EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Council held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 15 October 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.30 pm

29 Apologies

30 Declarations of interest

Agenda Item 24 – Outside Body – Woodbury, Exmouth, Budleigh Health and Wellbeing Alliance: Councillor Nick Hookway, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Member of Exmouth Town Council and Devon County Council.

31 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.

32 Public speaking

There was one public speaker, Councillor Roy Collins.

Councillor Roy Collins spoke about the impacts of climate change on national and international food production and urged the Council to stop allocating good quality agricultural land for housing. They further called on the Council to support farmers in East Devon.

The Chair of Council thanked Councillor Roy Collins for his comments which were duly noted.

33 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

34 Announcements from the Chair and Leader

The Chair of Council invited councillors to observe a minutes' silence to mark the sad passing of Councillor Andrew Toye and former Councillor Graham Troman.

35 Confidential/exempt item(s)

The Chair of Council confirmed that there were three items of confidential/exempt business that would be dealt with under Agenda Items 26, 27 & 28.

To answer questions asked by Members of the Council pursuant to Procedure Rules No. 9.2 and 9.5

The following Questions on Notice had been submitted and the responses to those questions were submitted to Council. The table below includes any follow up questions submitted at the meeting.

Question	Question from	Question	Response
1	Cllr Stuart Hughes	Question to the Chair of Council As a serving District Councillor and long-time community advocate, I am concerned by the Council's apparent departure from the respectful tradition of publicly acknowledging the passing of all former members who served with distinction. The recent death of Graham Troman, who represented Sidmouth Sidford for eight years, passed without any formal recognition — despite his dedicated service and local impact. Can the Leader explain whether this reflects a change in Council protocol, and if so, what rationale underpins the decision to no longer honour former Councillors in this way?	Chair of Council Unfortunately, the Council was not notified of the recent passing of the former councillor. Where a notification of the passing of a former councillor is notified to the Council arrangements will be put in place to mark the sad news. A recent review of procedures has resulted in a protocol being put in place to mark the passing of both former/ current councillors. This protocol ensures that such events are marked, including lowering the flag to half mast at Blackdown House and the Councils' condolences being sent from the Chair of Council, a short statement issued through our Comms Team, and marking the passing of former or current councillors with a minutes' silence being observed at the next available Council meeting. I would welcome councillors notifying the Chair's Office or Democratic Services in such circumstances to ensure the appropriate tributes can be made.

2	CIIr Mike Goodman	Question to Portfolio Holder for Finance At the cabinet meeting on October 1st, agenda item 10 highlighted the potential challenges for EDDC when setting the budget for 2026. Can I ask the leader will he agree with me that there is a benefit to our council to consider working closely with other Councils in Devon to potentially reduce costs	Portfolio Holder for Finance Yes, working with other Councils is a way to help reduce costs and to give greater resilience, capacity, and capability particular in difficult to recruit to specialist areas. The Council has used this approach in several areas already
		and will he start to discuss these benefits with other districts.	including the South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) for its internal audit function, STRATA for its IT provision, Devon County Council for procurement services, Teignbridge District Council for coin cash counting and more recently a shared service agreement with BCP (Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole) for flood and coastal risk management.
			We will continue with this approach, and it is likely leading up to LGR there will be more opportunities available to us to pursue.
3	CIIr Mike Goodman	Question to Portfolio Holder for Council, Corporate Coordination & External Engagement In March the Council last formally discussed LGR and various recommendations were agreed by EDDC. Since this, there have been statements made by the leader regarding LGR which are different, could	Portfolio Holder for Council, Corporate Coordination & External Engagement When the Leader announced his appointments to Cabinet at Annual Council, Members were advised I was taking over the responsibility of working on and being

the leader please inform members and the public what the current options are and when residents and members will be able to discuss these. this council's lead Member for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

Since this council agreed in March that its preferred Devonwide restructuring model was for a 4-5-1 arrangement officers from this council, along with the other District and Borough Councils in Devon and alongside Torbay Council have been working to develop this model and to evaluate it against the government's six reorganisation evaluation criteria establishing a single tier of local government; efficiency, capacity and withstanding shocks; high quality and sustainable public services; working together to understand and meet local needs; supporting devolution arrangements and stronger community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment.

The 4-5-1 model anticipates unitary authorities being configured as follows; 4: South Hams, Teignbridge, West Devon and Torbay; 5: East Devon, Mid Devon, North Devon, Torridge and Exter City Council; 1: Plymouth City Council.

The work that this council, along with its partner authorities, has undertaken since the Council decision in March has been to build upon, and evaluate the Interim Plan submission (as set out in the 26-page proposal document presented to Council). Members are reminded of the debate and decisions that this council made on 19 March, and which are recorded in Minute 95 of that meeting. Members are also remined of the documentation that supported the decision

Agenda for Council on Wednesday, 19th March, 2025, 6.00 pm -East Devon

Currently the publicly announced Devon-wide restructuring proposals have come from Plymouth City Council, Exeter City Council and Devon County Council. Each of their respective proposals may be found on the websites for Plymouth City Council, Exeter City Council and Devon County Council.

This council's Members will determine this council's required Devon- wide local government reorganisation

submission to government at the Extraordinary Council meeting on 26 November.

The government, having at that point received reorganisation submissions from all 11 tier one and tier two Devon councils, has indicated that, at some point before its determination is made probably in the summer of 2026, that there will be a public consultation exercise on all of the proposed options.

Councillor Goodman asked the following follow up question. Could the Portfolio Holder comment on a statement made by the Leader of Council, in response the Portfolio Holder requested that Councillor Goodman submits the statement and the Portfolio Holder would respond.

Question to Portfolio

4

Cllr Mike Goodman

Holder for Council. **Corporate Coordination** & External Engagement With the drive by the government to move councils to become a unitary or unitaries, does the Leader agree that Devon becoming unitary should be about improving services for our residents and reducing costs. In no communications have I seen any financial figures that tell residents or members what the savings are if Devon were to have one, two or three unitaries for Devon. Is the Leader able to confirm what the savings are for Devon if we became one unitary, two unitaries or three unitaries.

Portfolio Holder for Council, Corporate Coordination & External Engagement

The government's stated objectives behind requiring councils in Devon to be restructured is in part, as you indicate, to bring about service improvements whilst making better use of resources. This council, along with the other District and Borough Councils in Devon and alongside Torbay Council has over recent months been working to develop restructuring proposals for submission to government that can

be evaluated against the governments six required reorganisation evaluation criteria establishing a single tier of local government; efficiency, capacity and withstanding shocks; high quality and sustainable public services; working together to understand and meet local needs: supporting devolution arrangements and stronger community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment.

It is through this process that a range of possible Devon-wide restructuring options have been considered by this, and the other District and Borough Councils in Devon and alongside Torbay Council. This work is underpinned by comprehensive financial analysis. The final detailed evaluated proposals will be considered by Council on 26 November as a submission must be made to government by 28 November. This will include the details of expected financial savings.

Members will receive an initial briefing on these evaluated proposals on 15 October.

Councillor Goodman asked the following follow up question: Could the Portfolio Holder confirm what are the financial benefits for each option. In

response the Portfolio Holder confirmed that the submission to Government was being prepared and at the extraordinary full Council meeting on 26 November 2025 the proposals would include financial information to support councillors in their decision making at that meeting.

Reports from the Cabinet and the Council's Committees and questions on those reports

The Council noted the minutes from meetings of the Cabinet and other committees, including:

- Cabinet 9 July, 30 July, 3 September & 1 October 2025
- Housing Review Board 31 July 2025
- Licensing and Enforcement Committee 16 July 2025
- Licensing and Enforcement Sub Committee 30 July & 13 August 2025
- Personnel Committee 10 September 2025
- Planning Committee 15 July, 19 August & 23 September 2025
- Strategic Planning Committee 8 July, 2 September & 30 September 2025
- Asset Management Forum 29 September 2025
- Cranbrook Placemaking Group 4 August 2025
- Leisure Strategy Delivery Forum 16 September 2025
- Scrutiny Committee 10 July & 4 September 2025
- Overview Committee 17 July 2025
- Audit & Governance Committee 24 July & 18 September 2025
- South & East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee 24 July 2025
- Standards Committee 17 July 2025
- Placemaking in Exmouth Town & Seafront Group 9 September 2025

38 Standards Committee - Updated Annual Report

The Chair of Council presented a report setting the work of the Standards Committee for the civic term 2024/2025.

Council noted the following activity:

- Meetings in 2024/2025
- Monitoring of complaint caseload
- Resolving complaints before they escalate
- Response to Government consultation on changes to the Standards regime
- The appointment of Independent Persons, Independent Representatives and Town/Parish Representatives
- Dispensations granted

The Council welcomed the work of the Standards Committee and how it contributed to and offers direction to shape the governance, culture and ethos of the organisation.

The annual report was duly noted.

39 Committee Arrangements and Proportionality

The Council received a report setting out the allocation and appointment of councillors for seats on the Council's committees following a change in membership of the political groupings on the Council.

Council noted that there had been changes made to the Conservative Group and Independent Group and that an ungrouped councillor has joined a political group.

Council were informed that following these changes the number of councillors per group was:

Democratic Alliance Group – 30 Conservative Group – 14 Independent Group – 11 Cranbrook Voice Group – 3 Independent Councillor Group – 2

Council noted that following an analysis of the committee seat allocation and in consultation and support from the Group Leaders and based on the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the following entitlement to committee places was:

Democratic Alliance Group – 58

Conservative Group – 27 Independent Group – 21 Cranbrook Voice Group – 6 Independent Councillor Group – 4

Councillor John Loudoun proposed the recommendations which having been seconded by Councillor Sarah Jackson were put to the vote and carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED:

That Council:

- 1. Notes the political balance of the Council and agrees the proposed allocation of committee places as follows:
 - Democratic Alliance Group 58
 - Conservative Group 27
 - Independent Group 21
 - Cranbrook Voice Group 6
 - Independent Councillor Group 4
- 2. Agrees to delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the appropriate Group Leader to confirm nominations to committees.
- 3. Agrees to delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the appropriate Group Leader to make in year changes to committee appointments in accordance with the allocation of places to political groups by the Council and the wishes of the relevant political Group Leader.

40 Recommendation from Cabinet on 30 July 2025 - Local Development Scheme

The Portfolio Holder for Place, Infrastructure & Strategic Planning presented recommendations from the Cabinet following their consideration of the Local Development Scheme.

Council noted that the proposed revised Local Development Scheme formed the formal project plan for future local plan production. The revision was necessary to the current Local Development Scheme in light of proposed amendments to the local plan making timetable which now incorporated a second Regulation 19 consultation in the Autumn to

address both the second new community and associated evidence as previously envisaged but also a further iteration of the Local Plan itself.

Councillor Todd Olive proposed the recommendation which having been seconded by Councillor Yehudi Levine was put to the vote and duly carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED:

That the Council adopts the Local Development Scheme work programme for planning policy production for East Devon District Council.

Recommendation from Scrutiny Committee - Changes to Agricultural Property Relief and Business Property Relief

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee presented a report setting out a recommendation following the committees consideration of a report on the changes to the agricultural relief and business property relief.

Council acknowledged the concerns about the potential impact of the reforms on the farming community in the District, but following further exploration it was clear that there was a paucity of data from which to properly understand the issues below the regional level and supported the comprehensive report from the EFRA Select Committee which helped to demonstrate that this matter was best addressed nationally.

Councillor Mike Goodman proposed the recommendations which having been seconded by Councillor Ian Barlow were carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Council agrees that this issue is best addressed at a national level, taking a lead from the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee report; and
- That the Council agrees that there is continued support for the farming community in the District by pushing for improved consultation, the undertaking of a full impact assessment and consideration being given to both delaying the implementation of the reforms and to alternative proposals.

42 Recommendation from Cabinet - Recycling & Waste LATCo Funding Mechanism and Governance update

The Portfolio Holder for Environment – Operations presented recommendations from Cabinet relating to the Recycling and Waste LATCo funding mechanism and governance arrangements.

Councillor Geoff Jung proposed the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Mike Goodman and having been put to the vote was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED:

That Council:

- 1. Approve the updated Business Case set out in Appendix E of the report.
- 2. Approve a loan of no more than £2.8 million to the LATCo.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented recommendations from Cabinet relating to the Financial Outturn for the Council for 2024/2025.

Councillor Sam Hawkins proposed the recommendations which having been seconded by Councillor Kim Bloxham were put to the vote and carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED:

That Council approves:

- 1. The Financial Outturn position for 2024/2025, including the implications and proposals relating to the Balances and Reserves held by the Council.
- 2. The proposed reserve transfers contained within the report and give delegated authority to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance for any amendments to these transfers as any additional year end data becomes available.

44 Recommendation from Cabinet - Delivery Vehicle for Marlcombe

The Portfolio Holder for Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning presented a report setting out the Strategic Outline Business Case for the establishment of a delivery vehicle for the Marlcombe new community.

The Council noted that the strategic outline business case required a budget of £350,000 to enable the development of the business case alongside progressing further technical work, matching potential funding being made available by Homes England.

Councillor Todd Olive proposed the recommendation, which having been seconded by Councillor Nick Hookway was carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED:

That Council approve that a budget of £350,000 is made available from the new communities reserve to enable the development of the business case alongside progressing further technical work, matching potential funding being made available by Homes England.

Recommendation from Cabinet - Financial Strategy 2026 onwards (2026 - 2035)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the draft Financial Strategy for 2026 onwards (2026 – 2035) which included a 10 year Medium Term Financial Plan which looked ahead over that period to give a projection of the Council's financial position with actions needed to ensure financial sustainability and the ability to set annually balanced budgets.

Council noted that the landscape around that Council's finances was completely different from previous years, with the Fairer Funding Review bringing significant reductions from 2026/2027 along with Local Government Reorganisation, which would give the Council only two more years of setting budgets before a successor authority was in place.

Councillors were advised that modelling had been undertaken under the normal premise of 10 years, although the strategy was focused on dealing with the next two years of still being a Council with the effects of significant funding reductions from the Fairer Funding Review.

Council welcomed the strategy which set out details of the key legacy projects the Council wanted to deliver in its remaining time.

Councillor Sam Hawkins proposed the recommendation which having been seconded by Councillor Todd Olive was carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED:

That Council adopt the Financial Strategy 2026 onwards (2026 – 2035) and its direction outlined in balancing future budgets.

46 Recommendation from Constitution Working Group - Councillors' Gifts & Hospitality Protocol

Council considered recommendations from the Constitution Working Group following their review of the Constitution.

Council noted that the only guidance available to Councillors on the declaring of gifts and hospitality was included in the Councillors' Code of Conduct. It was noted that this guidance was limited in its application and the opportunity had been taken to write a separate protocol.

Council welcomed the protocol which provided more detailed guidance to councillors and co-opted members on the appropriateness of accepting gifts and hospitality and the factors that should be taken into account when making a decision.

Councillor Sarah Jackson proposed the recommendations which having been seconded by Councillor Mike Goodman were carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED:

That Council:

- 1. Approves the Councillors' Gifts and Hospitality Protocol and to include the protocol in the Council's Constitution.
- 2. Delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communications and Democracy to make any minor drafting changes to the protocol prior to the publication of the protocol on the Council's website.

47 Recommendations from Constitution Working Group - Independent Remuneration Panel Terms of Reference

Council considered a report setting out recommendations from the Constitution Working Group following a review of the Council's Constitution.

Council noted that the Independent Remuneration Panel, which reviews allowances and subsistence payments to councillors did not currently have a set of terms of reference to support their operation and the Working Group were recommending the inclusion of terms of reference for the Panel.

Councillors welcomed the Terms of Reference for the Independent Remuneration Panel which set out how the panel operated and its core functions and roles and responsibilities.

Councillor Sarah Jackson proposed the recommendations which having been seconded by Councillor Mike Goodman were carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED:

That Council:

- 1. Approves the Independent Remuneration Panel Terms of Reference to be included in the Council's Constitution.
- 2. Delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communications and Democracy to make any minor drafting changes prior to the publication of the Terms of Reference on the Council's website.

48 Recommendations from Constitution Working Group - Councillor Champion Protocol

Council considered recommendations from the Constitution Working Group following their review of the Constitution.

Council noted that the Working Group had reviewed the existing Councillor Champion Protocol and were proposing to make minor changes including the addition of a Councillor Champion for Equality, Inclusion and Diversity and changing the wording member to councillor.

Council requested that consideration should be given to other Councillor Champion roles and requested that the Constitution Working Group investigate adding or removing champion roles before submitting a report to the Cabinet.

Council welcomed the proposed changes to the Councillor Champion Protocol and Councillor Sarah Jackson proposed the recommendations and having been seconded by Councillor Tim Dumper were unanimously carried.

RESOLVED:

That Council:

- 1. Approved the Codes & Protocols Councillor Champions to be included in the Council's Constitution.
- 2. Delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communications and Democracy to make any minor drafting changes to the Councillor Champion Protocol prior to their publication on the Council's website.

49 Recommendations from Constitution Working Group - Councillor/Officer Relations

Council considered recommendations from the Constitution Working Group following a review of the Constitution.

Council were advised that following recommendations of External Auditors and feedback from the Peer Challenge team and the Centre for Public Scrutiny the opportunity had been taken to redraft the Council's Councillor/Officer Relations Protocol.

Council welcomed the protocol which explained the roles of Councillors and Officers setting out how they should work together and if any issues arose to whom those issues should be reported.

Councillor Sarah Jackson proposed the recommendations which having been seconded by Councillor Alasdair Bruce were unanimously carried.

RESOLVED:

That Council:

- 1. Approves the Codes and Protocols for Councillor/Officer Relations to be included in the Council's Constitution.
- 2. Delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communications and Democracy to make any minor drafting changes to the protocol prior to its publication on the Council's website.

50 Wreath Laying Protocol

Councillor Vicky Johns, Councillor Champion for the Armed Forces Covenant presented a report setting out a protocol to support wreath laying across the district at Remembrance Events.

The Council welcomed the protocol and supported councillors attending, representing and laying a wreath on behalf of the Council.

Councillor Vicky Johns proposed the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Steve Gazzard and unanimously carried.

RESOLVED:

That the Council approves a wreath laying protocol and supports councillors attending, representing and laying a wreath on behalf of East Devon District Council at memorials within their wards.

Appointment of Tenant Representative on the Housing Review Board

The Council received a report seeking the appointment of a tenant representative to serve on the Housing Review Board.

Council noted that following a recruitment process for the selection of a tenant representative and following an interview of the candidate one candidate was selected for their suitability to serve on the Housing Review Board.

The Chair moved the recommendation which was unanimously supported.

RESOLVED: That Sidney Ford is appointed as a Tenant Representative on the Housing Review Board until 30 April 2029.

Outside Body - Woodbury, Exmouth, Budleigh Health & Wellbeing Alliance

The Council considered whether the Woodbury, Exmouth, Budleigh Health & Wellbeing Alliance should be added to the list of outside bodies and the nomination of a councillor on the outside body.

The WEB Health & Wellbeing Alliance aims to unite voluntary sector and statutory health and social care organisations across Woodbury, Budleigh, Exmouth, and surrounding

villages to improve communication, share good practice, and enhance the health and wellbeing of local communities.

Councillor Nick Hookway proposed that the Woodbury, Exmouth, Budleigh Health and Wellbeing Alliance should be included on the list of outside bodies and proposed that Councillor Charlotte Fitgerald, having been seconded and put to the vote the recommendation was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED:

That the Woodbury, Exmouth, Budleigh Health and Wellbeing Alliance is included on the Council's list of Outside Bodies and that Councillor Charlotte Fitzgerald is appointed to serve on the outside body.

53 Local Government Act 1972 - Exclusion of the Press and Public

Councillor Charlotte Fitzgerald moved a motion to pass a resolution under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and public from the meeting, on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, Paragraph 3 (Information relating to the finance or business affairs of any particular person. The motion was seconded by Councillor Eleanor Rylance and having been put to the vote was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, Paragraph 3 (Information relating to the finance or business affairs of any particular person.

54 Recommendation from Cabinet - Cranbox Update

Council considered a recommendation from Cabinet on 3 September 2025 in respect of an update on the delivery of the Cranbox scheme.

Councillor Todd Olive proposed the recommendation which having been seconded by Councillor Paul Hayward was carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED:

That a budget of up to the amount set out in the exempt report from the Enterprise Zone programme is approved to underwrite the Cranbox project, should it not be able to proceed beyond the Pre Construction Services Agreement.

55 Recommendation from Cabinet - Cranbrook Leisure Governance & Consultant Procurement

Council considered a recommendation from Cabinet on 3 September seeking to allocate a budget for the Cranbrook Leisure Governance and Consultant procurement.

Councillor Nick Hookway proposed the recommendation which having been seconded by Councillor Matt Hall was carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED:

That a budget of the amount set out in the exempt report is allocated to the Cranbrook Leisure, Health & Wellbeing project from the Enterprise Zone programme, subject to endorsement by the Enterprise Zone Board.

Recommendation from Cabinet - Recycling & Waste LATCo Funding Mechanism and Governance update

This item was dealt with under Agenda Item 14 in open session.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

P Arnott P Fernley G Jung A Bailey C Fitzgerald F King B Bailey S Gazzard Y Levine I Barlow M Goodman J Loudoun D Mackinder K Blakey D Haggerty K Bloxham A Hall T McCollum M Hall V Bonetta J O'Learv C Brown S Hawkins T Olive P Hayward H Parr J Brown A Bruce J Heath S Richards M Chapman N Hookway H Riddell S Hughes I Chubb M Rixson B Ingham R Collins E Rylance O Davey S Jackson S Westerman R Jefferies T Dumper E Wragg P Faithfull V Johns

Officers in attendance:

Simon Davey, Director of Finance Tracy Hendren, Chief Executive Catrin Stark, Director of Housing and Health Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer) Andrew Wood, Director of Place

Councillor apologies:

J Bailey

S Chamberlain

B Collins

M Hartnell

M Howe

D Ledger

M Martin

C Nicholas

S Smith

J Whibley

D Wilson

Council 15 October 2025

Chair	 Date:	