

## **Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview Committee held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 28 June 2016**

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

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 8.25pm.

**\*1 Councillor David Chapman**

The Chairman asked that Committee members spend a few moments remembering the life and Council work of Councillor David Chapman who had sadly passed away on Sunday.

**\*2 Public speaking**

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

**\*3 Minute confirmation**

The minutes of the Overview Committee held on the 22 March 2016, were confirmed as a true record. Councillor Matthew Booth raised an issue arising from the minutes on coastal erosion issues at Pennington Point, Sidmouth and the Sidmouth Beach Management Plan and where responsibility for any coast protection works lay

Councillor Mike Allen advised that he had attended a meeting of the Joint Economy and Regeneration Think Tank but had not had a chance to discuss his report entitled 'East Devon Economic Development Policy in Rural Areas'. The Chairman reported that the Committee at its meeting on 29 November 2016 would discuss economy, including in rural areas.

**\*4 Role of the Committee**

Members noted changes to the Constitution agreed at Annual Council on 16 May 2016. The briefing paper set out the role of the committee following these changes.

**5 Local Government Boundary Committee for England Electoral Review Programme 2015 - 2019**

The Committee received a report from Mark Williams, Chief Executive, asking the Committee to consider and recommend to Cabinet/Council a future number of councillors for the District of East Devon (currently 59) and to approve the draft submission to be sent to the LGBCE (due week commencing 18 July 2016). The report had proposed for the purposes of debate that the minimum number of East Devon Councillors required was 45.

The key requirement the LGBCE needed was the council's view on the appropriate number of Councillor for the future. The LGBCE advised that effective representations would address:

- a. Decision Making;
- b. Scrutiny and Partnerships;
- c. Representational Requirements.

During discussions, the following further points and questions were also raised:

- If the Council were minded to reduce the number of councillors, was the need for Councillors to represent the Council on partnerships and outside bodies and Member Champions capable of being properly addressed? There was also the need to consider the representational requirements of constituents;
- Disappointment that only 31 councillors had replied to the latest survey;

- Less Councillors meant more work for those in post and that affected their work/life balance;
- There was not a standard number of electors per Councillor;
- Concern over a suggestion made in the report for there to be the same number of Councillors on Cabinet and Scrutiny, which would reduce the number of Councillors on Scrutiny;
- Mention should be made in the report of the Exeter to Waterloo rail line;
- There were originally 60 councillors at EDDC and this would be the ideal number to enable the work to be spread around ;
- The way Councillors now worked has changed greatly over the last 10 years and this work had increased considerably;
- What was the ideal number of councillors to properly service and represent East Devon?
- East Devon was a diverse district and had an ageing population,
- The number of planning applications in the District was increasing which meant more work for all Councillors, particularly those on Development Management Committee;

### **RECOMMENDED**

1. that the appropriate number of Councillors for the District of East Devon to be recommended to the LGBCE was 60 and that the justification for this was:
  - a. The need to ensure an appropriate work/life balance for new Councillors;
  - b. The need for enough members to ensure effective scrutiny and properly represent the full diversity of the district;
  - c. The role of the district councillor was seen to be a more active and demanding role as a consequence of developments in ICT and social media together with an increased interest in local democracy, planning and general societal changes;
  - d. Increased role of councillors resulting from changes in devolution and the funding of services;
  - e. The need to reflect the growth in population in East Devon both at Cranbrook and generally.
2. that a revised and updated draft submission based on that attached to the report be approved for the purposes of submission to the LGBCE;
3. that the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Group Leaders, be given delegated authority to make any recommended changes by the LGBCE to the draft submission following its consideration by the LGBCE.

### **6 Heart of the South West Formal Devolution Bid**

Members received a report from Mark Williams, Chief Executive, which sought approval to sign up *'in principle'* to the pursuit of a Devolution Deal and the creation of a Combined Authority for the Heart of the South West sub-region to administer the powers devolved through the Deal. An *'in principle'* agreement from all of the authorities, partners and MPs involved in the Heart of the South West devolution process would open up negotiations with Treasury to work towards a deal.

During discussions, the following points and questions were raised:

- Concern about possible future financial implications of taking on responsibility for health, social and wellbeing issues;
- Future of development of Hinkley Point C following the EU Referendum result;
- The process chosen by the government to introduce devolved powers was flawed.

### **RECOMMENDED**

1. that the Leader's current approach to devolution be endorsed and that agreement be given to signing up to the principle of creating a Combined Authority for the Heart of the South West, as set out in the Prospectus for Productivity, as the basis for negotiation with Government towards a Devolution Deal for the area;
2. that it be noted that giving this endorsement does not commit the Council to entering into a Devolution Deal or becoming a member of a Heart of the South West Combined Authority. This would be subject to future debate and agreement by the Council and subject to negotiations with Government.

## **7 Communications Plan 2016/20**

The Committee received a report from Karen Jenkins, Strategic Lead - Organisational Development and Transformation, on the Communications Plan 2016/20. The plan aimed to deliver effective communications to EDDC's customers. The Council strongly believed that customers who were informed about its services and benefits were more positive in their view of the Council than those who were not so informed.

Although there had been a great increase in social media activity, the Council used other methods such as the local press and leafleting to get its message across.

Karen Jenkins, Strategic Lead - Organisational Development and Transformation was thanked for her report.

### **RECOMMENDED**

that the Communications Plan 2016-2020 be endorsed.

## **\*8 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:

27 September 2016 – Affordable homes, Street Markets and trading consultation outcomes.

29 November 2016 – Economy.

11 January 2017 – Draft budgets and service plans 2017/18.

28 March 2017 – Tourism economy and cultural enhancement of natural environment.

### **Attendance list**

#### **Councillors Present:**

Peter Bowden (Chairman)

Graham Godbeer (Vice Chairman)

Mike Allen

Matthew Booth

Peter Faithfull

Maria Hale

Ian Hall

Rob Longhurst

#### **Councillors Also Present:**

David Barratt

Paul Diviani

John Dyson  
Jill Elson  
Cathy Gardner  
Roger Giles  
Ben Ingham,  
Andrew Moulding  
Marianne Rixson  
Pauline Stott  
Tom Wright

**Officers**

Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor  
Mark Williams, Chief Executive  
Karen Jenkins, Strategic Lead - Organisational Development and Transformation  
Rebecca Heal, Solicitor  
Chris Lane, Democratic Services Officer

**Councillor Apologies:**

Pat Graham  
Christopher Pepper

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