

## **Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview Committee held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 22 September 2015**

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

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 9.00pm.

#### **\*6 Chairman's introduction**

The Chairman welcomed the committee members to the meeting and asked for nominations for Vice Chairman, as, for personal reasons, Councillor Mike Allen wished to retire as Vice Chairman. Councillor Graham Godbeer was nominated as Vice Chairman for the meeting.

#### **\*7 Public speaking**

There were no public speakers at this point of the meeting.

#### **\*8 Minute confirmation**

The minutes of the Overview Committee held on the 30 June 2015, and of the joint meeting with the Scrutiny Committee on 11 August 2015, were confirmed as a true record.

#### **\*9 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations were made.

#### **\*10 Urgent item**

The Chairman agreed that a presentation from Andy Wood, East of Exeter Project Director on What an Enterprise Zone was and what the application for the Exeter and East Devon Enterprise Zone was all about would be discussed as an urgent under minute 13 below.

#### **\*11 Local Government Boundary Committee for England Electoral Review Programme (LGBCE) 2015-2019**

Members noted that at its meeting on 15 July 2015 Cabinet requested that the Committee undertake the initial investigation and scoping work to ensure that the Council had assessed possible options prior to the LGBCE electoral review commencing in September 2016. The report presented by Chief Executive highlighted the key issues that would arise and sought approval to the proposed online survey.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the Boundary Commission would expect a reasoned argument and analysis for any proposals made by the District Council. The view of Cabinet was that they wanted the Overview Committee to lead on this process.

Debate on the issue also included:

- Boundary Commission had extensive powers to decide on a Council's size;
- What was the most appropriate size for the Council going forward;
- This was a separate process from that being undertaken for Devon County Council, to which EDDC had commented upon;
- Housing developments in the district, particularly at Cranbrook and elsewhere would affect the Electoral Review;
- The workload for each councillor had increased in line with elector expectations, especially with regard to planning, and this was difficult to manage;
- Council Plan would be an important piece of evidence for the Boundary Commission;
- If time allowed, perhaps two surveys could be carried out.

- RESOLVED 1. that the contents of the report and the comments made at the meeting be noted and incorporated into the survey;
2. that a survey be undertaken of members' views and the results be reported together with an initial discussion proposal relating to Council size.

**\*12 Economic Development**

The Committee received a presentation from Andy Wood, East of Exeter Projects Director on the proposal for an Exeter and East Devon Enterprise Zone. There were currently 25 Enterprise Zones nationally which supported 540 businesses and had attracted 19,000 jobs and £2.2bn of private investment.

There were benefits to both business and the community from a successful Enterprise Zone application. The government had recently called for further zones, there were five proposals in the Heart of the South West area which were being assessed by the LEP Panel; the Growth Point proposal was in second place to Huntspill Energy Park. Members noted that the East of Exeter Growth Point was not experiencing the same level of delivery of jobs compared with the large number of new homes being delivered. The Enterprise Zone application was in response to this imbalance. The application also had the benefit of keeping the profile of the Growth Point high.

Debate on the issue also included:

- Concern was expressed on the affect on business opportunities in other parts of East Devon due to lower business rates in the Enterprise Zone;
- The affect a successful bid could have on the Local Plan;
- Concern about possible distortion of economic policy in the district and that the application had not yet been discussed at Council.

Andy Wood, East of Exeter Project Director was thanked for his report.

The Committee received the report of Rob Murray, Economic Development Manager. This set out the background to his work since his appointment to the post in May 2015. His work so far included providing economic input to the council's departments, developing projects to meet the needs of local business and developing joint work programmes with the Economic Development teams of neighbouring authorities (Exeter and Heart of Devon/EHOD).

The programme of work presented was very substantial for a small economic development team and it had only been possible for a small part of the programme to be implemented so far. It was noted that a full report on economic issues would be prepared by Rob Murray, Alison Hayward and Richard Cohen towards the end of the year.

Debate on the issue also included:

- addressing member wish for greater involvement in economic issues in the district should be addresses;
- importance of resourcing economic development in East Devon properly and including this in discussions on the budget, which would start in October;
- realistic goals and time frames need to be given to the economic development service;
- Business Taff was no longer considered to be required or the best way to improve communication with business in East Devon.

It was requested that Rob Murray circulate his presentation to members.

**RECOMMENDED**

1. that the top three agreed aims and outcomes for economic development in East Devon be:
  - a) To establish a robust, representative and transparent process of business engagement.
  - b) To improve the Council's knowledge of local business needs across all sectors and provide a clear process for businesses to feedback into EDDC.
  - c) To consider rural economic issues as a counterbalance to the Growth Point and urban related initiatives.
2. that a report be prepared to assess an effective and transparent engagement strategy with the EDDC business community.

**\*10 Overview forward plan**

The Committee discussed items for the forward plan, and agreed the following topics to be scoped before further consideration on how to proceed:

**RESOLVED**

That the forward plan include:

17 November 2015 – Council Plan and Economic Development.

13 January 2016 – Draft service plans and budget 2016/17 jointly with Scrutiny Committee.

26 January 2016 – Discussion on planning policy and how this should be dealt with within the Council, possibly through a separate planning policy committee. Also Coastal Flooding and the Exmouth Beach Management Plan.

22 March 2016 – Sustainability.

**Attendance list**

**Councillors Present:**

Peter Bowden (Chairman)

Mike Allen

Matthew Booth

Peter Faithfull

Graham Godbeer

Pat Graham

Ian Hall

Rob Longhurst

Christopher Pepper

**Councillors Also Present:**

David Barrett

John Dyson

Jill Elson

Marcus Hartnell

Ben Ingham

Geoff Jung

Marianne Rixson  
Philip Skinner  
Pauline Stott  
Tom Wright

**Officers**

Mark Williams, Chief Executive  
Richard Cohen, Deputy Chief Executive  
Andrew Wood, East of Exeter Project Director  
Rob Murray, Economic Development Manager  
Chris Lane, Democratic Services Officer

**Councillor Apologies:**

Marie Hale  
John Humphreys

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