

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview Committee held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 28 March 2017**

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 8.06pm.

#### **\*20 Public speaking**

There were no public speakers at the meeting.

#### **\*21 Minute confirmation**

The minutes of the Overview Committee held on the 29 November 2016, were confirmed as a true record.

#### **\*22 Declarations of interest**

Councillor Peter Faithfull

Minute 23

Personal Interest – Member of the Arts and Culture Forum

Councillor Ian Hall

Minute 23

Personal Interest – Chairman of Cloakham Lawns Sports Club

Minute 24

Personal Interest – Employed by Pritchard Patent Product Co Ltd

#### **\*23 Culture Plan 2017 - 2022**

The Service Lead, Countryside & Leisure presented the report that set out the purpose of the Cultural Plan and the cultural activities, which East Devon DC was both promoting and supporting across the district. The report illustrated how cultural activities play an important role in helping to deliver the Council's health and wellbeing agenda, the promotion of its outstanding natural environment and how culture can help support the local economy. The report and Cultural Plan clearly demonstrated how cultural activities could make a difference to the way people lead their lives, engage with the environment and develop civic pride. Income generation was very important as well as the capacity to deliver new cultural programmes once long term financial planning was secured.

During discussions, the following points and questions were raised:

- Should libraries be included within the Plan?
- Industrial culture needed to be highlighted e.g. Honiton Lace and Axminster Carpets
- Culture could bring in additional income. The Arts Council would fund heritage projects
- Provide cultural opportunities for young people so they could engage
- More information on the coast and its capacity to provide culturally
- The outdoor environment was to be used within the school curriculum –presently very topical and relevant
- The need for a decent website/webpage to promote this properly
- Not just about culture, the health and wellbeing agenda should not be underestimated
- Encourage Town Apps – would be useful for visitors to access information

Charlie Plowden and his team were thanked for their hard work in promoting culture and tourism alike.

**RESOLVED:**

that the Overview Committee endorses the cultural activities within the Cultural Plan which sets the vision and ambitions for the Council's future engagement with culture within the district.

**24 East Devon Local Economy**

The Deputy Chief Executive updated Members with an overview on the development of a new economic intelligence report called All Business Great and Small, The East Devon Economy Report. The document gave an update on the district's local economy, recent key achievements, progress of current projects and provided a forward look to what projects were in the pipeline.

During discussions, the following points and questions were raised:

- Productivity nationally was the lowest in Europe but key to future prosperity
- Broadband in rural areas was essential for productivity
- The need to encourage creative businesses not just service industry jobs
- Small businesses need to be aware of the support that was available to them
- Two thirds of the businesses were in rural areas, could analysis be gathered to cover this?
- EDDC should offer advice and guidance within schools – to support its future residents
- The need to promote the right industrial premises in the right areas
- Productivity means increasing the wealth for future generations
- How to measure productivity where the dominant sector was the service industry. It was important to ensure that the correct measures were being used.

The Portfolio Holder Economy welcomed a further economy report in order for discussion and debate to be taken forward.

Members consider the content of this report and Appendix 1 and **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet:

- a. the report formed the basis of an Action Plan and further work to confirm the priorities, projects and financing arrangement for a future pipeline of Local Economic Development activity,
- b. a report be submitted to Cabinet to agree the direction and detail of the Council's Local Economic Development activity to include rural economic development,
- c. a report was presented in Autumn 2017 as part of the preparation of a future Economic Development Investment Plan for the Council within the overall budget planning for 2018/19 onwards.

**25 Housing Delivery Task and Finish Forum final report**

Members considered the final report presented by the Chairman of the Forum, Councillor Ian Hall. A national shortage of housing had been recognised for some time, but more recently brought to the forefront following the publication of the Housing White Paper on 7 February 2017. This set out how to reform the housing market and boost the supply of new homes in England.

Whilst this district had seen houses built, of most significance in scale in the new town of Cranbrook, demand still outstripped supply. Of particular concern was the proportion of affordable units that had dropped against the total number of house completions. The cost of getting onto the property ladder in the district continued to rise. This impacted on the demographics of the district further, with young people being unable to secure a home in the area of their choice.

During discussions, the following points and questions were raised:

- EDDC officers should be responsible for inspecting new developments of its own houses to ensure high standards
- Lead by example in building quality
- Little support from developers during the TAFF process

The Chairman of the Forum wished to thank John Golding, Ed Freeman and Debbie Meakin for their valuable support.

**RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet:

The Forum had recommended the following, based on the interviews, findings and consultation.

- (1) that Overview welcomed the Cabinet decision to support the proposal for establishing a Local Housing Company for the Council, as a means of delivering more housing;
- (2) that Council continue to maintain as a priority the delivery of affordable homes in its Council Plan;
- (3) that Cabinet ask relevant officers to undertake further research into the financial model of affordability, considering new practices emerging in other local authorities, to report back to the Overview Committee;
- (4) that Cabinet ask relevant officers to look at means of attracting other registered providers to the District in order to have a wider choice of providers than the dominant Devon and Cornwall Homes (DCH);
- (5) that Council explore how it could better support existing Community Land Trusts, and help bring forward new Trusts, through using partner organisations such as the Wessex Community Housing Project, and regular promotion of successful projects;
- (6) that Cabinet explore investment into property as a means of better financial return on reserves;
- (7) that the forthcoming District Design Guide (under the adopted Local Plan) was developed not only to improve the quality of new buildings, but to be innovative in seeking high quality of design, sustainability, and build, in order to drive a higher quality of planning applications submitted;
- (8) that consideration be given to encouraging the use of off-site manufacture for both developers in the area and for those interested in self-build;
- (9) That Council ensures a robust response to the government on the Housing White Paper including a request for a more coherent national housing policy; a return to a grant providing scheme of funding to stimulate growth; and practical solutions to deliver more diversity in the housing market.

**Attendance list**

**Councillors Present:**

Graham Godbeer (Chairman)

Ian Hall (acting Vice Chairman)

Peter Faithfull  
Matt Booth  
Rob Longhurst  
John Humphreys  
Mike Allen

**Councillors Also Present:**

Pauline Stott  
Paul Diviani  
John O’Leary  
Brian Bailey  
David Barratt  
Phil Twiss  
Andrew Moulding  
Phil Skinner  
Douglas Hull  
Tom Wright  
Jill Elson

**Officers**

Mark William, Chief Executive  
Richard Cohen, Deputy Chief Executive  
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead – Governance and Licensing  
Charlie Plowden, Service Lead – Countryside & Leisure  
Ed Freeman, Service Lead - Planning Strategy and Development Management  
Jay Lambe, Service Lead – Regeneration and Property  
Alison Hayward, Senior Manager – Regeneration and Economic Development  
Drew Aspinwall, Economic Development Manager  
Lynsey Lawrence, Funding and Research Officer  
Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer

**Councillor Apologies:**

Pat Graham  
Alan Dent  
Geoff Pook

**Officer Apologies:**

John Golding, Strategic Lead - Housing, Health and Environment

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