28

Standards Committee

Minutes 1 - 6

Arising from consideration of the above minutes:-

- **Audit & Governance, minute number 22 – Expenditure on consultants and agency staff 2017/18**

Councillor Longhurst had raised an issue at the meeting relating to Strategic Plan costs totalling £50,000 and the Strategic Lead for Finance was going to update members on what this referred to. Councillor Giles asked for an explanation about what this cost related to. The Chief Executive stated this would be related to the budget previously approved by Cabinet required for the GESP team, covering secondments of staff and the use of various experts and consultants as work progressed.

- *34 **Amendment to appointments on the Overview and Licensing & Enforcement Committees**

RESOLVED that following the election of Councillor Geoff Pratt to the Council, he will replace Councillor Matt Booth on the Overview Committee and the Licensing & Enforcement Committee.

- *35 **Appointment of a non-voting Parish Council representative to the Standards Committee**

RESOLVED that Councillor Bob Nelson, currently Chair of Broadhembury PC, is confirmed as a non-voting Parish Council representative to the Standards Committee, following a recent recruitment process to fill the vacancy on the Committee.

- *36 **Motion - Voluntary Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks**

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Ian Hall, seconded by Councillor Iain Chubb and supported by Councillor Brian Bailey, Councillor Bruce De Saram, Councillor Mike Howe and Councillor Pauline Stott.

“That this Council supports elected Councillors from May 2019 obtaining their own basic Disclosure and Barring Service check and the voluntary disclosure of the result and further that the Council will facilitate the publication of the result of the check on the Councillor pages of the Council’s website.”

The proposer of the motion, Councillor Ian Hall, made the following comments; He wanted to move a motion that EDDC supports a non-mandatory, voluntary Disclosure and Barring Service check DBS for sitting members seeking re-election and newly elected Councillors from May 2019.

The reason for bringing the motion was to ensure EDDC has the most robust tool available to everyone through a ‘voluntary’ Disclosure and Barring Service Check (DBS).

The subject of a mandatory DBS check was discussed last September and based on advice from the Monitoring Officer it is known that this cannot be a compulsory check, which might be subject to legal challenge, but in the interests of openness and transparency councillors should not want a DBS check simply because it is mandatory. Public perception is important and other local authorities have voted unanimously for a voluntary DBS check.

Councillors all complete register of interest forms and declare various DPI and personal interests as and when required, and these particular checks and balances are effective. In talking to members of the public it is assumed that councillors would already have a DBS check in place as with their ROI declarations, ensuring that they are all fit and proper community leaders, and they can be reassured that openness & transparency is as paramount to councillors as it is to them.

When he was first elected in 2015, Cllr Hall was astonished that there were no checks at this district level of public service and with the situation for all councils changing rapidly in terms of reduced services provided and more collaborative working between authorities they must be seen to be shutting the stable door before the horse bolts.

Cllr Hall had had to undertake CRB & DBS checks as a result of other voluntary roles in the community previously, and the clear view from those who have elected him and others who support this motion view this as a very reasonable, ‘pain free’, low cost part of what is expected of all councillors as community Leaders.

No one should have anything to hide and he urged all members to support this motion where he will be requesting a recorded vote be taken.

The seconder of the motion, Councillor Iain Chubb, referred to the numerous occasions currently when councillors engaged with young people and local communities. There are requirements for people to go through various checks in relation to council business, such as Taxi drivers whose applications need to be checked by the Licensing Committee and the checks made by Payroll staff in relation to the expenses claimed as a result of the use of cars. He pointed out that it seemed strange that EDDC did not have a DBS scheme in place before something bad occurred.

Cllr Wright stated that DBS checks do not protect anyone from bad things happening because many offenders have been through a process of being DBS checked. However it was important as a matter of public perception.

Cllr Booth suggested that safeguards are in place to protect councillors from mis-use of DBS checks.

Henry Gordon-Lennox explained that there were three types of checks carried out. Basic checks which went back to an individual, Standard checks, and Enhanced checks which were requested and retained by employers. From a council perspective with its role in relation to data protection requirements, it was not the responsibility of the council to keep information on councillors, and if information was disclosed as a result of a DBS check it would be difficult to know what the Council could do with it.

Other points made during the debate included the following;

- There is nothing requiring a councillor to disclose anything in their past once they are elected and future behaviour cannot be predicted.
- The legality of who keeps the information is important.
- A scheme for the Council should be mandatory not voluntary.
- There is work currently going on within government in relation to the disqualification criteria for councillors and mayors. There are likely to be amendments proposed to the Local Government Act 1972 to facilitate this and make DBS checks mandatory in due course.
- The key word in the motion is 'voluntary' offering councillors a choice which will be supported by the Council, as a first step to schemes becoming mandatory.

Henry Gordon-Lennox clarified that it would currently be unlawful to impose mandatory checks. Councillors do not meet the criteria for Standard or Enhanced checks. Amendments to the motion are not necessary because the issues are self-regulatory and the Code of Conduct would not apply because there would be automatic disqualification if a Councillor was convicted for a relevant offence. It is the content of the DBS check which is critical for the public to know about, requiring a document to be posted online or statements to be made about a check being clear or otherwise. He considered that the issue had been adequately debated previously at Full Council and Cabinet and councillors would have the choice to have their DBS sheet put on the website which the Council will facilitate.

The Chairman invited Cllr Hall to give his right to reply.

Cllr Hall stated that he would prefer the scheme to be a mandatory one and reiterated that councillors should not miss this opportunity to be proactive about this issue. He requested a recorded vote.

The Chairman requested that the motion be now put and that a recorded vote take place. This was agreed by a show of hands.

The Chief Executive read out the names of all councillors present to record who voted for or against the motion, or abstained from voting.

The Councillors in support of the motion comprised; Mike Allen, Megan Armstrong, Brian Bailey, Dean Barrow, Susie Bond, Colin Brown, Peter Burrows, Paul Carter, Maddy Chapman, Iain Chubb, Alan Dent, Bruce De Saram, Paul Diviani, Tim Dumper, John Dyson, Jill Elson, Mark Evans-Martin, Peter Faithfull, Cathy Gardner, Steve Gazzard, Roger Giles, Graham Godbeer, Simon Grundy, Ian Hall, Mike Howe, Stuart Hughes, John Humphreys, Ben Ingham, Geoff Jung, David Key, Rob Longhurst, Dawn Manley, Andrew Moulding, Cherry Nicholas, Darryl Nicholas, John O'Leary, Helen Parr, Geoff Pook, Geoff Pratt, Val Ranger, Marianne Rixson, Philip Skinner, Pauline Stott, Brenda Taylor, Phil Twiss, Mark Williamson, Eileen Wragg, Tom Wright.

There was one councillor abstaining from the vote, Councillor; Matt Booth.

The Chairman stated the outcome of the recorded vote as being 48 in favour, and one abstention.

RESOLVED:

‘that following a recorded vote, the motion proposed by Councillor Ian Hall and seconded by Councillor Chubb was carried’.

***37 Motion – Future housing provision in the East Devon District Council area**

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Ben Ingham, seconded by Councillor Roger Giles and supported by Councillor Megan Armstrong, Councillor Susie Bond, Councillor Matthew Booth, Councillor Cathy Gardner, Councillor Peter Faithfull, Councillor Geoff Jung, Councillor Rob Longhurst, Councillor Dawn Manley, Councillor Geoff Pratt, Councillor Val Ranger, Councillor Marianne Rixson.

“This Council expresses its deep reservations at the government requirements for future housing delivery in the East Devon District Council area. The Council is concerned that the requirement for a minimum of 844 homes per year might be more than would be necessary to meet local housing need, would be damaging to the countryside, quality of life and would prove deeply unpopular with the people of East Devon. The Council therefore agrees to further consideration as to whether there are exceptional circumstances and more realistic assumptions of demographic growth that would justify a lower figure which would be required to be fully evidence based and which, if demonstrated, would be fed into the GESP process. A request is made for a budget for the Policy Team to commission expert evidence to assess in light of it being contrary to officer views as reported to Strategic Planning Committee in September. The public should be engaged as part of any assessment in the normal way”.

The proposer, Councillor Ben Ingham, made the following points. That some years ago this Council, Exeter City Council, Mid Devon District Council and Teignbridge District Council commissioned a combined Housing Needs Assessment considering the projected population growth and needs. This resulted in East Devon pursuing what he considered to be an aggressive jobs led local policy. As a result, 19,000 homes were regarded as enhancing the quality of the built environment, but this was more housing than was necessary to meet local requirements and was more about shouldering Exeter’s needs rather than protecting the North West quadrant of East Devon. If EDDC failed to meet the five year target for land supply, it would become an open target for unscrupulous developers. This would be about building the wrong type of housing, for the wrong people in the wrong places. There needs to be a reduction in the annual number of houses to be built in favour of young families and low earners in our communities. EDDC should not accept the revised

Government figures and the ONS and CPRE consider that this is wrong. Sir Hugo Swire MP contacted the Housing Minister as a result of his concern. EDDC must change its policy for it to be able to develop low cost housing and help to create futures for those people represented by local councillors.

The seconder, Councillor Roger Giles, stated that it is essential to get accurate projections which are evidence based. On 20 September, the ONS produced a report which predicted slower population growth than previously predicted. The need for new houses was now over stated, and ONS projected lower figures. Locally, developers argue against building affordable homes. East Devon has the highest inward migration for the whole of Devon. Building more houses will attract more migration. EDDC's Strategic Planning policy encourages large-scale inward migration which is detrimental to the prospects of young local people who cannot get on to the property ladder. The problem is a lack of affordable homes, while too many expensive homes are being built. Cllr Giles urged the Council to resist top down figures imposed by Government in favour of meeting local housing needs.

Councillor Megan Armstrong, expressed concern about the Council's environmental policy. That action was required to reduce the carbon footprint before the tipping point on climate change was reached. A strategic assessment should be carried out on the environmental impact of development. Too many houses are being built on greenfield sites, while actions such as planting trees could counter the increasing number of new sources of fossilised fuel.

Cllr Gardner stated that EDDC are committed to building an increasing number of houses to support Exeter's infrastructure needs without any guarantees of support for East Devon's infrastructure. She also pointed out that the public are unaware of the GESP and consultation should take place.

Cllr Booth referred to the CPRE report and support of Sir Hugo Swire MP. He also stated that Devon CPRE had offered to organise a presentation of their report to this Council.

Cllr Jung referred to reports demonstrating that we are not building houses for young local families who are moving away. New houses are being purchased by people from the Home Counties whilst local people are priced out of the market. EDDC should be looking to secure the future of the next generation.

Cllr Diviani stated that EDDC has a track record of doing things well, using Cranbrook as a success. The infrastructure issues were sorted with Government before much work was done by developers. In excess of £94m was attracted. If EDDC wants to build communities rather than estates then local people need to be able to have their say. The GESP is in its early stages but we needed to see how the area covering the travel to work area for Exeter can develop. He advised putting an analysis of what was required into the hands of the Strategic Planning Committee.

Cllr Howe pointed out that it was the Government who kept revising the figures. In September, the Strategic Planning Committee rejected the GESP as unsatisfactory. In October, the Development Management Committee recommended to Strategic Planning that a lower threshold for affordable housing is discussed and considered, and that an analysis of figures is undertaken accordingly.

He suggested an amendment to the motion to the effect that it is referred to the Strategic Planning Committee, and put this as a proposal. Cllr Diviani seconded this and Cllr Skinner supported this.

The Chairman invited Cllr Ingham to give his right to reply.

Cllr Ingham made further comments about the GESP and in support of the motion.

The Chairman asked for a vote on an amendment to the motion that “this motion be referred to the Strategic Planning Committee”, proposed by Cllr Howe and seconded by Cllr Diviani.

This was carried by a show of hands and the amendment became the substantive motion.

The Chairman requested that a vote take place on the proposal that the motion be now put. The proposal was put and agreed by a show of hands.

RESOLVED:

‘that this motion is to be referred to Strategic Planning Committee for further consideration.’

The Chairman declared the meeting closed.

Attendance list

Councillors present:

Mike Allen
Megan Armstrong
Brian Bailey
Dean Barrow
Susie Bond
Matthew Booth
Colin Brown
Jenny Brown
Peter Burrows
Paul Carter
Maddy Chapman
Iain Chubb
Alan Dent
Bruce de Saram
Paul Diviani
Tim Dumper
John Dyson
Jill Elson
Mark Evans-Martin

Peter Faithfull
Cathy Gardner
Steve Gazzard
Roger Giles
Graham Godbeer
Simon Grundy
Ian Hall
Mike Howe
Stuart Hughes
John Humphreys
Ben Ingham
Geoff Jung
David Key (Vice Chairman)
Rob Longhurst
Dawn Manley
Andrew Moulding (Chairman)
Cherry Nicholas
Darryl Nicholas
John O'Leary
Helen Parr
Geoff Pook
Geoff Pratt
Val Ranger
Marianne Rixson
Philip Skinner
Pauline Stott
Brenda Taylor
Phil Twiss
Mark Williamson
Eileen Wragg
Tom Wright

Honorary Aldermen:

Trevor Cope
Christine Drew
David Scott

Officers:

Mark Williams, Chief Executive
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead – Governance and Licensing
Sue Howl, Democratic Services Manager

Councillor apologies:

David Barratt
Steve Hall
Marcus Hartnell
Douglas Hull
Jim Knight
Bill Nash
Christopher Pepper
Eleanor Rylance
Ian Thomas

Honorary Aldermen apologies:

David Atkins

Stephanie Jones
Graham Liverton
Ann Liverton
Frances Newth
Ken Potter
Tim Wood

Officer apologies:

Richard Cohen, Deputy Chief Executive

Chairman Date