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Agenda for Council Wednesday, 15th October, 2025, 6.00 pm

To: All elected Members of the Council; Honorary Aldermen

Venue: Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton

Contact: Andrew Melhuish, Democratic Services Manager;

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(or group number 01395 517546)

Issued Monday, 6 October 2025

This meeting is being recorded for subsequent publication on the Council's website and will be streamed live to the [East Devon District Council YouTube channel](#)

Dear Sir/Madam

Meeting of the Council of the District of East Devon on Wednesday, 15th October, 2025 at 6.00 pm

You are called upon to attend the above meeting to be held in the Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton. It is proposed that the matters set out on the agenda below will be considered at the meeting and resolution or resolutions passed as the Council considers expedient.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T. Hendren".

Tracy Hendren, Chief Executive

1 Apologies

2 Declarations of interest

Guidance is available online to Councillors and co-opted members on making [declarations of interest](#)

3 Minutes of the previous meeting (Pages 5 - 31)

4 Public speaking

Information on [public speaking](#) is available online

5 Matters of urgency

Information on [matters of urgency](#) is available online

6 Announcements from the Chair and Leader

7 Confidential/exempt item(s)

To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the Press) have been excluded. There are three items which officers recommend should be dealt with in this way, but if confidential minutes from Cabinet and/or the Council's Committees are being discussed, Officers may recommend consideration in the private part of the meeting.

8 To answer questions asked by Members of the Council pursuant to Procedure Rules No. 9.2 and 9.5 (Pages 32 - 36)

9 Reports from the Cabinet and the Council's Committees and questions on those reports (Pages 37 - 187)

10 Standards Committee - Updated Annual Report (Pages 188 - 191)

11 Committee Arrangements and Proportionality (Pages 192 - 206)

12 Recommendation from Cabinet on 30 July 2025 - Local Development Scheme (Pages 207 - 217)

13 Recommendation from Scrutiny Committee - Changes to Agricultural Property Relief and Business Property Relief (Pages 218 - 223)

14 Recommendation from Cabinet - Recycling & Waste LATCo Funding Mechanism and Governance update (Pages 224 - 237)

15 Recommendation from Cabinet - Financial Outturn for 2024/2025 (Pages 238 - 261)

16 Recommendation from Cabinet - Delivery Vehicle for Marlcombe (Pages 262 - 269)

17 Recommendation from Cabinet - Financial Strategy 2026 onwards (2026 - 2035) (Pages 270 - 293)

18 Recommendation from Constitution Working Group - Councillors' Gifts & Hospitality Protocol (Pages 294 - 302)

- 19 **Recommendations from Constitution Working Group - Independent Remuneration Panel Terms of Reference** (Pages 303 - 311)
- 20 **Recommendations from Constitution Working Group - Councillor Champion Protocol** (Pages 312 - 317)
- 21 **Recommendations from Constitution Working Group - Councillor/Officer Relations** (Pages 318 - 342)
- 22 **Wreath Laying Protocol** (Pages 343 - 351)
- 23 **Appointment of Tenant Representative on the Housing Review Board** (Pages 352 - 356)
- 24 **Outside Body - Woodbury, Exmouth, Budleigh Health & Wellbeing Alliance**
To consider the inclusion of the Woodbury, Exmouth, Budleigh Health & Wellbeing Alliance 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.
- 25 **Local Government Act 1972 - Exclusion of the Press and Public**
To consider passing a resolution having been duly proposed and seconded 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 to the Local Government Act 1972.
- Reason: Para 3 Schedule 12A Information relating to the finance or business affairs of any particular person.
- 26 **Recommendation from Cabinet - Cranbox Update** (Pages 357 - 363)
- 27 **Recommendation from Cabinet - Cranbrook Leisure Governance & Consultant Procurement** (Pages 364 - 381)
- 28 **Recommendation from Cabinet - Recycling & Waste LATCo Funding Mechanism and Governance update** (Pages 382 - 395)

Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, any members of the public are now allowed to take photographs, film and audio record the proceedings and report on all public meetings (including on social media). No prior notification is needed but it would be helpful if you could let the democratic services team know you plan to film or record so that any necessary arrangements can be made to provide reasonable facilities for you to report on meetings. This permission does not extend to private meetings or parts of

meetings which are not open to the public. You should take all recording and photography equipment with you if a public meeting moves into a session which is not open to the public.

If you are recording the meeting, you are asked to act in a reasonable manner and not disrupt the conduct of meetings for example by using intrusive lighting, flash photography or asking people to repeat statements for the benefit of the recording. You may not make an oral commentary during the meeting. The Chair has the power to control public recording and/or reporting so it does not disrupt the meeting.

Members of the public exercising their right to speak during Public Speaking will be recorded.

[Decision making and equalities](#)

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EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Council held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 16 July 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 10.07 pm

7 Apologies

Apologies for absence are set out at the end of the minutes.

8 Declarations of interest

Agenda Item 14:

Councillor Jessica Bailey declared an Affects NRI as a Devon County Councillor serving on the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority.

Councillor Steve Gazzard declared an ANRI as Unison member and former employee of Devon Ambulance Service

Agenda Item 15:

Councillor Jessica Bailey declared an Affects NRI as a Devon County Councillor serving on the South West Regional Flood & Coastal Committee.

Agenda Item 16:

Councillor Steve Gazzard declared an Affects NRI as a Unison member and former employee of Devon Ambulance Service.

Councillor Sarah Jackson declared an Affects NRI as their partner is a CWU member.

9 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 April 2025 and the extraordinary meeting held on 18 June 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.

10 Public speaking

Two members of the public had registered to speak at the meeting.

Agenda Item 10 – Combe Raleigh Parish Meeting: Mr Dezell, Chair of Combe Raleigh Parish Meeting.

Mr Dezell advised Council that Combe Raleigh Parish Meeting were seeking powers to enable certain works in the area to be carried out. These works included highway improvements, tree planting and maintenance of verges and would ensure significant improvements were made for the benefit of local residents.

Agenda Item 16 – Motion on Notice: Communication Workers Union – design and positioning of letterboxes: Mr Darren Robotham on behalf of the Communication Workers Union.

Mr Robotham spoke in support of the motion calling for the banning of low level letterboxes in doors and request that Government is asked to introduce legislation to support this.

11 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

12 Announcements from the Chair and Leader

None.

13 Confidential/exempt item(s)

The Chair of Council confirmed that there was one item of confidential/exempt business that would be dealt with under Agenda Item 22.

14 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 Portfolio Holder Environment – Operations Given that the Sidmouth Esplanade railings—an iconic feature of our town’s Regency-era seafront—have only been repainted twice in the past 15 years, most recently through a £16,000 restoration effort, and considering they now show visible signs of deterioration, can the Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Spaces confirm whether there are plans to repaint them in the near future? Furthermore, could this form part of a longer-term, proactive maintenance programme to preserve the historic	We have a programme of annual inspection and maintenance across all our public realm assets, but with our capital programme limited due to government budget pressures, we have to focus repair and maintenance on priority health and safety issues. We don’t have enough in our capital programme to actively invest in asset improvements across all our estate. We bring budget submissions to the annual BSCAP meeting for Members to decide on the priorities against the available and affordable capital. Our Engineers are inspecting the railings at Sidmouth every 6

		character and visual appeal of Sidmouth's seafront as a whole—particularly in light of the important role the Esplanade plays in shaping visitor impressions and supporting the town's tourism economy?	months, and on each occasion areas of rust which are affecting the structure are being repaired and painted. The overall paint condition is not great but does not present a health and safety hazard. The railings' structure is now at a point that re-painting alone won't be enough and replacement should be considered. However Members will need to decide on the affordability of this given it isn't currently a health and safety hazard. Engineers will submit a capital bid for 26/27 for ELT, Cabinet and BSCAP to consider replacement, against other identified capital requests.
As a follow up to the question Councillor Stuart Hughes asked the Portfolio for Environment – Operations to investigate whether there was any scope for a community led group to undertake decoration works to the railings. In response the Portfolio Holder agreed to refer the request to officers for a response.			
2	Cllr Stuart Hughes	Question to Portfolio Holder for Finance: In light of the ongoing cost-of-living pressures on East Devon residents, would the Portfolio Holder consider reviewing our current council tax debt recovery procedures to ensure greater leniency—specifically by introducing a minimum 28-day grace period between the granting of a liability order and the instruction of enforcement agents/bailiffs, during	In light of the ongoing cost-of-living pressures on East Devon residents, would the Portfolio Holder consider reviewing our current council tax debt recovery procedures to ensure greater leniency—specifically by introducing a minimum 28-day grace period between the granting of a liability order and the instruction of enforcement agents/bailiffs, during which a personalised repayment plan could be explored?

		which a personalised repayment plan could be explored?	In relation to the specific question: Prior to a liability order being granted we have statutory recovery documents that we have to issue as a minimum when a council taxpayer falls behind with their instalment plan: • 1st reminder • 2nd reminder (sent where a resident pays on a 1st reminder but falls behind again) • Final notice • Summons • Liability order notice (once issued by the Court) At all of these stages we encourage council taxpayers to engage with us if they are struggling to pay in order to set up repayment plans. Once a liability order notice is issued and we receive no contact, or payment is made then after at least 14 days each case is looked at by a Council Tax officer. They will carry out further attempts to contact the resident this will including phone, text, email or letter. Where there is no engagement from the resident, we will also consider alternative recovery options such as attachment of earnings/benefits or a charging order or passing the case to the Enforcement Agent. The majority of cases do

			have at least a 28-day grace period before being passed to an Enforcement Agent. From our data since April 2024 until May 2025 only 1% (7 cases) were sent to an Enforcement Agent in less than 28 days with the earliest being on day 27. We therefore don't consider there is a need to review our current recovery procedures to build in a minimum 28-day grace period as there will be instances where residents refuse to pay council tax rather than being unable to pay and it's important that we retain that flexibility if required. The Council is very aware of the cost-of-living crisis and the impact that it is having upon our residents including paying their council tax. Residents falling into arrears with their Council Tax can be a key indicator of someone who is struggling financially, and we therefore recognise the importance of supporting our residents by making sure we take into account the council's anti-poverty strategy in the collection of council tax. Some of the key measures that we have implemented as part of our anti-poverty work are: • Providing up to 100% Council Tax Reduction

			(CTR) for our lowest income households. The Council made the scheme more generous from April 2023 for those on low incomes which included increasing support up to 100%. This means our lowest income working age households have been lifted out of paying altogether. We reported to Cabinet in January 2025 the reduction in arrears for those claiming CTR had fallen from 19.7% in July 2022 to 13.69% in December 2024. This demonstrates how the Council has delivered real help with Council Tax to some of our lowest income households in East Devon. • We have a dedicated Financial Resilience team within our Revenues & Benefits Service where Council Tax staff will often refer cases in for wider financial help. Along with providing

			emergency financial help they will work with residents who are struggling to afford paying essential bills by reviewing their income and expenditure and identifying ways this can be improved along with working with other partner agencies. In 2024, 291 referrals for more in-depth work were made and this achieved average weekly savings of £148. • As part of our corporate debt policy, we are also implementing the Vulnerable debt toolkit so that Council Tax staff can be better trained in identifying residents with vulnerabilities enabling them to provide the appropriate support including better tailored repayment plans, referral for debt advice, etc. This a government backed toolkit and is recognised as good practice for debt management. The Council made a

			commitment to implement the toolkit, and training is currently underway with the aim to be live across Revenues and Benefits by August 2025. We are not aware that any of the other Devon authorities have implemented this. • One of the areas the Revenues and Benefits team are working on is to implement is e-notifications and this will include text messaging and emailing prompts to pay when payments are late or missed to supplement the statutory recovery processes. The aim of this is to help reduce the number of residents falling into arrears which will in turn reduce the number of enforcement cases. I hope that the above provides the reassurance that cases are not automatically referred to an enforcement agent and that there is support in place to help our residents who are struggling to pay and that we are continually exploring additional ways to increase

			engagement.
As a follow up Councillor Stuart Hughes asked the Portfolio Holder for Finance to provide the details/data around referral timings along with outcomes to show cases under 28 days, to promote transparency in our approach. In reply the Portfolio Holder for Finance agreed to provide a written response.			
3	Cllr Mike Goodman	Question to Portfolio Holder Culture, Sport, Leisure & Tourism/Economy & Assets Given that EDDC's leisure policy actively encourages participation in sport for all age groups, how does the Council justify the proposed increase of up to 50% in football and rugby pitch fees in light of its commitment to residents' health and wellbeing?	Feedback on this was provided in response to Cllr Goodman's question at budget setting, and information added to the fees papers. Sports facilities are essential to supporting physical activity and wider health and wellbeing outcomes. This is reflected in the Council's Leisure Strategy for quality sports facilities and the need to ensure the right sport facilities are provided in the right places and they are well used and managed. The Strategy does not propose actual prices for each facility; this is done as part of the annual fees and charges process in line with the wider policy principles and proposed subsidy levels and concessions policy. The rationale is as follows: All our fees were reviewed as part of budget setting and either followed 1) roughly 3% inflation rounded, 2) Increases above inflation where there was a specific rationale, such as with

			bulky waste where we needed to cover costs of new legislation or services, or 3) Where benchmarking demonstrated we were not at market rate or comparable to neighbouring authorities. For these sports pitch fees no. 3 applies. Benchmarking has shown that other councils do not charge different rates for weekday/weekend matches. Therefore, the pricing for weekday/weekend matches has been aligned. Benchmarking shows that individual matches are priced suitably for the adults and therefore a 3% increase is deemed acceptable to cover increasing maintenance costs. However benchmarking has shown that the pricing for individual youth matches should be decreased to be in-line with other local authorities (Bournemouth Youth - £54.00 per match, Teignbridge Youth - £43.00 per match). Youth pricing has increased by a nominal 3% to cover increasing costs. Adult pricing for both full and half season tickets has increased by 50% more than the proposed youth season ticket costs as a result of this benchmarking.

			Although other local authorities do not provide an option for season tickets making this impossible to benchmark, when broken down to a per-game price, the proposed pricing is lower than benchmarked areas to provide value for money and an incentive to purchase a full or half season ticket. Per match costs as part of a full season ticket will equate to £29.61 for youth matches and £44.42 for adult matches. Per match costs as part of a half season ticket will equate to £35.61 for youth matches and £53.44 for adult matches. Even with the proposed increase in season ticket pricing for adults this year, EDDC will still be providing excellent value for money compared to other local authorities. Benchmarking per match: Bournemouth £92.50. Lympstone Marine Camp £59. Teignbridge £90. Charges for youth football matches in these areas are in line with our proposed 2025/2026 charges as outlined above. Our staff, servicing and admin costs are all rising, and given wider budget pressures and the need to set a balanced budget it was felt reasonable to make these increases, given are prices are still

			significantly lower than others. Our Leisure Manager is currently drafting a policy for sports clubs and associations as part of the Playing Pitch Strategy to provide some form of discount if they show that they are providing community based activities. This will require consensus internally before putting in as an action in a new Playing Pitch Strategy action plan being developed for 2026/27 onwards. The PFH Cllr Hookway is supportive of a wider review as part of the strategy as a way forward.
As a follow up Councillor Mike Goodman asked why discounts to clubs had not been made for the current season. In response the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Sport Leisure & Tourism advised that the discounts had only recently been introduced.			
4	Cllr Mike Goodman	Question to Portfolio Holder Culture, Sport, Leisure & Tourism/Portfolio Holder Economy & Assets At the joint budget meeting, officers were requested to review the proposed increases in pitch fees. Why were no adjustments made when the budget was presented to Council on 26th February, and what was the outcome of the review?	The fees were reviewed, but as set out above felt to be reasonable given the comparison with other providers and the need to balance provision and costs in the context of setting a balanced budget. With CSR and further budget pressures next year, this sort of prudent balancing will become even more necessary.
As a follow up Councillor Goodman queried why pitch fees were increasing by up to 50% and in response the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Sport, Leisure & Tourism confirmed that this increase had not been challenged by the Overview & Scrutiny Committees and had been supported by the Cabinet.			

5	Cllr Mike Goodman	Question to Portfolio Holder Culture, Sport, Leisure & Tourism/Portfolio Holder Economy & Assets Can the Council explain why, despite general annual fee increases of approximately 3%, certain sports pitch fees rose disproportionately—for example, a full-season fee for adult rugby and football increasing from £1,035 to £1,599 and a half-season from £622 to £960?	Please see answer for question 3 which explains, this is in relation to benchmarking per match comparisons.
In are answer to a follow up question from Councillor Mike Goodman the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Sport, Leisure & Tourism confirmed that it was unlikely that fees would increase in 2026/2027.			
6	Cllr Mike Goodman	Question to Portfolio Holder Culture, Sport, Leisure & Tourism/Portfolio Holder Economy & Assets In recognition of the value that community sport provides, is the Council willing to commit to revising these fees for the 2025/26 season—specifically to £1,065 for a full season and £640 for a half season?	The fees are felt to be reasonable given the comparison with other providers and the need to balance provision and costs in the context of setting a balanced budget. With CSR and further budget pressures next year, this sort of prudent balancing will become even more necessary, and further increases may be required.
7	Cllr Mike Goodman	Question to Portfolio Holder Sustainable Homes and Communities Given that this Council recognises the importance of providing high-quality housing for its residents and acknowledges the significant challenges East Devon District Council housing has faced in recent years, why has the Stock	As previously explained at Council on 4th December, Cabinet on 5th March and again of 4th June, and at HRB on multiple occasions, the stock condition survey does not take the form of a single document but rather comprises a substantial dataset—over one million lines of information. This dataset covers our entire housing stock and

		Condition Survey—originally proposed in 2020 but only completed in October 2025—not yet been made public?	includes details on the condition of key components, energy performance ratings, projected lifespan of building elements, and other relevant metrics. Given that the surveys were conducted over a two-year period, some properties have undergone works in the interim. As a result, the dataset requires thorough validation and cross-referencing with records of completed works to ensure its accuracy and relevance. This process is essential to ensure that the data accurately reflects the current condition of our housing stock and aligns with officers' local knowledge and asset records. Council officers have been undertaking this complex task alongside their regular duties. In addition, further quality checks have been necessary, including discussions with the contractor regarding their quality assurance procedures and how the data has been compiled and presented. As previously stated, a report on the Stock Condition Survey and an update to the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan are scheduled to be presented to the Housing Review Board on 31st July 2025.

As a follow up Councillor Mike Goodman queried the accuracy of the response. In reply the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes and Communities confirmed that the information provided was accurate and that a full report would be made available at the next meeting of the Housing Review Board on 31 July 2025.			
8	Cllr Mike Goodman	Question to Portfolio Holder Sustainable Homes and Communities Can the Council confirm its commitment to transparency by agreeing to publish the results of the Stock Condition Survey as a public record, ensuring the data is anonymised to prevent identification of individual properties?	As stated previously, the stock condition survey is a data file of over one million lines of data which even if redacted would not provide the public with useful information. A report on the findings of the stock condition survey will be published and therefore available to the public as part of the HRB on 31st July 2025.
As a follow up Councillor Mike Goodman queried whether the response had been influenced by recent coverage of the issue by the local MP. In reply the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes and Communities confirmed that it had not. The Portfolio Holder further confirmed that the work around the stock condition survey had required a huge amount of work from officers in order to bring a report to the Housing Review Board. The Portfolio Holder further commented that it was important to ensure the Council had a good standard of homes in the district.			
9	Cllr Jess Bailey	Question to Portfolio Holder for Communications and Democracy 1/ what amount has Eddc spent on the technology to make meetings Hybrid, meaning that members of the public and councillors can speak remotely? 2/when was this money spent? 3/who signed off this expenditure? 4/why is it still not operational? 5/what date can you commit to being operational? Please can I politely request the answer is not 'very soon' as we have been told	1 – 3 A written response will be given. 4 – 5 the protocol is drafted but will not be agreed until testing is complete. There have been changes in project leads including long periods without a project lead that has stalled the project. Democratic Services are now leading on the project and testing of the hybrid technology has commenced including reviewing how the hybrid element of the system works. Democratic Services have now been issued with additional IT kit to enable operation of the

		'very soon' for months/years.	hybrid system and further testing is planned to take place during July and August. The testing work has identified some issues with the system and we are working with our contractor to ensure the hybrid solution is fit for purpose. Once the testing is complete and any issues rectified with our contractor it is proposed that councillor testing will be undertaken before going live. A protocol for access to hybrid meetings has been drafted and once testing is complete will be shared with councillors. The Government recently announced (5 June 2025) that local authorities will be able to hold remote and hybrid meetings (with voting rights) but has not given any indication of a timeframe for introducing legislation to support this. In the meantime, work will continue to test the hybrid option with a view for implementation/going live in October 2025. This will provide the opportunity for councillors to access meetings and participate remotely but will not allow members who serve on a committee to be able to vote remotely, until legislation provides.

As a follow up Councillor Jess Bailey requested a response to the first part of the question. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that a written response

would be provided.			
10	Cllr Ian Barlow	Question to Portfolio Holder for Communications & Democracy Can the PFH explain why it has taken over 6 weeks for new committee seats to be allocated following Cllr Bonetta joining the independent group of councillors. This is surely a simple mathematical calculation that should take 30 minutes to do and an hour at most. By the time this gets to be ratified at council over 5 months will have passed. This should surely be one of the top priorities to make sure that our democratic system is seen to work effectively.	Officers were asked to conduct a review of the political proportionality figures following the last Council meeting, which we duly started. However, we were then advised that there was to be a change to the Independent Group, which means that we need to revise the figures again. Work on these figures is ongoing but unfortunately there has not been sufficient time to complete this work and consult with Group Leaders on the proposed figures in time for this meeting. Whilst urgency of this is acknowledged there is a process that we need to go through and in light of the concerns raised last time, we need to ensure that the work is done thoroughly and with full consultation with the Group Leaders. Officers apologise for the delay and will complete the review by the end of July and circulate the figures to Group Leaders in early August 2025.

15 **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 – 2 April, 30 April and 4 June 2025
- Housing Review Board – 24 April 2025
- Licensing and Enforcement Committee – 2 April and 3 June 2025
- Licensing and Enforcement Sub Committee – 2 April 2025

- Personnel Committee – 15 April 2025 Planning Committee – 22 April, 13 May and 10 June 2025
- Strategic Planning Committee – 19 May 2025
- Arts and Culture Forum – 16 April 2025
- Asset Management Forum – 16 June 2025
- Cranbrook Placemaking Group – 9 June 2025
- Leisure Strategy Delivery Forum – 8 April and 11 June 2025.

RESOLVED: That the minutes from the meetings listed be noted.

16

Request for powers - Combe Raleigh Parish Meeting

The Council received a report setting out a request from the Combe Raleigh Parish Meeting to make an order conferring on it powers of a parish council.

The Council noted that under Section 109 of the Local Government Act 1972, that on the application of a parish meeting not having a separate parish council, the district council may by order confer on the parish meeting any functions of a parish council.

The Chair of the Parish Meeting explained the need of the powers to carry out certain works in Combe Raleigh, including planting trees and maintaining trees and verges to improve the quality of life for local residents.

In consideration of the request councillors raised the following issues:

- Concern around powers of last resort and powers to do anything (including incurring expenditure)
- Important that any powers conferred on the parish meeting are use responsibly and allows them to carry out sufficient activities in their area
- Consideration should be given to formation of a parish council
- Powers support the ability to use funds they hold

The Council recognised the need for the parish meeting to have the powers to be able to carry out works for the benefits of the local community but felt that powers of last resort to incur expenditure, not otherwise authorised and subsidiary powers to do anything which was calculated to facilitate, or was conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions under s111 should be considered at a later date.

Councillor Dan Ledger proposed the recommendation to make an order under Section 109(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to confer on the Combe Raleigh Parish Meeting the powers listed in a – h. The motion having been seconded by Councillor Ian Barlow was carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED: That the Council makes an order under Section 109(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to confer on the Combe Raleigh Parish Meeting the following powers:

- a. Clock maintenance – Parish Councils Act 1957 s.2
- b. Road widening – Highways Act 1980 s.s.30,72
- c. Roadside seats and shelters- Parish Councils Act 1957 s.1
- d. Certain traffic signs and other notices – Road Traffic Regulations Act 1972 s.72
- e. Plant trees and shrubs and to maintain roadside verges – Highways Act 1980 s.96
- f. Newsletter to provide information in relation to matters affecting local government – Local Government Act 1972 s.142
- g. Acquire and provide buildings for public meetings and assemblies – Local Government Act 1972 s.133

- h. Allowing a contribution by way of a grant or loan towards the expenses incurred by a voluntary organisation in providing any recreational facilities - Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s.19

17 **Executive Leadership Team structural review**

The Chief Executive presented a report setting out details of the Executive Leadership team review of the current staffing structure to ensure that the authority was fit for purpose and had the capacity and resilience required both in terms of the ongoing plans for transformation and also ensuring the authority was a fit for purpose organisation that was able to appropriately respond to the Government's proposals in relation to devolution and local government reorganisation.

The report also set out the out of hours arrangements for the authority which had been enhanced and addressed funding proposals arising from the changes to the out of hours arrangements.

The recommendation was moved by Councillor John Loudoun and seconded by Councillor Richard Jefferies and having been put to the vote was carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED:

1. That Council approve a budget of £338,000 to be met from the Transformation Fund to support temporary funding requirements as detailed in the report.
2. That Council approve a budget of £75,000 due to proposed changes to out of hours arrangements.

18 **Natural Seaton Interpretive Masterplan**

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism presented a report seeking agreement to fund various elements of the Seaton Wetlands project.

The Council noted that funding for the interpretive masterplan would come from the sales receipts of the former Seaton Jurassic building.

Councillor Nick Hookway proposed the recommendation which having been seconded by Councillor Todd Olive was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED: That Council approves that the residual budget of £80,000 from the sales receipts of the former Seaton Jurassic building are ringfenced for delivering outputs of this interpretive masterplan.

19 **Recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel**

The Council received a report setting out the recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel following their review of the Councillor Scheme of Allowances, Parish/Town Council Scheme of Allowances and a review of Special Responsibility Allowances.

During discussion of this report the following comments were made:

- Vice Chair of Strategic Planning Committee should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance in recognition of the increased workload, particularly around the preparation of the local plan.

- The Scheme of Allowances should include details to reflect the availability of a range of railcards to be used and arrangements in place covering compassionate leave.
- Whether consideration should be given to a cap on the number of Special Responsibility Allowances that are payable to Assistant Portfolio Holders and Councillor Champions.

Councillor Todd Olive proposed the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Ian Barlow and having been put to the vote were carried by a majority show of hands.

That Council:

1. Adopt the revised Councillors Allowance Scheme (attached as Appendix 2).
2. Approve that a parish basic allowance should be available to all parish chairs and members in accordance with the Panels recommendations.
3. Approve that the HMRC agreed travel rates for parish members should continue to be aligned to those of East Devon District Council staff and members.
4. Approve that where it is considered necessary by the Council to introduce assistants within portfolio areas the level of remuneration should be set at 25% of the Basic Allowance (£1,347.87). To be backdated to 1 June 2025.
5. Approve that where it is considered necessary by the Council to nominate Champions the level of remuneration should be set at 15% of the Basic Allowance (£808.73). To be backdated to 1 June 2025.
6. Approve that the Vice Chair of the Licensing and Enforcement Committee SRA is paid at 50% of the Licensing and Enforcement Committee Chairs allowance (£1,754.28). To be backdated to 1 June 2025.
7. Approves that the Independent Person appointed to the Audit and Governance Committee is paid an annual SRA of £400. To be backdated to 1 June 2025.
8. Adopts the same approach for council and parish members as that applied to employees, for Family Friendly Policies (incorporating maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave) and to include reference to these policies in the Councillor Scheme of Allowances for East Devon District Council.
9. Request that the Independent Remuneration Panel review whether a Special Responsibility Allowance should be payable to the Vice Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee in recognition of the increased workload.

20 **Motion on Notice - Emergency Services**

Councillor Stuart Hughes proposed the motion on notice relating to fire service co-responders, which was seconded by Councillor Colin Brown and supported by Councillors Aurora Bailey, Brain Bailey, Iain Chubb, Mike Goodman and Jenny Brown.

In speaking to the motion Councillor Hughes stated that for nearly three decades, trained firefighters have worked alongside ambulance services to provide critical, lifesaving assistance to patients experiencing medical emergencies. Their swift intervention has saved countless lives, ensuring communities receive prompt professional care when ambulance crews are delayed or unavailable.

Councillor Hughes called on the Council to:

1. Recognise the vital role fire service co-responders have played in supporting emergency medical incidents, especially in isolated areas.
2. Acknowledge widespread concerns from fire stations, emergency personnel, and residents regarding the impact of this decision on community safety.
3. Call on SWAST and Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service to reconsider this phase-out and explore alternative solutions that preserve co-responders' role alongside Community First Responders.

4. Request that the Chief Fire Officer and SWAST leadership provide a full assessment of how this change will affect response times and public safety.
5. Urge the relevant authorities to engage with councils and local communities to ensure transparency and accountability in future emergency response planning.
6. Support the recent Devon County Council Adult and Care Committee's decisions to formally request a review of the SWAST decision and to write to SWAST seeking clarity on how emergency response standards will be maintained following the removal of fire service co-responders.

In conclusion Councillor Hughes asked that:

This Council formally requests a review of the decision and will write to SWAST, Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, and Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service, in a similar vein to Devon County Council Adult and Care Committee, to seek clarity from SWAST on how emergency response standards will be maintained following the removal of fire service co-responders.

In seconding the motion on notice Councillor Colin Brown supported the comments from Councillor Hughes.

Having been put and seconded the motion on notice was put to the vote and carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED: That the Council formally requests a review of the decision and will write to SWAST, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, and Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service, in a similar vein to Devon County Council Adult and Care Committee, to seek clarity from SWAST on how emergency response standards will be maintained following removal of fire service co-responders.

21 **Motion on Notice - Inclusion of care homes and hotel accommodation in flood risk assessments**

Councillor Stuart Hughes proposed a motion on notice which was seconded by Councillor Geoff Jung and supported by Councillors Aurora Bailey, Brian Bailey, Iain Chubb, Mike Goodman, Jenny Brown, Colin Brown, Paul Hayward, Yehudi Levine, Tim Dumper, Del Haggerty, Bethany Collins, Charlotte Fitzgerald, Matt Hall, Anne Hall, Olly Davey, Paula Fernley, Marcus Hartnell and Joe Whibley.

In speaking to the motion Councillor Hughes stated that as part of East Devon's work on Coastal Protection Schemes, care homes housing a significant number of vulnerable residents, plus important hotel accommodation are assessed as commercial properties. Unfortunately, the current flood risk assessment models' classification means only individual dwellings count towards substantial grant funding yet care homes and hotel accommodation are classed as commercial properties and are subject to far less beneficial funding.

Councillor Hughes further stated that to ensure a comprehensive and a more accurate assessment, the Council urge the Government, through Defra & the Environment Agency, to formally classify both care homes and hotels as dwellings in calculations for flood defence funding and coastal protection schemes. This adjustment would better reflect community vulnerability, improve resource allocation, and strengthen long-term resilience planning for East Devon and beyond.

Councillor Hughes requested that the Council calls on Defra and the Environment Agency to review this oversight and incorporate care homes and hotels as a distinct category in future flood risk strategies.

In seconding the motion on notice Councillor Geoff Jung supported the comments from Councillor Stuart Hughes.

Having been put and seconded the motion was put to the vote and unanimously carried.

RESOLVED: That the Council calls on Defra and the Environment Agency to review this oversight and incorporate care homes and hotels as a distinct category in future flood risk strategies.

22 **Motion on Notice - Communication Workers Union - design and positioning of letterboxes**

Councillor Peter Faithfull proposed the motion on notice which was seconded by Councillor John Heath and supported by Councillors Bethany Collins, Jenny Brown, Geoff Jung and Chris Burhop.

In speaking to the motion on notice Councillor Peter Faithfull requested that this Council actively support the work of the Communication Workers Union in relation to the design and positioning of letterboxes.

Councillor Faithfull stated that as a planning authority we are in a unique position to influence the fitting of letterboxes to reduce the risk of harm to our postal and delivery workers. The CWU have, for a long time, been campaigning for a ban on low-level letterboxes. The two main causes of injury in relation to low-level letterboxes are back injuries and dog bites.

Councillor Faithfull requested that this council work in a number of ways to support the campaign of the CWU.

1. That we actively discourage low-level letterboxes on new build homes.
2. We actively promote discouraging low-level letterboxes on replacement doors.
3. That we will show our support of the CWU campaign to our two Members of Parliament.

Along with the main campaign about low-level letterboxes, we will discourage the use of poorly designed letterboxes that can often include sharp edges and overly powerful springs, that can often cause minor injuries in the form of cuts and bruises.

In seconding the motion on notice Councillor John Heath supported the comments from Councillor Faithfull.

Having been proposed and seconded the motion on notice was put to the vote and unanimously carried.

RESOLVED: That this Council work in a number of ways to support the campaign of the CWU.

1. That the Council actively discourage low level letterboxes on new build homes.
2. That the Council actively promote discouraging low level letterboxes on replacement doors.
3. That the Council will show its support of the CWU campaign to our two local MPs.

23 **Motion on Notice - Newton Poppleford Settlement Boundary**

Councillor Cllr Chris Burhop proposed the motion on notice which was seconded by Cllr Paul Hayward and was supported by Councillors Stuart Hughes, Colin Brown, Yehudi Levine, Ben Ingham, Ian Barlow and Jess Bailey.

In speaking to the motion on notice Councillor Burhop stated that at the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) meeting of 22nd November 2024 when settlement boundaries were discussed, the SPC minutes record the following in relation to Newton Poppleford's proposed settlement boundary;

"Newton Poppleford – raising the issue of consistency, concern was raised on the proposed Settlement Boundary in that the area described as excluded in stage 2 on the map should be included. Road safety concerns were also raised. A proposal to support the report recommendation failed. Therefore, a proposal to have the settlement boundary as the area shown as Stage 2 with the inclusion of area adjacent to Exmouth Road was supported."

Recommendation (f) of that minute went on to state "Newton Poppleford – that the Settlement Boundary be drawn as including Stage 2 plus area adjacent to Exmouth Road, with the exact boundary to be drawn by officers for delegated approval by the Assistant Director and the Chair of Strategic Planning Committee."

Councillor Burhop further stated that whilst the thought process given at the time of expanding the settlement boundary to "make the settlement boundary more even over the geographical area of the village" was on the face of it understandable, the discussion, which excluded the District Councillor for the village, ignored the fact that all of the village's amenities are located to the Eastern end of the village, which is why historically the settlement boundary was set to expand only to include the two proposed development sites Newt 04 and Newt 05 to the East of Exmouth Road, per officers' recommendation.

The revised boundary, attached as a file to this motion, was presented at the subsequent SPC on 11th December at which Councillor Burhop spoke in respect of the errors in the thoughts about expanding the settlement boundary to the West of Exmouth Road, namely that the lack of footpath provision makes expansion on the Western side of Exmouth Road inaccessible. This debate is covered in pages 6 & 7 of the minutes (minute 249). They record that "During discussions some members concurred that unless the footpath was installed the western side of the village would be unsafe and there was nothing to confirm at this stage that the footpath would happen. It was suggested that a condition could be imposed to ensure that no development could take place until there was a suitable footpath".

However legal advice obtained at that meeting confirmed that no decision taken by a committee of the council could be moved within 6 months of the original decision unless the motion to amend is signed by 15 or more councillors. In other words errors identified in any council condition need 25% of the council to sign up to an amendment at full council in order to be corrected. Councillor Burhop resolved to draw up such a motion to propose a correction.

Subsequent to the meeting Councillor Burhop was told by the Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee that, as the plans had now been submitted for Regulation 19 consultation, then again they could not be amended until the consultation ended.

Councillor Burhop requested that the proposed amendment be included in the agenda of the Strategic Planning Committee of 8th July however the published agenda did not include this proposal.

In conclusion Councillor Burhop requested that the settlement boundary for Newton Poppleford submitted in the Regulation 19 Consultation in the Draft Local Plan contained a material error and should now be amended per the proposed map, being officers' original recommendation.

In seconding the motion on notice Councillor Paul Hayward supported the comments from Councillor Burhop.

Councillor Todd Olive, Chair of Strategic Planning Committee proposed an amendment to the motion to refer the matter back to the Strategic Planning Committee and the following wording was supported by the proposer and seconder to the motion on notice: *That the Council instructs the Strategic Planning Committee to revisit the decision taken in respect of the Newton Poppleford settlement boundary submitted in the Regulation 19 consultation at their meeting on 2 September 2025.*

Having been put and seconded the motion on notice was put to the vote and carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED: That the Council instructs the Strategic Planning Committee to revisit the decision taken in respect of the Newton Poppleford settlement boundary submitted in the Regulation 19 consultation at their meeting on 2 September 2025.

24 **Planning Committee - Appointment of Vice Chair**

The Council received a nomination to change the Vice Chair of the Planning Committee from Councillor Sarah Chamberlain and to appoint Councillor Eileen Wragg, following a request from the Democratic Alliance Group.

A number of councillors expressed concerns that the appointment was not in line with the requirements of the Constitution as the Chair and Vice Chair represented the same ward and this was contrary to the Constitution. In response, the Monitoring Officer advised that whilst the Chair and proposed Vice Chair represented the same ward they did not both live in the same ward and the appointment having been proposed by Councillor Richard Jefferies and seconded by Councillor Olly Davey was put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED: To appoint Councillor Eileen Wragg as the Vice Chair of the Planning Committee.

25 **Outside Body - Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London Adjudication Joint Committee**

The Council considered a request to include the Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London Adjudication Joint Committee (PATROLAJC) to the list of outside bodies and the nomination of a councillor on the outside body.

Council supported that PATROLAJC should be included as an outside body and Councillor Tim Dumper was nominated to serve on the outside body.

Councillor John Loudoun proposed and Councillor Chris Burhop seconded the recommendation and having been put to the vote was carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London Adjudication Joint Committee is included on the list of outside bodies.
2. That Councillor Tim Dumper is appointed to serve on the Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London Adjudication Joint Committee as the council's representative.

26 Appointment of Independent Community Representative to serve on the Housing Review Board

The Council received a report seeking the appointment of an Independent Community Representative to serve on the Housing Review Board.

Council noted that following a recruitment process for the selection of an independent person 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 Wang Tain is appointed as an Independent Person on the Housing Review Board until 30 April 2029.

27 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 - Exclusion of 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).

28 Leisure Review including final Options Appraisal of the preferred Leisure Contract Arrangements

Councillor Nick Hookway proposed a recommendation that the preferred option, as set out in the exempt report, in respect of the strategic leisure review was supported

alongside agreeing a budget, for the amount as set out in the exempt report, to meet the expected costs to be met from the Council's Transformation Reserve.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Todd Olive and having put to the vote was carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED: That Council approved a budget, as set out in the exempt report, to meet expected costs from the Council's Transformation Reserve.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

P Arnott	P Fernley	F King
A Bailey	C Fitzgerald	D Ledger
B Bailey	S Gazzard	Y Levine
J Bailey	M Goodman	J Loudoun
I Barlow	A Hall	D Mackinder
K Blakey	M Hall	M Martin
K Bloxham	S Hawkins	T McCollum
C Brown	P Hayward	T Olive
J Brown	J Heath	H Riddell
A Bruce	N Hookway	M Rixson
C Burhop	M Howe	E Rylance
B Collins	S Hughes	A Toye
R Collins	B Ingham	S Westerman
O Davey	S Jackson	J Whibley
T Dumper	R Jefferies	D Wilson
P Faithfull	G Jung	E Wragg

Officers in attendance:

Mark Barrow, Interim Director Place
Simon Davey, Director of Finance
Tracy Hendren, Chief Executive
Andrew Melhuish, Democratic Services Manager
Catrin Stark, Director of Housing and Health
Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)

Councillor apologies:

V Bonetta
S Chamberlain
M Chapman
I Chubb
D Haggerty
M Hartnell
V Johns
C Nicholas
J O'Leary
H Parr
S Richards
S Smith

Chair

Date:

Report to: **Council**

Date of Meeting 15 October 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



Questions on Notice

Report summary:

The constitution provides that members of Council may ask: the Chair, the Leader or a Portfolio Holder Member of the Cabinet; or the Chair of any Committee or Sub Committee a question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the district.

A member may only ask a question if either:

(a) they have given at least 3 working days' notice in writing of the question to the Chief Executive; or

(b) the question relates to urgent matters, they have the consent of the Chair to whom the question is to be put and the content of the question is given to the Chief Executive by noon on the day of the meeting.

In response to a question on notice an answer may take the form of:

(a) A direct oral answer;

(b) Where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or

(c) Where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner.

In accordance with the Constitution two questions on notice have been received and they are set out in the report with the responses.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

To note the responses to the questions on notice.

Reason for recommendation:

In accordance with the Council's Constitution Rules Part 4, 9.2 Questions on notice at full Council; 9.3 Notice of questions.

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	Cllr 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 and will he start to discuss these benefits with other districts.	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 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	Cllr 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 the Leader please inform members and the public what the current options are and when residents and members will be able to discuss these.	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 this council's lead Member for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Since this council agreed in March that its preferred Devon-wide 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 reminded of the documentation that supported the decision – <u>Agenda for Council on Wednesday, 19th March, 2025, 6.00 pm - East Devon</u>

			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 at – Plymouth City Council: 250317LocalGovernmentReorganisationFullCouncilReportFINAL.pdf https://democracy.plymouth.gov.uk/documents/s152193/250317LocalGovernmentReorganisationFullCouncilBriefingPaperFINAL.pdf 250317 Plymouth Local Government Reorganisation Interim Plan FINAL.pdf Exeter City Council: APPENDIX A - Exeter City Council Interim Submission FINAL.pdf Devon County Council: Getting it right for Devon - Interim plan - 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.
4	Cllr Mike Goodman	Question to Portfolio 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	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

		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.	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.

Report to: **Council**

Date of Meeting 15 October 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



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

Report summary:

To receive reports from the Cabinet and the Council's Committees and receive any questions on those reports from meetings between 7 July 2025 and 6 October 2025.

Recommendations from Cabinet and the Council's Committees are set out as separate agenda items and contained in the agenda pack.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

To note the reports from Cabinet and the Council's Committees and the responses to any questions raised.

Reason for recommendation:

In accordance with the Council's Constitution.

Officer: Andrew Melhuish (Democratic Services Manager) – andrew.melhuish@eastdevon.gov.uk

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☒ Environment - Operations
- ☒ Environment – Nature & Climate
- ☒ Council, Corporate Co-ordination and External Engagement
- ☒ Communications and Democracy
- ☒ Economy and Assets
- ☒ Finance
- ☒ Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- ☒ Sustainable Homes and Communities
- ☒ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

Report in full

The minutes from the following meetings are included:

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

Financial implications:

None.

Legal implications:

None.

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 9 July 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.55 pm

20 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meetings of Cabinet held on 4 June 2025 were agreed.

21 Declarations of interest

Min 37. Natural Seaton Interpretive Masterplan.

Councillor Paul Arnott, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Is the Seaton County Councillor.

22 Public speaking

The Portfolio Holder Environment Operations spoke on the emergency to the high-pressure sewage main just yards from Exmouth Beach being dealt with by South West Water (SWW) utilising the Maer Road car park. He was surprised that this incident had taken place due to SWW confirming recently they had no issues to providing future services for a large planning application for further houses in Exmouth. Cllr Hookway expressed his displeasure stating that this could not have happened at a worse time with several public events taking place over the coming weekend, with another sewage spill being catastrophic to the reputation of the town. Councillors asked that SWW be held accountable and that the company were on hand over the weekend to react immediately if a further incident occurred.

Cllr Ian Barlow asked that the political proportionality for committee seats be looked into immediately, as recently joined members were having to wait until the October Council meeting for this to be allocated.

23 Matters of urgency

There were two items that has been agreed to be dealt with in this way recorded at Minute 28 Minutes of Leisure Strategy Delivery Forum held on 19 June 2025 and Minute 25 – Extension to the contract of procuring digital call handling platform.

24 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There was three items which officers recommended should be dealt with in this way recorded at Minutes 27 – 29.

25 Extension to the contract of procuring digital call handling platform

The report was presented for an urgent decision to improve services within Home Safeguard by extending the contract length for the procurement of the new digital call handling platform which differs to what was agreed with Cabinet on 4 September 2024.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

Agree to the increased length of the contract, which differs to the agreed length of contract previously approved by Cabinet.

REASON:

A decision was made by Cabinet on 4 September 2024 to give authority to enter into a contract for £252,900 over a 4-year period for the digital platform that enabled Home Safeguard to respond to new technologies. The featured cost and duration of the contract was based on a previous quote sought from a previous lead officer, from leading healthcare tech company called Enovation (provided in February 2024).

To comply with procurement guidelines, EDDC approached Enovation for a new quote as part of the award process; this was a direct award with Enovation a preferred supplier on the TEL framework, LOT 1 via the Northern Housing Consortium. Costs had increased (£3,508 per year) since the previous quote and contract were discussed, and after negotiation with Enovation, the most cost-effective option is a contract for £333,666 over 5 years and on that basis, the Director of Housing and Health in consultation with colleagues and ELT, recommends to cabinet that the contract is awarded on this basis.

The financial provision had been confirmed by Finance for the additional amount, however as the contract length still differed from that agreed by Cabinet and was required to be reflected as five years in duration, Cabinet are asked to endorse the above decision.

26 **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 - Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

That under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting as exempt information, of the description set out on the agenda, is likely to be disclosed and on balance the public interest is in discussing this item in private session (Part B).

27 **Recycling & Waste Future Services model business case**

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations as set out in the report were agreed.

28 **Minutes of Leisure Strategy Delivery Forum held on 19 June 2025**

Members noted the Minutes and recommendations of the Leisure Strategy Delivery Forum held on 19 June 2025.

29 **Leisure Review findings including final Options Appraisal of the preferred Leisure Contract Arrangements**

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations as set out in the report were agreed.

30 **Minutes of Strategic Planning Committee held on 19 May 2025**

Members noted the Minutes and recommendations of the Strategic Planning Committee held on 19 May 2025.

Minute 266: South East Devon Wildlife – Joint Habitats Site Mitigation Strategy 2025 to 2030

That Strategic Planning Committee recommend to Cabinet that the South East Devon Wildlife Joint Habitats Site Mitigation Strategy 2025 to 2030 be adopted.

31 Minutes of Leisure Strategy Delivery Forum held on 11 June 2025

Members noted the Minutes of the Leisure Strategy Delivery Forum held on 11 June 2025.

32 Enterprise Zone Implementation Plan

The Exeter & East Devon Enterprise Zone (EEDEZ) designation had been in operation since April 2017. The Enterprise Zone (EZ) comprises four sites covering almost 90 hectares in East Devon. The focus of the EZ programme had been on addressing barriers to delivery and bringing forward catalytic investment to sustain economic recovery and achieve longer-term objectives. This Implementation Plan provided an update on what the designation had achieved to date and areas for future investment.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

Note the strategic direction, project delivery, and financial planning outlined in the 2024 EEDEZ Implementation Plan and approve the proposed actions to support economic recovery and achieve long-term objectives.

REASON:

The EEDEZ Implementation Plan provided an overview of the strategic direction, project delivery, and financial planning necessary to support economic recovery and achieve long-term objectives.

33 Procurement of Legal, Financial and Commercial Advisors for Cranbrook District Heating Expansion Areas Project

The report notified Cabinet of two contracts that would both exceed £100,000:

- 1) Contract for consultant support for a Legal Advisor. The advisor would play a vital role in developing the legal aspects of the project, negotiating terms with counterparties and ensuring both the project and EDDC were protected from legal risks. The maximum expenditure on the contract will be £200,000. This represents 20% of the Commercialisation grant awarded by the Green Heat Network Fund.
- 2) Contract for consultant support for a Financial and Commercial Advisor. The advisor would play a critical role in developing scheme's financial model as well as updating the business case to ensure robust and justified financial and commercial structuring. The maximum expenditure on the contract would be £128,000. This represents 13% of the Commercialisation grant awarded by the Green Heat Network Fund.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approves:

1. The letting of the contract to Bevan Brittan, to provide legal advice, with a total contract value of up to £200,000.

2. The letting of the contract to Global City Futures, to provide financial and commercial support, with a total contract value of £128,000.

REASON:

To support the delivery of Cranbrook District Heating Expansion Project.

34 **Annual complaint monitoring and service improvement report 2024/25**

The council's annual complaint monitoring and service improvement report for 2024/25 was presented to Members.

In answer to questions the Monitoring Officer said the report was a summary and that there was a significant amount of work going on with regular information going to the Housing Review Board. It was acknowledged the pressures on the Housing team and that lessons learnt were ways of showing what had been taken onboard to improve the service.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

Note the numbers and trends in terms of formal complaints dealt with during the year; the learning points which have been identified; and actions taken to address these.

REASON:

The council was required by the Housing Ombudsman to publish its self-assessment against the complaint handling code, on an annual basis, as part of the complaint performance and service improvement report. This should be accompanied by Cabinet's response to the report.

The purpose of publishing the Council's response to the self-assessment and to the report was to provide assurance that it was a true reflection of the council's complaint handling.

35 **Jurassic Coast Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management Mitigation Study**

Along the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site (WHS), there were many locations where existing coastal flood and erosion defences were adjacent to undefended sections of cliff and coast that form part of the WHS. As sea levels rise and these natural lengths of coast continue to erode landwards, the existing coastal defences will be at risk of outflanking. To manage these risks, the Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) that set out the long-term policy for Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) along the coast identify the need to modify and/or build new defences to manage the transitions between defended and undefended sections of coast.

The project was estimated to cost £495k and full funding had been secured via joint funding-bids submitted at the same time in late 2024 to South West RFCC (£120k Local Levy), Wessex RFCC (£345k Local Levy) and the Environment Agency (£150k FCERM Grant in Aid) to deliver the project over the next 3 years (from April 2025 to March 2028). It has been confirmed with the Environment Agency that the full project budget (£495k) would be claimed and administered by BCP Council, with South West Flood & Coastal managing the income/expenditure for the duration of the project.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

Note the commencement of the project and support EDDC officer involvement in its development.

REASON:

Supporting the project would help reduce the risk of adverse impact on the World Heritage Site from future coastal defence works along the Jurassic Coast, including East Devon and the forthcoming Sidmouth Beach Management Scheme.

36 **Budleigh Salterton Beach & Cliff Management Plan**

A new Budleigh Salterton Beach and Cliff Management Plan was to be developed to set-out sustainable approaches to managing the risk of coastal erosion at Budleigh Salterton over the short and long-term. The project was estimated to cost £195k with £165k of Local Levy having been secured from the South West RFCC and £30k from EDDC, to deliver the project over the next 2 years (from April 2025 to March 2027).

To guide the project, a Project Board and BCMP Advisory Group would be formed. The BCMP Advisory Group would comprise representatives of the diverse range of stakeholders representing the community of Budleigh Salterton as well as statutory bodies and would have a remit of advising the project team and Project Board as the project develops. The Project Board would comprise of senior officers (Director of Place, Assistant Director StreetScene and Engineering Projects Manager) and Portfolio Holder for Environment – Operational from EDDC to ultimately oversee and direct the project, including making final decisions having considered feedback from the advisory group. The final BCMP would be brought to Cabinet for approval and adoption in due course.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

Note the commencement of the project and authorise the establishment of both the Project Board and Advisory Group, and grants delegated authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the portfolio holder for Environment – Operational, to agree representation on both the Project Board and Advisory Group.

REASON:

Supporting the project would ensure development of the Budleigh Salterton BCMP had the appropriate governance and oversight and input from key stakeholders.

37 **Natural Seaton Interpretive Masterplan**

The Natural Seaton Masterplan had been drafted by consultant, Dominic Acland and engaged various stakeholders in its development. The resulting plan was ready for adoption with the authorisation of ELT and sought to use funds held from the sale of the Seaton Jurassic building to deliver the various outputs of the masterplan.

Following on from this piece of work, the Countryside Team would be looking to use this strategic document as the foundations of a major grant application from National Lottery Heritage Fund, for funding work at the southern end of the wetlands site to deliver habitat creation, access and interpretive work to “complete” the Seaton Wetlands project.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Approve the direction of travel in relation to the current version of the masterplan; a working document to guide project work relating to the natural world in and around the town of Seaton.

2. Delegates authority to the Director of Place to convene the proposed stakeholder group.
3. Agree that the Countryside Team Manager seeks funding from a National Lottery Grants for Heritage application later this year.

RECOMMENDED to Council:

4. That the residual budget of £80,000 from the sales receipts of the former Seaton Jurassic building are ringfenced for delivering outputs of this interpretive masterplan as detailed in table 3 of the report.

REASON:

To develop the Natural Tourism offer within the town of Seaton, with the input of partner stakeholders.

38 **The Reform of Planning Committees: Technical Consultation**

The Government was consulting on a working paper setting out how proposals to reform planning committees and introduce a national scheme of delegation would be implemented off the back of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill which was currently being considered by Parliament. These proposals included enabling greater levels of officer delegation, mandatory training for committee members and to have consistency across the country on delegation.

Members expressed their concerns and disappointment that the Government was taking this stance. They stated people need to engage at a local level and that these proposals were not democratic with a lack of understanding to the importance of local plans.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

Consider the proposed changes in the Reform of Planning Committee Technical Consultation and agree the proposed response for submission.

REASON:

To ensure that members were aware of proposals that will affect the Council's constitution and decision-making processes and had the opportunity to submit comments for government consideration.

Attendance List

Present:

Portfolio Holders

P Arnott	Leader of the Council
P Hayward	Portfolio Holder Assets and Economy
N Hookway	Portfolio Holder Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
G Jung	Portfolio Holder Environment - Operations
D Ledger	Portfolio Holder Sustainable Homes & Communities
T Olive	Portfolio Holder Place, Infrastructure & Strategic Planning

Cabinet apologies:

S Hawkins	Portfolio Holder Finance
S Jackson	Portfolio Holder Communications and Democracy
J Loudoun	Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder Corporate, Council & External Engagement
R Jefferies	Portfolio Holder Environment - Nature & Climate

Also present (for some or all the meeting)

Councillor Aurora Bailey
Councillor Brian Bailey
Councillor Ian Barlow
Councillor Kevin Blakey
Councillor Colin Brown
Councillor Roy Collins
Councillor Peter Faithfull
Councillor Paula Fernley
Councillor Steve Gazzard
Councillor Mike Goodman
Councillor Matt Hall
Councillor Marianne Rixson
Councillor Eleanor Rylance
Councillor Kim Bloxham

Also present:

Officers:

Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)
Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer
Tom Buxton-Smith, Engineering Projects Manager
Tim Child, Assistant Director Place, Assets & Commercialisation
Simon Davey, Director of Finance
Ed Freeman, Assistant Director Planning Strategy and Development Management
Andrew Hancock, Assistant Director StreetScene
Naomi Harnett, Corporate Lead (Interim) – Major Projects & Programmes
Rebecca Heal, Solicitor
Tracy Hendren, Chief Executive
David Robertson, Project Manager Recycling and Waste
Lynsey Williams, Housing Sustainment and Resettlement Service Manager
Andrew Wood, Director of Place

Chair

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 30 July 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.45 pm

39 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meetings of Cabinet held on 9 July 2025 were agreed.

40 Declarations of interest

Min 44 Adoption of East Devon National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030
Cllr R Jefferies, Affects Non-registerable Interest: Chair East Devon National Landscape Partnership

Min 46 Exmouth Motorhome Parking – Overnight stopovers
Cllr N Hookway, Affects Non-registerable Interest: Member of Exmouth Town Council and Devon County Council
Cllr S Gazzard, Affects Non-registerable Interest: Member of Exmouth Town Council and Exmouth Motorhome Task and Finish Forum
Cllr B Bailey, Affects Non-registerable Interest: Member Exmouth Town Council
Cllr A Bailey, Affects Non-registerable Interest: Member Exmouth Town Council

Min 50 Clyst St Mary and Sowton (Bishops Clyst) Neighbourhood Plan
Cllr M Howe, Affects Non-registerable Interest: Parish Councillor of Bishops Clyst
Cllr M Hall, Other registerable Interest: Strategic implications to the neighbouring authority for which Cllr Hall works (and left the meeting for the item)

Min 51 Recommendation from Strategic Planning Committee
Cllr M Hall, Other registerable Interest: Strategic implications to the neighbouring authority for which Cllr Hall works (and left the meeting for the item)

Min 53 Delivery of second new Community
Cllr M Hall, Other registerable Interest: Strategic implications to the neighbouring authority for which Cllr Hall works (and left the meeting for the item)

41 Public speaking

Mr Whitely thanked the Leader for the opportunity to raise concerns about East Devon's Local Plan. He argued the plan must be based on correct principles, but believe it relies on flawed data and assumptions, particularly from the ORS report used to determine housing needs.

His key concerns included:

- No fixed Government target exists for East Devon, and alternative housing calculation methods are allowed under national policy if properly justified.
- ORS followed the standard method but failed to consider that 60% of the district lies within National Landscapes (NLs), which have different demographics and legal protections.
- The use of uniform data across the district skews housing need calculations, leading to an inflated housing target of 21,000 homes instead of a more accurate estimate of around 16,000.

- As a result, housing is being disproportionately allocated outside the NL and even within protected areas, potentially violating laws like the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and National Planning Policy Framework provisions.
- 700 homes in the plan may be illegal, as they serve communities outside the NL, effectively redrawing protected boundaries without Parliamentary approval.
- The speaker emphasises that this is a national issue, not one that should be borne by East Devon alone, and criticises the lack of scrutiny over the ORS report and absence of public consultation on these statistical and legal issues.

He urged the council to reconsider and properly assess the plan's foundation.

In response, Cllr Olive informed the Cabinet that correspondence with Mr Whiteley had already been exchanged on this issue. The Chair thanked Mr Whitely for his contribution.

Cllr Kevin Blakey informed Cabinet that, at its meeting on 9 June 2025, the Cranbrook Placemaking Group discussed the future of Wellbeing Cranbrook, the successor to Sport England's local pilot. The East Devon New Community Manager had committed to providing key information and updates—specifically:

1. The job description for the Community Wellbeing and Activity Organiser,
2. Clarification from the NHS on funding for a Community Connector role, and
3. A discussion with Cranbrook Town Council about potentially hosting Wellbeing Cranbrook.

However, none of these actions have been completed.

Cranbrook Town Council (CTC) was eager to develop youth-focused services, given the town's young and socio-economically challenged population. For instance, 29% of pupils at Cranbrook Education Campus are eligible for pupil premium, above the national average. CTC believes investment in youth services would have wider community benefits.

A social housing provider has shown interest in contributing funding toward a youth role, but progress is stalled due to uncertainty over the future of Wellbeing Cranbrook and potential funding from the Place Partnership or East Devon District Council.

Cllr Blakey asked Cabinet to:

- Ensure the previously promised information is shared with the Placemaking Group immediately, and
- Request that the overdue report on Wellbeing Cranbrook be prepared in time for the next Cabinet meeting on 3 September.

Cllr Blakey requested a written response to his concerns.

Cllr S Gazzard spoke of his learning of a decision to dispose of Radcliffe House community hall, being sold to a charity to run it. The two Ward Members were not consulted, nor were the regular users of the facility. Cllr Gazzard requested a written response on the issue.

42 **Matters of urgency**

One matter of urgency listed under minute 51.

43 **Confidential/exempt item(s)**

Two items were considered, listed under minute 53 and 54.

44 **Adoption of the East Devon National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030**

Daniel Wynn, East Devon National Landscape Manager updated Members on the review of the current AONB Management Plan, as required under Section IV of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Public consultation on the reviewed management plan took place in February to April 2025, and now adoption of the East Devon National Landscape Management Plan by EDDC and the other relevant local authorities was required before publishing the management plan and lodging it with Defra.

The plan had been adopted by Devon County Council the previous week; therefore the Chair, in light of being present and voting at that meeting, left the meeting for this item.

The work involved in bringing the Plan to this point in a short period of time after previous staff exits was acknowledged and the EDNL Manager was thanked for his hard work.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

Agree to adopt the East Devon National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030.

REASON:

Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 relevant local authorities were required to prepare and publish a plan which formulates their policy for the management of their area of outstanding natural beauty and review the Management Plan at intervals of not more than 5 years. EDDC with other local authorities had authorised the East Devon National Landscape Partnership to review the Management Plan for the East Devon National Landscape (formerly known as AONB) on their behalf. The review had been completed, and the plan was ready to be published.

45 **Stewardship of Public Amenities**

The report highlighted that the population of East Devon was increasing at more than twice the national average, driven in part by new housing developments. Prompted by financial pressures, the council took a decision around 15 years ago to stop adopting public amenities in such developments. In the intervening period a private management model has emerged, part of a wider national trend. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has recently concluded that the proliferation of such models was leading to significant customer detriment.

The report set out the need for a new approach to the stewardship of community assets in East Devon's new housing-led developments, including strategic scale new communities, that focuses on creating social value for the lasting benefit of residents. This included:

- A Stewardship Strategy targeted at new developments;
- A Charter Mark for community friendly developments;
- Annual quality of life survey in new developments
- Establish a Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning Portfolio Holder Group to consider the Council's approach and report to Cabinet

Cllr Kim Bloxham welcomed the report and its recommendations, especially the creation of a Portfolio Holder group; and expressed a desire to join the group. She stressed the importance of including input from the *Cranbrook Placemaking Group*, which she felt was currently underrepresented in the report.

Key concerns she raised included:

- **Service Disparities:** A significant and complex disparity between “Old” and “New” East Devon. Residents in new developments like Cranbrook pay for services through both council tax and estate rent charges, while those in older areas receive more services from East Devon District Council (EDDC) without extra charges. This inequality is especially noticeable within parishes like Broadclyst.
- **Estate Rent Charges & Management Companies:** She strongly criticised the use of private Management Companies funded by estate rent charges, citing high fees, lack of accountability, and poor service quality. Cranbrook’s experience in 2018 showed that transitioning services to the Town Council reduced costs for residents and improved transparency.
- **Lack of Clarity and Risks in Governance:** There is confusion between the roles of Management Companies and Management Agents. The current model is hard to unwind once established, and some developers resist handing over public open spaces to councils. She warned against the formation of interim Management Companies while waiting for Community Governance Reviews, which risk locking communities into costly and unaccountable arrangements.
- **Need for Local Accountability:** She argued that Town and Parish Councils were best placed to manage local services. If they don’t take on these responsibilities, residents will continue to pay more. Cranbrook has shown this model works and could serve as a template for other towns.
- **Future Governance & LGR:** With the potential shift toward a unitary authority, the role of Town and Parish Councils should be re-evaluated. A clear, sustainable stewardship model for Cranbrook depends on a boundary review and avoiding new management company setups in future developments.
- **Urgency and Opportunity:** She asked Cabinet to act decisively, adopt the report’s recommendations, and lead a national example in addressing the problems associated with estate rent charges and management companies, which are increasingly seen as a source of customer harm by bodies like the Competition and Markets Authority.

She concluded by emphasising that East Devon has a unique opportunity to lead on this issue and push for meaningful change.

Other comments included:

- Timescale for developing and bringing forward the stewardship was tight, in light of local government review;
- Concern that discretionary assets such as parks and gardens would be lost once a unitary authority was in place;
- Pressures on local councils who were not best placed to take on and manage assets; and the timing of calculating precepts for them was tight;
- Examples of experiences of estate charges and their value;

- Opportunity to link with emerging local plan to be genuinely transformative in approach.

Cllr Mike Howe also expressed his desire to be a member of the Portfolio Holder group recommended.

The Chair explained that Government directive was currently not to push liability down to town and parish level. Local Government Reorganisation should give the opportunity to look at a new “year zero”. This was an opportunity to set the standard for future developments.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

1. Recognised the vital role that the effective stewardship of public amenities plays in supporting the establishment of sustainable communities.
2. Supported the commissioning of a Stewardship Strategy targeted at new developments coming forward in the District, alongside the formulation of a Charter Mark for community-friendly developments.
3. Supported an annual quality of life survey being undertaken across all new developments in the district in order to monitor progress.
4. Supported the establishment of a Place, Infrastructure & Strategic Planning Portfolio Holder Group to consider the Council’s approach to the stewardship of public amenities in new developments across the district, and an Assets & Economy Portfolio Holder Group to consider the future of the Council’s existing assets in the community in light of Local Government Reorganisation, with both groups to bring an initial report back to Cabinet within six months

REASON:

To ensure that new housing-led developments in the district were supported by high quality community infrastructure and public services through a management regime that was predicated upon the creation of social value.

To ensure that the Council’s approach to the stewardship of public amenities more widely remained in step with the changing context of future local government reorganisation and expected budgetary pressures.

46

Exmouth Motorhome Parking - Overnight stopovers

A statement was read out on behalf of Mr R Kathro, an Exmouth resident, who could not be present at the meeting.

His statement raised concerns about ongoing, unregulated camping in Exmouth’s car parks and highways, which he felt stemmed from a poorly managed trial initially meant to last two years, but now ongoing for eight. He criticised a biased consultation process that favoured expanding camping despite factual and data errors.

He urged East Devon District Council (EDDC), Devon County Council (DCC), and Exmouth Town Council (ETC) to take action to address persistent poor behaviour by some campers, as reported by residents. A document titled “*To car park manager vF.docx*”, based on input from about 95 residents, outlined suggested steps for improvement and had been circulated to Cabinet members. The statement stressed that, without proper management, issues will continue to be exploited by irresponsible campers, and called on the councils to act responsibly and effectively.

Cllr Anne Hall, Chair of Overview Committee, informed the Cabinet of their previous meeting where the proposed improvements to overnight stopover arrangements were debated. She felt that the debate had added value to a derisive subject, and the committee had tried to mitigate to the best solution possible. As a result the proposed recommendations had been amended before presentation to Cabinet.

Discussion on the proposals included:

- Differentiating between a managed camp site and the proposals, particularly relating to the fee and how that may impact on nearby campsites;
- Emergency works by South West Water could not be halted as they had legal power of entry to the site to carry out such work; Members were informed that relations with SWW had improved in that proactive liaison is now in place;
- Impact of motor homes on highways both in Exmouth and other areas;
- Welcomed the previous debate at Overview Committee;
- Suggestion to add in a recommendation to include a safety fence at the eastern end of the site to prevent pollution of the brook, with the design and installation aspects to be delegated to the appropriate Portfolio Holder and officers.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

Approve the improvements to the overnight stopover arrangements as follows;

- a) Install a drive-over grey wastewater (shower & dishwater) disposal point in Maer Road Car Park
- b) Install a chemical toilet waste disposal point in Maer Road car park – connected directly to the sewerage network
- c) Install a fresh water tap in Maer Road car park.
- d) Reduce the maximum permitted number of consecutive overnight stays to 2 nights, with no return within 72 hours. This is in line with other authorities and prevents the risk of paid habitation within the car parks.
- e) Improve the signage stating the rules and restrictions for overnight stays within both car parks – including ground markings along Queen's Drive Echelon to designate bays suitable for overnight parking, stipulating a safe distance between vehicles.
- f) Trial RingGo only payment for overnight parking sessions to prevent vehicles remaining on site for longer than the maximum permitted number of nights.
- g) Increase the overnight stopover fee to £20.00 (currently £11.00) per night in recognition of the additional costs incurred in managing, maintaining and installing the physical improvements to the overnight parking arrangements.
- h) Ring-fence £5.00 (25%) from each overnight parking stay to fund enforcement activity specifically related to overnight parking;
- i) A yearly review to be carried out by the appropriate scrutiny committee;
- j) Explore the costs and feasibility of erecting a fence at the eastern end of the Maer Road car park; with a budget limit of £6k that can be met from the current capital programme (with delegated authority to the PH Finance and the Director Finance); the design and installation to be delegated to PH Environment Operational in conjunction with officers; for reasons of safety, and to prevent pollution of the Littleham Brook on the site.

REASON:

The recommendations of the Exmouth Motorhome TAFF were first reviewed by Cabinet in January 2024. At that point it was determined that public consultation should be carried out to gather further feedback and provide assurance on the recommendations. The consultation has now been carried out with most respondents supportive of the proposed improvements. These recommendations have also been formally endorsed by Exmouth Town Council in April 2025. The recommendations were reviewed and

amended to their current iteration by the EDDC Overview Committee on the 17th July 2025.

47 **Winter Parking Offer Review - 2025**

A review of the Winter Parking Offer, first introduced in 2016, was presented to Cabinet. This sought approval for changes to the winter parking tariffs and an end to the £2.00 promotional offer.

The varying charges for car parks in Sidmouth was queried; local Ward Members explained that the variances were to encourage a shorter stay for a shoppers car park to encourage the turnover. Members were also reminded of the good value that car parking permits offered.

Cllr Matt Hall called for care in communicating any changes to parking charges, as they were open to misinterpretation and may be perceived as an additional cost burden to local businesses and the public. The Chair informed Members that, subject to their approval, a press statement had already been prepared to mitigate against that.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approved the changes to the winter parking tariffs and the subsequent end to the £2.00 promotional offer which had been available since 2016.

REASON

Considering inflation, the £2.00 winter parking offer introduced in 2016 is effectively the £1.33 winter offer in 2025. Unlike the cost of maintaining our car parks and providing other services, the winter offer had not increased for 9 years. Initially introduced to encourage seasonal exploration and shopping, the winter offer had become a permanent overlay to the standard parking tariffs, with most sites now offering this promotion as the standard rate for winter parking.

The proposal to replace the winter offer is a blanket promotion of -50% of summer charges across all sites during the winter. This will better reflect the demand and use of each site, and the maximum stay restrictions that are present during the summer, will remain in the winter. The -50% winter tariff will provide cohesion between the summer and winter charges and simplify future tariff changes.

It should be noted that most authorities are moving to a single tariff model, with no variance between summer and winter charges, so this will continue to be an enticing promotion for East Devon and meet the objectives of the original offer.

48 **Financial Outturn for 2024/25 and Quarter 1 monitoring update**

The revenue budget and capital outturn positions at the end of the financial year 2024/25, and a summary of the Council's financial position for quarter one of 2025/26 were presented to Cabinet.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

1. The variances identified as part of the Revenue and Capital Monitoring process up to Quarter one be acknowledged.

RECOMMENDED to Council:

2. The outturn position for 2024/25 including the implications and proposals relating to the Balances and Reserves held by the Council.

3. The proposed reserve transfers contained within the report and give delegated authority to the Director Finance in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder for any amendments to these transfers as any additional year end data becomes available.

REASON:

To accord with the Council's financial regulations, the report presented the outturn position for the Council's approved budgets for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Expenditure.

The report updated Members on the overall financial position of the Authority and included recommendations to reserve transfers and for corrective action, when required, for the remainder of the current financial year.

49 **Risk Report quarter one 2025/26**

Risk information for the first quarter of 2025/26 financial year was supplied to allow Cabinet to have oversight of the strategic risk register. This followed the full review of risks by responsible officers during May/June 2025. Most of the reviews were completed by the responsible officers with the Interim Performance & Risk Team Leader.

The format of the report had also been improved to assist Members.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

Note the current status of the strategic risks following the full risk review undertaken in May/June 2025.

REASON:

To ensure that Cabinet had oversight of the strategic risks that were currently being monitored and managed by directorates across the council.

50 **Clyst St Mary and Sowton (Bishops Clyst) Neighbourhood Plan (First Review) - Examiner's Report**

The purpose of the report was to provide feedback on the outcome of the independent examination of the first review of the Clyst St Mary and Sowton (Bishops Clyst) Neighbourhood Plan and secure formal decision on the findings.

The Examiner had found that, with proposed modifications, the Plan proposal met the necessary 'basic conditions' and recommended to the District Council that it could go forward to referendum.

Cllr Mike Howe expressed his thanks to the Neighbourhood Planning Team and the Parish Council for their work in reaching a good compromise.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

1. Endorse the Examiner's recommendations on the Clyst St Mary and Sowton (Bishops Clyst) Neighbourhood Plan (First Review).
2. Agree a 'referendum version' of the Plan be produced (incorporating the Examiner's modifications with minor amends for corrections where stated, as set out in Annex 1 of this report) and proceed to referendum, and that a decision notice to this effect be published.

3. Congratulate Bishops Clyst Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on their hard work.

REASON:

The legislation required a decision notice to be produced at this stage in the process. The Plan was the product of significant local consultation and has been recommended to proceed to referendum by the Examiner subject to modifications which were accepted by the Parish Council.

51 **Recommendation for Cabinet's consideration from the meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee on 8 July 2025**

The work programme for planning policy production in East Devon was recommended from the Strategic Planning Committee meeting held on 8th July 2025.

RECOMMENDED to Council to adopt the proposed new Local Development Scheme – work programme for planning policy production.

52 **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 - Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting as exempt information, of the description set out on the agenda, is likely to be disclosed and on balance the public interest is in discussing this item in private session (Part B).

53 **Delivery of second new Community**

RESOLVED: To approve the recommendations set out in the report.

Attendance List

Present:

Portfolio Holders

P Arnott	Leader of the Council
S Hawkins	Portfolio Holder Finance
P Hayward	Portfolio Holder Assets and Economy
N Hookway	Portfolio Holder Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
S Jackson	Portfolio Holder Communications and Democracy
R Jefferies	Portfolio Holder Environment - Nature & Climate
G Jung	Portfolio Holder Environment - Operations
D Ledger	Portfolio Holder Sustainable Homes & Communities
T Olive	Portfolio Holder Place, Infrastructure & Strategic Planning

Cabinet apologies:

J Loudoun	Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder Corporate, Council & External Engagement

Also present (for some or all the meeting)

Councillor Aurora Bailey
Councillor Brian Bailey
Councillor Ian Barlow
Councillor Kevin Blakey
Councillor Kim Bloxham
Councillor Colin Brown
Councillor Jenny Brown
Councillor Christopher Burhop
Councillor Roy Collins
Councillor Steve Gazzard
Councillor Mike Goodman
Councillor Anne Hall
Councillor Matt Hall
Councillor Mike Howe
Councillor Sophie Richards
Councillor Marianne Rixson

Also present:

Officers:

Mark Barrow, Interim Director Place
Simon Davey, Director of Finance
Richard Easthope, Parking Services Manager
Ed Freeman, Assistant Director Planning Strategy and Development Management
Tracy Hendren, Chief Executive
Charles Plowden, Assistant Director Countryside and Leisure
Catrin Stark, Director of Housing and Health
John Symes, Finance Manager
Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)
Andrew Wood, Director of Place
Daniel Wynn, East Devon National Landscape Manager
Debbie Meakin, DSO

Chair

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 3 September 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.35 pm

54 Minutes of the previous meeting

The Chair started the meeting by expressing his sincere condolences to the parents of Councillor Andrew Toye who sadly passed away this week. Tributes were made from Members who had worked closely and befriended Andrew over many years. He was Exmouth born and bred and played an important role as a District as well as Town Councillor. Although a quiet man his contribution was always pertinent and relevant. He had a strong affiliation with the Sea Scouts and a love of dancing. He will be sorely missed.

The minutes of the previous meetings of Cabinet held on 30 July 2025 were agreed.

55 Declarations of interest

Min 67. LGR and Devolution update.

Councillor Nick Hookway, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Is a Devon County Councillor.

Min 67. LGR and Devolution update.

Councillor Paul Arnott, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Is a Devon County Councillor involved in LGR.

Min 67. LGR and Devolution update.

Councillor Paul Hayward, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Is a Devon County Councillor.

Min 67. LGR and Devolution update.

Councillor Richard Jefferies, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Is a Devon County Councillor.

Min 72. Build & Buy Plan: Acquisitions & Preliminary Site-Specific Proposals.

Councillor Steve Gazzard, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Is a Ward Member.

56 Public speaking

Aynsley Jones the Cranbrook Community Manager spoke on the funding issues for Cranbrook. She stated that EX5-Alive CIC Hub was the only dedicated provision for a wide range of essential services in Cranbrook. They had been unsuccessful in receiving follow-on funding from the National Lottery to continue the progress already made, putting the Hub currently in a precarious position. In Cranbrook a significant proportion of the population was under the age of 24 years with many families having children, which was why the services provided were critical. The Hub provided critical support including emergency food parcels, child asylum seeking support and school attendance assistance. The Hub was where residents could meet, make relationships, find support and gain a sense of belonging avoiding social isolation and feeling disconnected. The Hub was a positive one-stop shop signposting residents to other services available to

them. She asked that Cabinet think of solutions and work with them so they could continue to provide services for Cranbrook. The Portfolio Holder Sustainable Homes and Communities said he was happy to liaise with the group to investigate what help may be available (if any). Cllr Tim Dumper offered his support and wished to encourage other members to do the same.

57 **Matters of urgency**

There was one late report recorded at Minute 68.

58 **Confidential/exempt item(s)**

There were three items dealt with in this way recorded at Minutes 72 – 74.

59 **Minutes of Cranbrook Placemaking Group held on 9 June 2025**

Members noted the minutes of the Cranbrook Placemaking Group held on 9 June 2025.

60 **Minutes of Cranbrook Placemaking Group held on 4 August 2025**

Members noted the minutes of the Cranbrook Placemaking Group held on 4 August 2025.

61 **Minutes of Overview Committee held on 17 July 2025**

Members noted the minutes and approved the recommendations of the Overview Committee held on 17 July 2025.

Minute 40 Exmouth Motorhome Parking – Overnight Stopovers

The report has since been approved by Cabinet on 30 July 2025.

Minute 42 Animal Licensing and Enforcement Policies

1. To formally adopt the draft Animal Enforcement Policy
2. To formally adopt the draft Animal Licensing Policy

62 **Minutes of Recycling and Waste Partnership Board held on 30 July 2025**

Members approved the recommendations of the Recycling and Waste Partnership Board held on 30 July 2025 as follows.

Minute 42 – Simpler Recycling

1. Cabinet approved the reallocation of £200,000 from the existing refurbishment capital budget to fund the required vehicles.
2. Cabinet approved the completion of a TEEP assessment to support the co-collection of paper, glass and cardboard.
3. Cabinet note the early-stage work for 'films and flexibles' implantation was underway.

63 **Minutes of Housing Review Board held on 31 July 2025**

Members approved the recommendations of the Housing Review Board held on 31 July 2025 as follows.

Minute 58 Finance report

1. Cabinet considered and noted the outturn position for 2024/25 including the implications and proposals relating to the balances and reserves held by the Council.
2. Cabinet noted the year-to-date Housing Revenue Account position for quarter 1 2025/26.

Minute 59 Review of Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

Cabinet approved the updated Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

Minute 60 Review of Electrical Safety Policy

Cabinet approved the updates and amendments to the Electrical Safety Policy for Housing, including the clarification of portable appliance testing.

Minute 61 Review of Housing Repairs Policy & Awaab's Law

1. Cabinet approved the proposed Repairs Policy.
2. Cabinet noted that some final amendments may be made following further feedback from tenant scrutiny and stakeholders. The policy would be brought back should any material changes be required.

Minute 62 Review of Radon Policy

1. Cabinet approved the proposed Radon Policy.
2. Cabinet noted that some final amendments may be made following further feedback from tenant scrutiny and stakeholders (with a commitment to bring the policy back should any material amendments be required).

Minute 65 Stock condition survey report

That Cabinet note the results of the stock condition survey.

Minute 66 Housing Revenue Account Business Plan update report

That Cabinet note the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan position and required efficiency savings.

Minute 67 Build & Buy - A housing investment and delivery plan for East Devon

1. That Cabinet recommend that Council endorse the Build and Buy Plan.
2. That Cabinet note that the financing of the Build and Buy Plan was subject to approval of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and the 2026/27 budget setting process in due course.

Minute 69 Build and Buy Plan: Acquisitions and preliminary site-specific proposals

1. That Cabinet note the proposed development sites; with further design feasibility and stakeholder engagement and consultation plans to be prepared.
2. That Cabinet approve that work to establish a pipeline of affordable housing acquisitions is commenced in line with the vision set out in the Build and Buy Plan.
3. That Cabinet approve that any capital and revenue expenditure above existing approved budgets be subject to the approval of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and budget setting process in 2026/27.
4. That Cabinet grant delegated authority to the Director of Housing and Health in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes and Communities to

progress the RIBA stage 3 on sites 1-4 Honiton and RIBA stage 3 on sites 5 and 6 in Exmouth.

64 **Household Support Fund 7**

The Benefits and Financial Resilience Manager provided details on the proposed policy for the Household Support Fund 7 and funding available to support low-income households for the period 01 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Agree to the proposed policy for Household Support Fund for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026
2. Agree for delegated authority to be given to the Assistant Director for Revenues, Benefits & Customer Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes and Communities, in the event subsequent changes need to be made to the policy, including providing additional groups and/or funding amount to receive a targeted payment. Any required changes will be based on funding available and will consider available data from our social resilience dashboard, and any other relevant factors at the time a decision needs to be made. Any changes will include an updated Equalities Impact Assessment.

REASON:

The recommendations allowed for the Council to proceed with administration of the Household Support fund, through an open application process and a targeted support element of the fund. The open application process would ensure that low-income households can come to EDDC directly for financial support if they do not meet the criteria set for targeted payments.

65 **Housing Revenue Account Business Plan update**

The Assistant Director – Programmes, Investment & Development provided an update on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan and associated strategic documents that underpin the effective management and investment in EDDC's housing stock to ensure the housing service remains financially viable, sustainable, and responsive to tenant needs.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

Note the HRA Business Plan position and required efficiency savings.

REASON:

To enable the development of a long-term sustainable Business Plan to ensure sufficient investment in the housing stock.

66 **Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy public consultation**

Sarah Jennings the County Ecologist presented a summary of the Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) with recommendations for sign off for the public consultation.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Agrees as the Supporting Authority that the draft Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment - Nature and Climate, be made available for public consultation.
2. Delegates authority to the Assistant Director – Countryside, Environment & Ecology in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment - Nature and Climate to make or approve amendments to the consultation materials prior to public consultation.
3. Delegates authority to the Assistant Director – Countryside, Environment & Ecology in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment - Nature and Climate to approve the final version of the Devon Local Nature Strategy following the public consultation.

REASON:

The draft Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) addressed requirements set out in the Environment Act 2021. The LNRS had been drafted by Devon County Council as Responsible Authority in collaboration with a wide range of partners including EDDC. EDDC was a Supporting Authority in the process and officers had been involved. The Strategy needed to be finalised by December for Devon to get further funding. Devon County Council officers leading the development of the LNRS supported by relevant EDDC officers now considered that it was ready to go out for public consultation for wider discussion. There were no risks associated with this consultation.

67 **LGR and Devolution update**

The Chair and Councillor Richard Jefferies left the room while this item was being debated due to their roles in this matter as Devon County Councillors. The Vice – Chair stood in as Chair for this item.

The Director of Place provided an update in relation to proposals for both Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution. It included information regarding the passage of key legislation, proposals for the establishment of a Mayoral Strategic Authority and further details around the various options for local government reorganisation and the associated timeline for implementation.

The Deputy Leader commended Andrew Wood on behalf of the Council and the other authorities involved in the proposals, for his essential work and effort in getting to this stage in the process.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Grant delegated authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Council, Corporate and External Engagement to continue to develop proposals for the configuration and coverage of future principal authorities.
2. Notes the appointment of specialist support on behalf of the constituent Councils progressing the 1/4/5 model of local government reorganisation
3. Receives a further report detailing the full proposal for the 1/4/5 model of local government reorganisation in Devon.

REASON:

To ensure Cabinet was fully engaged in the devolution and local government reorganisation proposals.

To recognise the change in administration at the County Council and the lead role that the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Council, Corporate and External Engagement now played in relation to Local Government Reorganisation for the District Council.

68 **Naming of East Devon's Second New Community**

The Portfolio Holder for Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning presented the report stating that EDDC had engaged with local people, community groups and businesses to help choose a name for the new community planned near Westpoint.

The Chair thanked officers, members, parishes and residents for their involvement in this matter.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Notes the outcome of the recent public engagement exercise.
2. Supports Marcombe as the choice of name for the new community

REASON:

To support the emerging identity of the second new community in East Devon.

69 **Forward Plan**

Members agreed the contents of the forward plan for key decisions for the period 1 October 2025 to 31 January 2026.

70 **Build & Buy - A Housing Investment & Delivery Plan for East Devon**

The Assistant Director Programmes, Investment & Development presented his report which was a response to a growing housing need and feedback from the Housing Strategy consultation. The report provided an overview and introduction to 'Build and Buy' A Housing Investment & Delivery Plan for East Devon.

The Chair thanked and wished it noted that he recognised the remarkable work of the Housing Team in getting EDDC to this stage over the last 18 months.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Endorse the Build & Buy Plan.
2. Note that the financing of the plan is subject to the approval of the HRA Business Plan and the 2026/27 budget setting process in due course.

REASON:

To increase the supply of affordable homes for residents of East Devon and contribute to wider housing and community objectives, including estate regeneration.

71 **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 - Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

That under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting as exempt information, of the description set out on the agenda, is likely to be disclosed and on balance the public interest is in discussing this item in private session (Part B).

72 **Build & Buy Plan: Acquisitions & Preliminary Site-Specific Proposals**

RESOLVED that Cabinet agreed the recommendations as set out in the report.

73 **Update on delivery of the Cranbox scheme and procurement of modular provider and employers agent**

RESOLVED that Cabinet agreed the recommendations as set out in the report.

74 **Cranbrook Leisure - Governance and Consultant Procurement**

RESOLVED that Cabinet agreed the recommendations as set out in the report.

Attendance List

Present:

Portfolio Holders

P Arnott	Leader of the Council
S Hawkins	Portfolio Holder Finance
P Hayward	Portfolio Holder Assets and Economy
N Hookway	Portfolio Holder Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
S Jackson	Portfolio Holder Communications and Democracy
D Ledger	Portfolio Holder Sustainable Homes & Communities
J Loudoun	Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder Corporate, Council & External Engagement
T Olive	Portfolio Holder Place, Infrastructure & Strategic Planning
R Jefferies	Portfolio Holder Environment - Nature & Climate

Cabinet apologies:

G Jung	Portfolio Holder Environment - Operations

Also present (for some or all the meeting)

Councillor Ian Barlow
Councillor Kevin Blakey
Councillor Kim Bloxham
Councillor Bethany Collins
Councillor Roy Collins
Councillor Tim Dumper
Councillor Peter Faithfull
Councillor Paula Fernley
Councillor Steve Gazzard

Also present:

Officers:

Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)
Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer
Sharon Church, Benefits Manager
Will Dommett, District Ecologist
Mike O'Mahony, Senior Leisure Officer
Liam Reading, Assistant Director - Housing Programmes, Investment and Development
Mark Barrow, Interim Director Place
Tim Child, Assistant Director Place, Assets & Commercialisation
Simon Davey, Director of Finance
Naomi Harnett, Corporate Lead (Interim) – Major Projects & Programmes

Catrin Stark, Director of Housing and Health
Andrew Wood, Director of Place
Sarah Jennings, Devon County Ecologist
Rachel Papworth, Consultant

Chair

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 1 October 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.05 pm and ended at 7.30 pm

75 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meetings of Cabinet held on 3 September 2025 were agreed.

76 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest given.

77 Public speaking

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

78 Matters of urgency

There were none.

79 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There was one item dealt with in this way recorded at Minute 85.

80 Minutes of Scrutiny Committee held on 4 September 2025

Members noted the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 4 September 2025.

81 Recycling & Waste LATCo governance and financial proposal - further detail

The Interim Director of Place introduced a presentation summarising the steps taken to get to this stage and recommendations to future actions to be taken.

Cabinet received a report in July 2025 which reviewed the updated Business Case for Future Service Provision for Recycling and Waste. Cabinet resolved to proceed with creation of a Local Authority Trading Company (LATCo) and to receive a future report outlining financing options and detailed governance arrangements. The current report addressed these issues and recommended appropriate actions. Structure and governance arrangements had been developed by legal firm Bevan Brittan, in consultation with the Recycling and Waste Portfolio Holder Group and Officers. Options for the funding mechanism had been assessed and a flexible loan arrangement had been identified as the preferred option.

The Chair and Cabinet thanked and paid tribute to the Portfolio Holder Group for their service and Andrew Hancock, Dave Roberston and Mark Barrow for their hard work over a long time to get to this position in the creation of the LATCo.

RECOMMENDED to Council to:

1. a. Approve of the updated Business Case at Appendix E
- b. Approve of a loan of no more than £2.8 million to the LATCo

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

2. Subject to 1 above that Cabinet approve the following recommendations: -
 - a. To continue to progress the creation of a LATCo to take over provision of recycling & waste kerbside collections and associated services from 1st July 2026
 - b. That operational activities of the LATCo are funded through a revolving credit facility with the Council which includes the potential for security.
 - c. That delegated authority is granted to the Director of Place in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and Portfolio Holders for Finance and Environment Operations to make suitable arrangements and to enter into a formal loan agreement with the LATCo.
 - d. That the maximum value of the loan agreement is no more than £2.8 million and that the Shareholder Committee receives a regular report on the status of the loan, to be provided by the LATCo Company Board.
3. That a Cabinet Sub-Committee is formed immediately to undertake the Council's role as owner of the LATCo, being the Shareholder Committee, following structure outlined in this report and the recommendations agreed within the Structure and Governance proposal agreed by Cabinet in July 2025.
4. That Bevan Brittan are instructed to produce the following documents for approval by the Shareholder Committee
 - a. Articles of Association
 - b. Shareholder Agreement
 - c. Governance arrangements for the structure of the Company Board
 - d. Terms of Reference for the Company Board
 - e. Advice on the necessary actions to ensure compliance with Subsidy Control legal requirements including a submission to the UK Subsidy Register.
5. That Bevan Brittan are instructed to develop changes to the Council's Constitution to set out
 - a. The scope, powers and limitations of the Shareholder Committee, reflecting principles agreed by Cabinet in July.
 - b. The purpose, scope and limitations of the Recycling and Waste Partnership Board, following the recommendations within this report.
6.
 - a. delegates responsibility to the Chief Executive to appoint two to three staff to act as temporary Company Directors during the formation stage of the Company, until the selection process for Non-Executive Directors is completed and,
 - b. also delegates all future Company Board appointments and dismissals to the Shareholder Committee.
7. That the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and where necessary the appropriate Directors and Portfolio Holders, ensures effective ongoing oversight of the development of the LATCo and prior to the appointment of company managing director makes any required subsequent changes to the structure and development of the LATCo and appointment of its employees, to ensure that the establishment of the LATCo proceeds and meets the required key milestones and timelines.

REASON:

To enable the legal and effective establishment of the LATCo to be ready to take over provision of recycling & waste kerbside collections and associated services from 1st July 2026. Items in the report would ensure effective and complaint governance and financial arrangements such that the company can operate.

82 **Delivery Vehicle for Marlcombe**

The Portfolio Holder Place, Infrastructure & Strategic Planning introduced the report stating it was part of a large and complicated jigsaw that, when assembled in the right order, would in the coming years complete the picture of a vibrant, sustainable, well-supported community called Marlcombe. The Strategic Planning Committee had received and agreed a masterplan and transport vision for Marlcombe. Those papers set out a high-level spatial framework for exactly what, and where, was to come forward at Marlcombe – in terms of employment space and physical and social infrastructure like roads, schools, healthcare facilities, and wastewater treatment plants, as well as homes. The Cabinet report presented detailed how the council was going to make sure that its vision was made reality down the line.

The Director of Place presented the Strategic Outline Business Case for the establishment of a delivery vehicle for the Marlcombe new community. The delivery of a new town was a complex, long-term endeavour that necessarily involved multiple different stakeholders. A key learning point from Cranbrook was the need to establish a dedicated delivery vehicle from the outset to provide the necessary focus and resources to realise the ambitious vision for a place, including integrating both physical and social development. He thanked Cabinet and the Portfolio Holder Place, Infrastructure & Strategic for their support and leadership throughout this process.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Supports the Executive Summary of the Strategic Outline Business Case for the establishment of a delivery vehicle for the Marlcombe new community.
2. Receives a further report setting out the full Strategic Outline Business Case.
3. Receives subsequent reports regarding:
 - a. the terms of reference for an interim vehicle, and
 - b. the full business case for a delivery vehicle for the integrated proposal including the Cranbrook expansion and Enterprise Zone areas.

RECOMMENDED to Council:

4. That a budget of £350k 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.

REASON:

To support the future establishment of a delivery vehicle that was capable to ensuring that the vision for Marlcombe was translated into practical delivery on the ground.

83 **Financial Strategy 2026 Onwards 2026 – 2036**

The Portfolio Holder Finance stated the real financial challenges ahead, not least from the Fairer Funding Review and the uncertainty around local government reorganisation. He said that responsibility now was to ensure EDDC continued to make sound and responsible financial decisions in the best interests of its residents. The next steps would see the Senior Leadership Team bringing forward proposals to meet a stretch target of £1.5 million in savings or additional income over the next two years. These proposals would then be considered by members through the usual budget-setting process, helping shape a balanced draft budget for everyone's consideration. At the same time, Members would be reviewing the capital programme to make sure it was realistic and deliverable, with a focus on those legacy projects they wished to leave in place for the district.

The Director of Finance went on to present the Financial Strategy which was updated and presented annually. It includes a ten-year Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which looked ahead over that period to give a projection of our financial position with actions needed to ensure financial sustainability and the ability to set annually balanced budgets.

At this time the landscape was remarkably different, the Fairer Funding Review (FFR) brought significant funding reductions from 2026/27 and there was also Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). On the current timelines this gave the council only two more years of setting budgets before a successor authority was in place.

Although modelling had been undertaken under the normal premise of ten years, this Strategy's focus was dealing with the next two years of still being a Council with the effects of significant funding reductions from the FFR. The Strategy recorded and considered the funding of the key legacy projects the Council wanted to deliver in its remaining time.

The Deputy Leader paid tribute to Simon Davey, Director of Finance for being prudent in the past that has allowed for this financial position that was being presented to Cabinet. He stressed the need to be responsible with public money and for balanced accounts, for maximum retention of services and minimise putting up fees and charges for EDDC's residents.

RECOMMENDED to Council:

To consider the draft Financial Strategy 2026 Onwards (2026 – 2036) and to recommend to Council its adoption and direction outlined in balancing future budgets.

REASON:

It was essential the Council considered its financial resources in advance to allow time to make necessary amendments in its service provision to ensure balance budgets were maintained.

84 **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 - Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

That under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting as exempt information, of the description set out on the agenda, is likely to be disclosed and on balance the public interest is in discussing this item in private session (Part B).

85 **Recycling & Waste LATCo governance and financial proposal - further detail**

RESOLVED that Cabinet agreed the recommendations as set out in the report and recorded at Minute 81.

Attendance List

Present:

Portfolio Holders

P Arnott	Leader of the Council
S Hawkins	Portfolio Holder Finance
P Hayward	Portfolio Holder Assets and Economy
S Jackson	Portfolio Holder Communications and Democracy
G Jung	Portfolio Holder Environment - Operations
D Ledger	Portfolio Holder Sustainable Homes & Communities
J Loudoun	Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder Corporate, Council & External Engagement
T Olive	Portfolio Holder Place, Infrastructure & Strategic Planning
R Jefferies	Portfolio Holder Environment - Nature & Climate

Cabinet apologies:

N Hookway	Portfolio Holder Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

Also present (for some or all the meeting)

Councillor Aurora Bailey
Councillor Brian Bailey
Councillor Ian Barlow
Councillor Kevin Blakey
Councillor Kim Bloxham
Councillor Roy Collins
Councillor Paula Fernley
Councillor Mike Goodman

Also present:

Officers:

Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)
Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer
David Robertson, Project Manager Recycling and Waste
Mark Barrow, Interim Director Place
Tim Child, Assistant Director Place, Assets & Commercialisation
Simon Davey, Director of Finance
Ed Freeman, Assistant Director Planning Strategy and Development Management
Andrew Hancock, Assistant Director StreetScene
Simon Phillips, Director of CBRE
Chris Knott, CBRE

Chair

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Housing Review Board held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton, EX14 1EJ on 31 July 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.10 am and ended at 3.00 pm

51 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2025 were agreed.

52 Declarations of interest

Declarations of interest.

Councillor Sarah Chamberlain, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Employed by Exeter City Council in the housing department.

Declarations of interest.

Councillor Steve Gazzard, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Tenant of East Devon District Council.

69. Build and Buy Plan: Acquisitions and preliminary site-specific proposals.

Councillor Steve Gazzard, Affects Non-registerable Interest, some of the development sites were within his ward and the adjacent ward.

53 Public speaking

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

Councillor Dan Ledger, Portfolio Holder Sustainable Homes and Communities informed those present that following a 12-week inspection with the Regulator for Social Housing, the Council had received a C2 judgement. He explained the judgement grading and that the C2 judgement acknowledged several key areas of strength and the good experience that was being delivered to tenants. The feedback identified some work was needed to improve and enhance in some areas, but this was already planned for, with action plans in place for the coming year. Only 21 local authorities had been awarded the C2 so far, and only 3 awarded C1.

The housing team had shown dedication, commitment and drive to make significant changes across all teams to improve service delivery and the customer experience. The Portfolio Holder thanked the housing team and the wider teams at East Devon District Council as well as members of the Housing Review Board for their support, and positive approach to achieving such a great outcome.

54 Matters of urgency

There were none.

55 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There was one confidential/exempt item.

56 **Housing Review Board forward plan**

The Assistant Director – Housing Regulated Services presented the forward plan and advised members that the forward plan acted as a reminder of agenda items to come forward to future meetings. The forward plan had been derived from previous meetings and requests, as well as the housing service plan. Service managers were currently reviewing realistic time frames against each topic. Members were reminded that they could add further reports and topics for discussion to the next forward plan by either informing herself or the Democratic Services Officer.

Following on from his motion to Council in July, ‘Communication Workers Union – design and positioning of letterboxes’, Councillor Faithfull requested that the housing service actively support the work of the Communication Workers Union in relation to the design and positioning of letterboxes in relation to new and replacement doors on Council properties. He also asked for consideration to be given to the time that trade buttons to flats turned off. The Assistant Director – Housing (Regulatory Services) agreed to discuss this further with the housing teams.

Following on from a recent successful training session, members of the Housing Review Board requested that additional training sessions be arranged, particularly in relation to housing finances and the Housing Revenue Account.

57 **Housing staffing update**

The Assistant Director – Housing (Regulated Services)’s report provided the Board with key staffing updates on the housing service.

The Corporate Lead for Housing Property and Assets was in post and recruitment was moving forward with recruitment in other critical roles within the Property and Assets teams. Recruitment was live and ongoing and included:

- Compliance Manager
- Repairs Service Manager
- Senior Surveyor
- Heating Compliance Surveyor
- Maintenance and Planned Works Surveyors

These roles would bring further resource and resilience into the housing property and assets team and would ensure manageable scope and areas of responsibilities. They would support the Council in effective oversight and management of risk and health and safety and would increase the services’ ability to respond quicker to requests for surveyor visits and inspections.

It was noted that the interim Repairs Service Manager had left EDDC in June and the Assistant Director – Housing (Regulatory Services) acknowledged his work and thanked him for his time and commitment to EDDC. There were currently no agency staff being employed by the housing service.

Additional resource was also being brought in to support with housing-related complaints, with a full time Housing Performance Lead post beginning on 4 August 2025. In response to a question, it was reported that all complaints were initially administered by the corporate complaints team, but were then reviewed and investigated by the relevant teams across the Council

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

58 **Finance report**

The Housing Review Board considered the report of the HRA Accountant, which set out the revenue budget and capital outturn positions at the end of the financial year 2024/25 and provided a summary of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) financial position for quarter 1 2025/26. The HRA was a ring-fenced account for providing Council housing and associated services.

The revised Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget approved by Council (July 2024) agreed the use of the HRA Balance up to £1.750m in year, with the acceptance this would take the HRA Balance below its minimum adopted level of £2.1m to £1.350m, to be replenished in future years. Expenditure was being maintained within this parameter with ongoing analysis on future spending plans and projections to gain assurance on this position to financial year end. The year end outturn on the Housing Revenue Account was per the final agreed adjusted budget, resulting in a deficit of £1.336m, reducing the HRA Balance to £1.764m.

The review of the year to date figures up to the end of quarter 1 for the Housing Revenue Account showed that it was trending materially in line with the budget profile up to that point in the financial year. Therefore, there were no material revenue items or concerns to bring to the attention of members. As was normal at that point in the financial year, housing capital spend was low, as the procurement of contracts and assessment of required major works got underway.

The team were congratulated on the 2024/25 outturn position, regaining control and on achieving a budgeted that was better than that re-budgeted for.

The accountant advised the Board that he would arrange a training session for members on HRA finances in due course. A request was made for the finance report to be shown on the monitors in the Council Chamber in future.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that Cabinet considers and notes the outturn position for 2024/25 including the implications and proposals relating to the balances and reserves held by the Council.
2. that Cabinet notes the year-to-date Housing Revenue Account position for quarter 1 2025/26.

59 **Review of Anti Social Behaviour Policy**

The Housing Review Board were asked to approve the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, which had recently been reviewed. The management of anti-social behaviour (ASB) was covered under legislation and the Housing Act, as well as being a moral duty of the housing service to support tenants with their right to the peaceful enjoyment of their homes. It was important to have a policy which outlined how reports of ASB were managed, how tenants were supported to resolve disputes and how the council worked in partnership across the district to not only support its tenants, but also the wider community.

It was noted that the proposed policy had been out to consultation, which included three ASB focus groups, the Tenant Scrutiny Panel and a common place survey.

Once approved, a communications plan would be drafted and implemented to ensure the policy, and a key summary of it, was clearly communicated to tenants - balancing both the need to make tenants aware of their responsibilities, alongside what they could expect from the council as their landlord and clarity around definitions of anti-social behaviour.

A request was made for ward members to be informed at the initial stages when an ASB complaint was received. The Director for Housing and Health explained that she was conscious of the officer time and resource that this would involve, but that she would discuss it with the relevant teams. The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes and Communities reminded councillors of their strategic role and that officers' role was operational. Councillors would be informed if the ASB complaint was escalated. It was noted that EDDC had a community safety team who dealt with non-EDDC housing ASB claims.

RECOMMENDED: that Cabinet approve the updated Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

60 **Review of Electrical Safety Policy**

The Corporate Lead for Housing Property and Assets' report outlined the updates and changes made to the Housing Directorate's Electrical Safety Policy. The changes were in response to changes in legislation and ensured a full and robust policy was in place. The main body of the policy was approved by the Housing Review Board in 2023 and was due for a full review in September 2026.

A request was made to clarify in the policy the portable appliance testing of electrical items, whether this related to tenants' own electrical items or those supplied by EDDC. The Director of Housing and Health advised that this would be added to and clarified in the Electrical Safety Policy.

RECOMMENDED: that Cabinet approve the updates and amendments to the Electrical Safety Policy for Housing, including the clarification of portable appliance testing.

61 **Review of Housing Repairs Policy & Awaab's Law**

The Corporate Lead for Property and Assets' report presented a proposed Repair Policy that would replace the existing April 2021 Repairs Policy and the existing Damp and Mould Policy. The current policy was out of date and the introduction of Awaab's law from 27 October 2025 would require a high risk-based approach to repair, which defined timescales for responding to and completing the highest risk repairs. Compliance with the new law would require a fundamental change in the approach to how repairs were managed and the performance tracked, and would have a significant impact. The proposed policy aligned with the new requirements from Awaab's law and other related legislation.

It was noted that there were significant risks associated with the policy that would be managed as best as possible. The cost of the policy requirements was a risk and was dependant on the capital programme. Many of the issues and problems were historic and reflected the age of the Council's properties. In response to a question about disposals it was reported that a key factor was that the Council could not leave a tenant in an unfit property, however it was obligated to do works on a secure tenancy if the tenant did not want to move.

Members welcomed the policy and congratulated officers for their prompt response to the Awaab's Law requirements. They agreed that it was important to set realistic expectations and timings and communicate these to tenants. It was requested that garden maintenance be included in the policy.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that Cabinet approve the proposed Repairs Policy.
2. that Cabinet note that some final amendments may be made following further feedback from tenant scrutiny and stakeholders. The policy would be brought back to the Housing Review Board should any material changes be required.

62 **Review of Radon Policy**

The Compliance Surveyor's report presented a proposed Radon Policy for Housing to meet East Devon District Council's regulatory compliance and health and safety obligations. The proposed policy aligned with the Housing Act 2004 and other related legislation, ensuring legal compliance and that the Council's tenants would be provided with a healthy and safe home to live in as well as a safe environment for employees and contractors to work in.

The Corporate Lead for Housing Property and Assets explained to the Board that tenants were at the centre of the policy and confirmed that radon testing had been budgeted for.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that Cabinet approve the proposed Radon Policy.
2. that Cabinet note that some final amendments may be made following further feedback from tenant scrutiny and stakeholders (with a commitment to bring the policy back to the Housing Review Board should any material amendments be required).

63 **Quarterly performance report - Quarter 1 Tenancy Services**

The Housing Review Board were presented with key performance indicators (KPIs) for quarter 1 of 2025/26 for tenancy services. The Tenancy Services Manager (Regulated Services) gave a presentation which summarised performance actions being taken to improve performance in rentals, estate management and sheltered housing functions within tenancy services.

Some of the areas highlighted were:

- 98.93% rental income collected.
- Rent arrears of 1.34% (high performance and within top quartile).
- Reduction in number of ASB cases reported (although there were 43 open ASB cases).
- Estate inspections and tenancy visits.
- Communities team:
 - 8 Community Hubs per week.
 - 1603 attended in quarter 1.
 - Garden competition.
 - Resident Connect Festival.
 - Community Initiative Fun.

The Tenancy Services Manager and teams were thanked for all their hard work and excellent progress with performance. All of the KPIs were going in the right direction, with exceptional performance in some areas. It was hoped that tenants were seeing improvements on the ground. It was suggested that a positive communications piece be published on this.

64 **Quarterly performance report - Quarter 1 Property & Assets**

The Housing Review Board were presented with key performance indicators (KPIs) for quarter 1 of 2025/26 for property and assets. The Corporate Lead for Property and Assets gave a presentation which summarised performance actions being taken to improve performance in repairs, compliance and planned works functions within property and assets.

Quarter 1 performance headlines were:

- Progress was being made in filling the existing vacancies and right sizing the team for the current and future needs.
- Repairs: Calls and jobs were trending down and percentage of repairs completed within the target timescales was increasing (this was expected to increase with the introduction of the new repairs policy). Reporting alignment between systems was improving.
- There was a significant maintenance survey backlog due to resources constraints. This was leading to additional complaints, disrepair and Ombudsman cases. A new process for tracking and prioritising survey requests had been established.
- Average days to relet a property had stabilised due to void resources focusing on disrepair and extending the life of assets where possible.
- Outstanding compliance remedial works was decreasing, and new contracts were required to complete all the remedial works.
- The requirement for planned works was increasing as the service moved to a 'Whole Property' approach to the delivery of planned works. This would reduce repair costs and minimise disruption for customers. The resource constraints were reflective in the statistics.

The Corporate Lead for Property and Assets also gave some examples of void life extension works, successful planned works, and a case study which established a model for how planned works would be delivered, particularly with regards to tenant engagement.

The Director for Housing and Health thanked the officers for all their hard work. Performance was moving in the right direction and it had been an incredible journey over the last 12 months. She commended all the managers and staff teams working tirelessly to turn performance around. She also commented on the incredible performance in relation to the outturn budget and how the budget was being managed and attributed this to the hard work and judgement of housing teams and finance colleagues. The regulatory judgement of C2 position was fantastic and this was reflected in the tenant satisfaction measure (TSM) improvements.

The Director for Housing and Health went on to thank the Housing Review Board as a committee for all its support. It had scrutinised well, challenged where it was needed and asked officers to take on certain pieces of work and asked them to demonstrate ambition. The HRB had been a great critical friend.

65 **Stock condition survey report**

The Assistant Director of Programmes, Investment and Development's report presented the findings of the comprehensive stock condition survey undertaken by Currie & Brown on behalf of East Devon District Council (EDDC).

The programme surveyed 3,554 residential properties (86%) and assessed an additional 588 properties on a desktop basis. In total, 4,522 assets were surveyed, including community centres and garages. The purpose of the survey was to support strategic asset management, guide future investment planning, ensure continued compliance with the Decent Homes Standard and identify any health and safety risks under the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS). The key outcomes were contained in the report and noted by the Board:

- Decent Homes compliance.
- Damp issues
- Housing, Health and Safety Rating System.
- Community centres.
- Sewerage treatment plants.
- 30-year investment forecast.

The stock condition survey results demonstrated that East Devon District Council's housing stock was largely compliant and fundamentally sound, but required priority investment in some areas as well as long-term strategic investment. This investment, which would be set out in a 30 year Business Plan. It would need to be targeted and sustained to avoid asset degradation and future compliance failures which would impact tenant wellbeing, service delivery and long-term sustainability. The results of the stock condition survey would be used to inform the Asset Management Strategy.

RECOMMENDED: that Cabinet note the results of the stock condition survey.

66

Housing Revenue Account Business Plan update report

The Assistant Director – Programmes, Investment and Development's report provided the Housing Review Board with an update on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan and associated strategic documents that underpinned the effective management and investment in East Devon District Council's housing stock to ensure the housing service remained financially viable, sustainable and responsive to tenants' needs. The HRA Business Plan would provide the overall financial framework for the HRA.

The HRA continued to face significant financial pressure in the immediate and longer term. These pressures arose from a range of factors including an historic underinvestment, increased consumer and regulatory standards, general inflation, restricted rent increases, net zero expectations, disrepair claims, complaint resolution, high void and decant costs and other issues. The situation was not unique to East Devon with similar cost pressures being seen amongst other housing providers and stock holding local authorities.

The 2023/24 HRA budget outturn and capital spend far exceeded the planned budget, necessitating the contribution of all HRA earmarked revenue reserves and required £2.5m additional borrowing. The HRA adopted balance reserve was also reduced. A revised budget for 2024/25 was approved by Council in July 2024. Improved budget management, monitoring and controls meant the 2024/25 budget outturn was within budget at year end. This represented a significant improvement on the previous year and reflected significant improvements in financial planning and management of the HRA.

The previous HRA Business Plan had expired and needed updating to reflect current circumstances and the future investment needs of the stock. The purpose of a Business

Plan was to ensure long term financial sustainability over a 30-year period and ensure sufficient resources were available for the management, maintenance, repair and improvement of the stock. Business Plans should also consider maintaining stock levels through acquisitions, development and estate regeneration. The HRA Business Plan looked at development and stock regeneration, as well as considering land and assets that were underutilised. The key element was how this was balanced with investment in existing stock. The conclusion was that any development would need to pay for itself.

In order to support the required level of borrowing for stock maintenance and investment the HRA needed to reduce the revenue expenditure by 15% (£2.6m) in order to retain debt within a manageable capacity. Whilst achievable, the scale of reduction was significant and highly challenging. It was therefore essential that an Efficiency Plan was established to achieve a long-term sustainable position. An ongoing internal review had identified a number of opportunities for improved efficiency and cost reductions. Any savings or efficiencies would be based on the key principle of finding alternative approaches to service delivery to ensure the quality of tenant services were maintained or improved. Other elements of the Efficiency Plan included income maximisation and effective asset management to boost income and tackle poor asset performance.

The report outlined that a formal Business Plan would be published later in the current financial year with formal adoption to align with the 2026/27 budget. The plan would set the financial framework for budget setting and capital investment over the medium term. The Asset Management Strategy would be completed and presented prior to the start of the 2026/27 financial year.

It was noted that a stock transfer was not a viable option at this point in time so had been discounted as an option.

There were a number of assumptions in the Business Plan, which was a long term forecast. There were a number of variables and it was important to review the Business Plan on an annual basis. Assuming the efficiencies and reductions outlined in the report were delivered, modelling suggested a sustainable position was achievable within the overall plan period.

RECOMMENDED: that Cabinet note the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan position and required efficiency savings.

67 **Build & Buy - A housing investment and delivery plan for East Devon**

The Assistant Director for Programmes, Investment and Development's report provided an overview and introduction to Build and Buy, a housing investment and delivery plan for East Devon. The report was in response to a growing housing need and feedback from the Housing Strategy consultation to increase the supply of affordable homes for residents in East Devon and contribute to the wider housing and community objectives, including estate regeneration.

The purpose of the Build and Buy Plan was to maximise the use of the Council's assets, address housing need and support the Council's strategic objective of having a supported and engaged community that had the right homes in the right places with the appropriate infrastructure. The Plan aimed to deliver an aspirational target of 500 homes over the next five years, with an equal split between homes built on Council owned land and homes acquired through partnerships with private developers. This mixed delivery

approach was intended to accelerate housing supply, make efficient use of public assets, and ensure the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) had a range of housing stock to meet local needs. It was noted that the intention was that the majority of homes would be social rented rather than affordable rented. All would be funded through the HRA. A local authority development company was not being proposed.

Key considerations contained in the report were:

- Site development and feasibility.
- Construction type, procurement and delivery models.
- Housing mix and design standards.
- Community and stakeholder engagement.
- Risk assessment.
- Funding implications:
 - Capital investment.
 - Funding sources.
 - Revenue implications.
 - Governance.
- Communications and engagement strategy.
- Regular Portfolio Holder updates.
- Housing Review Board – routine reporting to provide oversight on delivery, risks and track performance against the plan proposals.
- Decision making and delegated authority.

Build and Buy – A Housing Investment and Delivery Plan for East Devon was a bold, ambitious and proactive response to the district's housing challenges. The Board noted that the development process could be lengthy and complex with the potential for lengthy delays, particularly at the planning and pre planning stage. Multiple external factors such as inflation, particularly on build costs and labour, could adversely affect development viability and necessitate a deviation from the plan target. As such, the hugely ambitious target of 500 homes over 5 years should be seen as an aspirational target.

The next steps included:

- Finalising site feasibility prioritisation and engagement plans.
- Establishing delivery partnerships and a pipeline of acquisitions.
- Regular progress reporting to Members, in addition to regular review to monitor delivery, risks, and financial performance.
- Seeking formal approval of the HRA Business Plan which would provide the strategic financial investment framework for financing the plan.

Concern was expressed over the resources that could be required to deliver such an ambitious plan. It was acknowledged that not all of the resource was currently available in-house and this would be built into the plan. It was currently a conceptual piece of work, with broad figures in principle. There would be precise costings and sustainability credentials on site specific schemes, which would be brought to the Board and considered on an individual basis.

The Board were pleased to see ambitions for the future and officers were thanked for presenting the build and buy plan.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that Cabinet recommend that Council endorse the Build and Buy Plan.
2. that Cabinet note that the financing of the Build and Buy Plan was subject to approval of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and the 2026/27 budget setting process in due course.

68 **Exclusion of the press and public**

RESOLVED: that under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting as exempt information, of the description set out in the agenda is likely to be disclosed and on balance the public interest is in discussing these items in private session (Part B).

69 **Build and Buy Plan: Acquisitions and preliminary site-specific proposals**

The Assistant Director for Programmes, Investment and Development and Development Surveyor's report set out the preliminary site-specific proposals to deliver circa 228 new affordable homes on six sites as part of the Build and Buy Plan, to maximise the use of the Council's Housing Revenue Account assets and deliver new affordable homes for the residents of East Devon. The report also recommended that work commence on establishing a programme of potential affordable housing acquisitions in line with the plan to deliver 500 new affordable homes over five years.

RECOMMENDED: that Cabinet:

1. note the proposed development sites; with further design feasibility and stakeholder engagement and consultation plans to be prepared.
2. approve that work to establish a pipeline of affordable housing acquisitions is commenced in line with the vision set out in the Build and Buy Plan.
3. approve that any capital and revenue expenditure above existing approved budgets be subject to the approval of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and budget setting process in 2026/27.
4. grant delegated authority to the Director of Housing and Health in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes and Communities to progress the RIBA stage 3 on sites 1-4 Honiton and RIBA stage 3 on sites 5 and 6 in Exmouth.

Attendance List

Board members present:

Wang Tian, Independent Community Representative
 Rosemary Dale, Tenant
 Rachel Browne, Tenant
 Councillor Christopher Burhop
 Councillor Sarah Chamberlain (Chair)
 Councillor Melanie Martin
 Councillor Simon Smith (Vice-Chair)
 Rob Robinson, Tenants
 Councillor Tim Dumper
 Councillor Helen Parr

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

J Heath
 S Jackson
 P Arnott
 I Barlow
 R Collins
 P Faithfull
 S Gazzard

M Goodman
P Hayward
N Hookway
G Jung
D Ledger
S Westerman

Officers in attendance:

Alethea Thompson, Democratic Services Officer
Giles Salter, Solicitor
Darren Hicks, Tenancy Services Manager (Regulated Services)
Tom Butcher, Development Surveyor
Will Dommett, District Ecologist
Tracy Hendren, Chief Executive
Andrew King, Assistant Director for Housing (Regulated Services)
Nathan Muggeridge, Corporate Lead for Housing Property and Assets
Liam Reading, Assistant Director - Housing Programmes, Investment and Development
Catrin Stark, Director of Housing and Health
John Taylor, Property and Asset Manager
Emma Congerton, Assistant Director Statutory Housing
Andrew Mitchell, Housing Solutions Service Manager
Rob Ward, Accountant

Councillor apologies:

Councillor Aurora Bailey
Sara Clarke, Independent Community Representative
Councillor Kim Bloxham

Chair

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Licensing and Enforcement Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 16 July 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.45 am

7 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 June 2025 were agreed and signed as a true record.

8 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

9 Public Speaking

Mr George Shorters, Chair of the East Devon Taxi Association addressed the Committee and noted that the latest inflation figure stood at 3.6%. As all costs continued to rise, the Taxi Association requested an increase to the fare tariff.

Mr Shorters also noted that the Government was providing grants to encourage people to buy electric vehicles, and requested that EDDC also take this into consideration.

The Chair thanked Mr Shorters for his contribution.

The Licensing Officer read out a statement submitted by Sparky's Taxis. The business was a long-standing small business in Honiton which relied on local trade. As the cost of living crisis continued, any increase in the fare tariff would negatively impact vulnerable people. Any drop in local trade, and subsequent drop in income, would have a significant effect on the business. This would also impact other local businesses which Sparky's relied upon.

10 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

11 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There were no confidential or exempt items.

12 Taxi Report - Proposed maximum table of fares report

With the agreement of the Committee, the Chair advised that this item would be moved up the agenda to enable the seven members of the taxi trade present to leave once the report had been considered.

The Licensing Officer, Emily Westlake, presented the report which asked the Committee to consider whether an increase to the East Devon hackney carriage fare tariff was necessary at this time. If a fare increase was considered appropriate, the Committee

were asked to indicate their preferred option from the revised fare tariff tables set out at Appendix F to the report, and authorise the publication of a public notice setting out the proposed fare tariff in a local newspaper and at the Council Offices in line with the powers conferred by Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

The Chair thanked the Licensing Officer for the considerable amount of work which had been undertaken to produce the report.

Responses to questions from Councillors and discussion included the following points:

- A small increase in the fare tariff would be preferable as there was a need to strike a balance;
- The Licensing Officer had consulted with the meter fitters who had advised that moving to calculating fares on a yardage basis would present no problem with re-calibrating meters going forwards, if the Committee was minded to agree that option;
- Meters must be re-calibrated by approved meter fitters, of which there were two for the District. Drivers had to pay a charge of approximately £25 and also take time out to travel out of the District which was a significant cost in terms of loss of working time;
- Regarding the option to charge less than the maximum agreed fares, it was noted that most drivers would generally charge the maximum fare and would not undercut other drivers and companies in the area;
- In response to a question regarding increasing the number of meter fitters in the area, the Licensing Officer would continue to pursue this. The Chair would be happy to add support by way of a letter if appropriate;
- The Licensing Officer would also continue to ask meter fitters to attend locations in East Devon to reduce the distance taxi drivers had to travel to have meters re-calibrated;
- The previous survey on the Guildford method of calculating fare tariffs had not yet been re-started. Licensing Officers continued to try to collate the necessary information themselves;
- It was noted that whichever system for calculating the fare tariff was used, within the taxi trade the members held differing views, depending on their own circumstances, as to whether the fares should be increased or not at the current time;
- Regarding the low response to the recent Guildford method consultation, it was noted that drivers did not trust that any information they provided would only be used for the purpose of introducing the method, despite assurances from Licensing Officers that this would be the case;
- Concern was raised that even a small increase in the current fare tariff would have a detrimental effect on customers and that this would then have a negative impact on the taxi trade;
- Should the Council move towards a policy of the taxi trade using only electric vehicles, the trade needed to be well supported at the present time to enable it to plan ahead for the cost of purchasing electric vehicles;

Having agreed that an increase to the fare tariff should be introduced, the Committee debated the appropriate level of the increase set out in the options shown in Appendix F to the report.

AGREED

1. That the Hackney Carriage fare tariff be increased as set out at version 3 of Appendix F of the report (increase of approximately 2% to all tariffs), and
2. That the requisite public notice of 14 days be given of the proposed increase as required by Section 65(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

The Licensing Officer, Lee Staples, presented the report which provided an update on activities of the Licensing Service under the Licensing Act 2003, Gambling Act 2005, taxi legislation and general licensing including street trading and pavement licensing.

It was noted that guidance from the Gambling Commission was still awaited as part of the current review of the Gambling Act 2005.

The Committee noted the report.

14 **Licensing Act 2003 - Statement of licensing policy, summary review and request to move to a consultation**

The Licensing Officer, Lee Staples, presented the report which sought approval to conduct a consultation for the summary review of the Licensing Act 2003 Statement of Licensing Policy.

It was noted that only limited changes to the Statement of Licensing Policy were being proposed and that the Council was required to hold a consultation.

AGREED

That approval be given to conduct a consultation for the summary review of the Licensing Act 2003 Statement of Licensing Policy.

15 **New draft pavement licence policy and request to move to a public consultation**

The Licensing Officer, Lee Staples, presented the report. District Councils were handed responsibility for the issuing of temporary 'fast track' pavement licences via the Business & Planning Act 2020 in August 2020, to streamline the process of obtaining a pavement licence and help businesses during the Covid pandemic. The temporary pavement licences were limited in duration to 30th September 2024, and as such the Government subsequently made amendments via the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act 2023 to make the provisions of the temporary pavement licence regime permanent. As a result of these legislative changes, licences previously issued by Devon County Council under the previous Highways Act 1980 regime will also now only be issued by district councils.

In order to promote consistency between local authorities across Devon and Cornwall a Draft Pavement Licensing Policy has been produced by the Devon Licensing Officers Group, with the view to this policy being adopted in each local authority area. The policy will ensure that the Council carries out its pavement licensing responsibilities in a fair, equitable and consistent manner.

The Committee was asked to consider a proposal to move to a public consultation on a draft pavement licensing policy.

Responses to questions and discussion included the following points:

- Pavement licences are available to view on the public register on the website;
- Councillors who had concerns regarding the operation and enforcement of current pavement licences were advised to take this up with Estates and Streetscene;
- It was noted that any member of the public could comment on the consultation. The Council did not need a specific level of response to proceed, but all responses received would be considered;

- Town and parish councils would be made aware of the consultation.

AGREED

That, having considered the draft Pavement Licensing Policy, a public consultation be held on the draft policy and that, following the public consultation, the draft policy document be returned to the Licensing & Enforcement Committee for further consideration.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

B Bailey
I Barlow
K Bloxham (Vice-Chair)
O Davey
T Dumper
P Fernley
S Gazzard
T McCollum
M Rixson
S Westerman
J Whibley (Chair)

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

R Collins

Officers in attendance:

Matthew Blythe, Assistant Director Environmental Health
Sarah Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer
Giles Salter, Solicitor
Lee Staples, Licensing Officer
Emily Westlake, Licensing Officer

Councillor apologies:

M Chapman
Y Levine

Chair

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Licensing and Enforcement Sub Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 30 July 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 9.33 am and ended at 11.11 am

8 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 June 2025 were agreed and signed as a true record.

9 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

10 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

11 Confidential/exempt items

There were no confidential or exempt items.

12 Application for a REVIEW of a Premises Licence under Section 51 of the Licensing Act 2003 - The Anchor Inn, Old Fore Street, Sidmouth EX10 8LP

The meeting was a hearing under the Licensing Act 2003.

The Chair introduced the members of the Sub Committee and the Officers present.

The Sub Committee's Legal Advisor, Giles Salter, outlined the procedure for the meeting.

The Sub Committee considered the application from a member of the public for a review of the premises licence under Section 51 of the Licensing Act 2003 at The Anchor Inn, Old Fore Street, Sidmouth EX10 8LP.

The applicant for the review, present and entitled to make representations, was Mr Steven Chalkley. Mr Chalkley was accompanied by Mr Stephen Spencer.

Present and entitled to make representations was the premises licence holder Mr Trevor Fudge. Mr Fudge was accompanied by Ms Michelle Anning.

Also present and entitled to make representations was Ms Denise Thomas.

The Licensing Officer highlighted the following points in the report:

- With regard to the dray work, the premises licence holders had now agreed to move the barrels to an alternative location during Sidmouth Folk Week. The alternative location was at the furthest point from the applicant for the review's property;

- Section 1.10 of the report [page 8] read as follows: “restricting dray work in the vicinity of bordering properties, limiting this to between 18:00 – 21:00 daily.” This section should read: “dray work in the vicinity of bordering properties should be restricted from 6pm to 9am daily.”
- The premises licence holders had confirmed that the maximum capacity of the beer garden was 547 people, however, the premises operated on the maximum number of 500 people.

In response to questions from Members it was noted that any noise complaints would be dealt with by Environmental Health rather than Licensing. An unwritten noise management plan was in place for the premises under review and the Environmental Health Officer had discussed this with the premises licence holder. It was noted that there was no requirement to have a noise management policy in place. Two complaints had been received in the previous year, one of which was from the applicant for the review.

The applicant for the review, Mr Chalkley, made his case and advised the Sub Committee that he had lived at his property, which shared a boundary with The Anchor Inn, since 2006. The applicant noted that noise levels had increased over the years, and he had made a complaint in September 2023, to which the Environmental Health Officer had responded. The applicant for the review was of the opinion that EDDC had wrongly interpreted the recommended noise levels in the Noise Council Code of Practice. Local residents did not want to affect business at The Anchor Inn, but did want unnecessary noise levels to be lowered. A noise limit of 65 decibels would be acceptable to residents.

The Environmental Health Officer advised that the noise management plan set an external decibel level of 70. In response to a question from Members, the Environmental Health Officer advised that, in his view, residents would only just notice a reduction of 5 decibels. The smallest perceived reduction in decibels is 3db. When The Anchor Inn garden was full, it would be likely that noise from the public audience would exceed noise from music played outside. The presence of the public audience would also attenuate the noise levels from the music to some extent.

The applicant for the review confirmed that the windows of his property were kept shut at all times during Folk Week in order to keep out noise and requested that Noise Council guidelines be adhered to.

In response to a question from Members, the applicant advised that music during the evenings of Folk Week was heavy rock and disco and therefore differed from folk music played during daytimes.

The Folk Week 2025 music listings for The Anchor Inn were submitted to the Sub Committee with the agreement of those present.

The applicant for the review advised that he had known the area when he bought his property and he was asking for a reduction in noise levels.

There were no questions from the premises licence holder or the interested person for the applicant for the review.

The premises licence holder's case was put by Ms Anning who advised that every effort had been made to be neighbourly and that the premises licence holder was happy to negotiate. Consideration should also be given to the number of people enjoying themselves during Folk Week.

In response to questions from Members of the Sub Committee, it was confirmed that an in-house professional sound engineer was always present during events and had been in post for the past 14 years. The Anchor Inn did not use bands' own sound engineers. Noise levels for amplified music were controlled through a sound desk.

The Environmental Health Officer advised that noise levels were the same regardless of the genre of music played, although it was noted that there would be a wider range of frequencies associated with rock music.

Regarding the applicant for the review's request for a reduction in noise levels to 65 decibels, the premises licence holder would not find this acceptable unless it applied to the whole of Folk Week and was not limited just to The Anchor Inn.

As Folk Week was so busy, the premises licence holder advised that flexibility was needed as to when to undertake dray work. Removing this flexibility would incur additional costs for the business if conditions on the timing of dray work were imposed for the whole of the year.

The interested person put her case and advised that her property was in close proximity to The Anchor Inn garden. In her view, The Anchor Inn was a nice family pub which provided a variety of music entertainment. In contrast to the applicant for the review, the interested person had not found noise levels intolerable during the previous years' Folk Week and advised that she had been able to hear her television and conduct phone conversations without difficulty or interference from noise. It was important for residents to remain objective with regard to the one week per year when Folk Week could be difficult for some. Residents should not be stipulating terms of business for premises trying to make a living.

The interested person responded to questions from Members of the Sub Committee regarding the proximity of her property to The Anchor Inn.

In response to a question from the Sub Committee regarding possible conditions, the Legal Advisor advised that any conditions imposed on The Anchor Inn solely for Folk Week would be publicised and that this may then generate complaints about other venues from complainants seeking the same conditions.

With regard to the current guideline of 70 decibels for Folk Week, the Environmental Health Officer advised that noise levels would be monitored during the upcoming week in order to establish whether there was a basis for complaints. The applicant for the review invited the Environmental Health Officer to visit his premises during Folk Week.

The applicant for the review made his closing statement and advised that he had no issue with the running of The Anchor Inn. The offer to relocate the dray work during Folk Week was accepted with thanks. The applicant reiterated that he sought a reduction of agreed noise levels to 65 decibels during Folk Week.

The hearing was adjourned for a short time to enable the Sub Committee to obtain legal advice.

On the resumption of the meeting, the Legal Advisor advised that the Sub Committee was of the view that it would be appropriate to adjourn the decision until after Folk Week to enable Members to visit Folk Week and to allow time for the Environmental Health Officer to undertake noise monitoring during the daytime at The Anchor Inn.

The premises licence holder expressed concern that Members visiting the premises during Folk Week would add additional stress during an already busy week. The premises licence holder was of the view that monitoring noise levels was the responsibility of Environmental Health.

The Chair advised that the Sub Committee was happy to rely on the noise monitoring data collected by the Environmental Health Officer during Folk Week.

The hearing was adjourned to a date following receipt of the noise analysis to be undertaken by the Environmental Health Officer during Folk Week. All parties would be informed of the date on which the decision would be made.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

K Bloxham (Vice-Chair)
O Davey
J Whibley (Chair)

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

Y Levine

Officers in attendance:

Lesley Barber, Licensing Officer
Sarah Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer
Phillippa Norsworthy, Licensing Manager
Giles Salter, Solicitor
Zoe Jones, Licensing Officer
Ian Winter, Environmental Health Officer

Councillor apologies:

Chair

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Licensing and Enforcement Sub Committee held at Tale Room, Blackdown House, Honiton on 13 August 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 9.32 am and ended at 10.19 am

13 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

14 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

15 Confidential/exempt items

There were no confidential or exempt items.

16 Application for the grant of a premises licence under the Licensing Act 2003 - Poltimore House, Poltimore, Exeter, EX4 0AU

The meeting was a hearing under the Licensing Act 2003.

The Chair introduced the members of the Sub Committee and the Officers present.

The Sub Committee's Legal Advisor, Giles Salter, outlined the procedure for the meeting.

The Sub Committee considered the application for the grant of a new premises licence at Poltimore House, Poltimore, Exeter EX4 0AU.

The applicant (Poltimore House Trust), present and entitled to make representations, was represented by Dr Peter Totterdill. Dr Totterdill was accompanied by Rosemary Exton (Poltimore House Trustee) and Dave Lee (Designated Premises Supervisor).

The interested persons, present and entitled to make representations, were James Westoby and Susan Westoby.

The Licensing Manager summarised the application as set out in the report and highlighted that the Police, having raised a representation, had reached an agreed position with the applicant which was set out at Appendix G of the report.

Environmental Health had contacted the applicant during the consultation process and the applicant had then provided a noise management plan and an example of an event management plan, as shown as Appendix I of the report. On that basis, Environmental Health had not raised a representation.

Two representations had been received from local residents based on all four of the licensing objectives. Poltimore House Trust had attempted mediation with the objectors. A statement from the objectors had been received subsequent to the publication of the agenda papers and had been circulated to the Sub Committee in advance of the hearing.

In response to a question from the Sub Committee, it was confirmed that events at Poltimore House were currently regulated through temporary event notices.

There were no questions for the Licensing Manager from the applicant's representative or from the interested persons. It was noted that Poltimore House is a Grade II* listed building.

The applicant's representative made the case for the application and highlighted the following points:

- In recent years the Poltimore House Trustees Board had sought to develop a sustainable plan for the future and build a professional board of trustees with good governance structures;
- It was a priority to secure a sustainable income source for the trust;
- Demand for the café had exceeded expectations and the café had been established as a separate company, popular with both local people and tourists;
- Opportunities for local employment were being created;
- The purpose of the application was to enable the café and farm shop to sell alcohol during normal business hours and also during regular evening events held at both the café and the outdoor arena;
- Should the application be granted, this would replace the need to repeatedly apply for temporary event notices and enable the Board of Trustees to expand the current offer;
- The Board of Trustees had introduced an events management process in order to ensure that events operated in accordance with agreed criteria.

Responses to questions from the Sub Committee included the following points:

- Prior to the fire in 2024, events had been held in Poltimore House. Since then greater use had been made of the grounds and the café. Evening events included local bands, outdoor theatre, a local orchestra and craft fairs;
- The purpose of the application was to provide a comprehensive licence to remove the need to apply for repeated temporary event notices;
- Should the licence be granted, it was planned to serve upmarket bottled craft beers with the potential to move to serving the same from kegs;
- The ethos was to serve locally sourced produce;

There were no questions from the interested persons for the applicant's representative.

The interested persons made their case and highlighted the following objections to the application:

- Should the off sales licence be granted, this would result in people leaving the premises with alcohol which would increase rubbish in the local area;
- There was no pedestrian access on the road to Poltimore House;
- Noise travels and the late hours applied for were a cause for concern due to the impact on the interested persons whose property was in close proximity to the events arena and the café;
- An off sales licence may result in cheaper beer being sold in the future in order to increase revenue;
- There had never been any communication from the Trustees with the interested persons;
- The interested persons had previously tried to make contact during events using the telephone number provided on the Poltimore House website, however, the calls had not been answered;
- The interested persons had a right to enjoy their property.

In response to questions from the Sub Committee, the interested persons advised that they had no wish to involve the Police, but wanted to be able to contact someone should there be issues with noise levels.

The applicant's representative confirmed that a contact person was always available on site during opening hours and events.

The Legal Advisor advised the applicant's representative, and those accompanying him, to contact the East Devon District Council Environmental Health Officer for advice on how to set and measure noise levels at the perimeter of the premises. Noise levels could then be included in the noise management plan and would future proof events as the trustees and the type of events changed over time.

Those present were also advised that premises licences may be reviewed should any issues with noise arise. These should be reported to Environmental Health.

The interested persons confirmed that an end time of 11:00pm for events would be acceptable.

There were no further questions or statements.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and advised that the decision would be notified in writing to all parties within five working days.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

I Barlow
Y Levine
J Whibley (Chair)

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

T Dumper

Officers in attendance:

Sarah Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer
Phillippa Norsworthy, Licensing Manager
Giles Salter, Solicitor

Councillor apologies:

Chair

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Personnel Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 10 September 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.05 am and ended at 12.17 pm

1 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 15th April 2025 were confirmed as a true record.

2 Declarations of interest

None.

3 Public speaking

Two statements were read out on behalf of previously registered public speakers, who were now unable to attend in person.

Statement from Mr P Quantrill

"I request East Devon council to desist from any existing or further investments in LGPS Funds.

Israel is guilty of genocide in Gaza and has been for decades in Palestine.
Israel is guilty of Apartheid in Palestine and as with the South African government in the 90s, they should be made to realise the world will not stand by and let their actions continue.

Companies in our High Streets , such as Barclays Bank, McDonalds, Next, Starbucks, L'Oreal and many, many more are complicit in supporting and funding this Israeli government and their military campaigns in Gaza and large parts of Palestine.
Anything this council can do to stop the funding will hopefully bring peace to the people of Palestine."

Statement from Ms T Sanders:

"Palestinians are facing the most horrific violence imaginable right now.
It could not be more urgent that LGPS funds be divested- ensuring Public Services monies are not funnelled into companies which are enabling the Israeli Government's apartheid and genocide against Palestinians.
In this context there are clear legal duties not to be complicit in assisting these atrocities.
Many councils are listening and taking positive action to stop aiding Israel.
This council is NOT powerless, and it must end all financial ties linked to Israel."

The Chair responded as follows:

Thank you very much for your statements.

The Council's pension fund is managed by Devon Pension Fund and concerns should be raised with them directly.

We do, however, note the points that you have made this morning.

Cllr Wragg spoke of her experience as a County Councillor and that the County authority do take ethical concerns seriously.

4 **Matters of urgency**

None.

5 **Confidential/exempt item(s)**

None.

6 **Annual Health and Safety Report 2024/25 and Corporate Safety Workplan 2025/26**

The presented report set out the work undertaken by the Corporate Safety Team through the year, and the work plan for 2025/26.

The report covered:

- Accidents and incidents, broken down into type;
- Training undertaken by staff;
- Workplace inspections and audits;
- Tests, drills and evacuations
- Policies and reports;
- Ongoing work
- Work Programme for the coming year.

Discussion by the committee included:

- Welcoming the recording of near-miss events, which provided valuable information;
- Data available currently was difficult to break down into specific trends; the replacement of recording software would help provide better informed data, but it was stressed that any significant incidents were always followed up and learnt from;
- The culture of reporting was changing, following promotion of the reporting mechanisms;
- Whilst Councillors were not regarded as employees, advice was offered to them on a regular basis for their role;
- Tribute given to officers dealing with difficult role and the increase in verbal abuse from the public;
- Assessments were made of the council offices, and refined following review such as the recent evacuation practice of a full Council meeting. Councillors requiring assistance had already been identified and measures put in place to assist them in case of emergency;
- Councillors were encouraged to report any near-miss, accident or incident and the contact means for doing so would be circulated;
- The office temperature met with the statutory requirement; however personal comfort levels vary.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

The Chair thanked Matt and his officers for their work.

7 **People Data: Annual Report 2024/25**

The report set out statistics of the workforce for the 2024/25 period.

Headline Findings

- **Headcount:** 557 staff (↑1.08% / 6 FTE), still below budgeted 565.4 FTE.
- **Pay:** Most staff are in Grade 4 (£35–41k). Significant growth in Grade 6 roles (↑23%). Average pay £33,151 (slightly below national council average £34k).
- **Directorates:** Place is now the largest (44.34%) following service restructuring.
- **Salary Costs:** ↑10.56% this year (slower growth than last year's 14.8%).

Workforce Trends

- **Market Supplements:** Increased from 11 → 21, mainly to address Housing Surveyor shortages.
- **Travel Costs:** Down for the 4th year (↓8.16%).
- **Recruitment Costs:** ↑ to £2,232 per head due to executive recruitment. Excluding these, costs would have fallen. Benchmark = £3–5k per head.
- **Vacancy Rate:** 6.82% (better than 12% benchmark).
- **Turnover:**
 - Combined = 13.08% (↑ from 11.25%, but still below LGA benchmark 13.5%).
 - Voluntary = 10.93% (close to national 12%).
 - Highest voluntary turnover: Housing (16.9%) and Governance (16%).
 - Non-voluntary turnover steady at ~2%.

Learning & Development

- **Training:** 508 attendees (↑ from 483), feedback positive.
- **Apprenticeships:** ↑90.9% since 2022/23 (17 → 21). No levy funds lost for the first time (prev. losses £3.8k–£14.9k). EDDC exceeds typical council uptake.

Attendance & Absence

- **Average Days Lost:** 10.24 per FTE (slightly ↑ from 10.05).
 - Benchmark: 10.59 days (regional), 8.8 days (national LG average).
- **Absence Causes:** Stress, anxiety & fatigue = 27.9% of cases (highest in Health & Housing).
- **Absence Patterns:** Long-term ↓7.3%, but short-term ↑5.4% and medium-term ↑19.8%.

Workforce Profile

- **Age:** Average 49 (national council average 47).
- **Diversity:**
 - Ethnic minority staff = 3.24% (↑ from 1.6%, still well below national 16%).
 - Staff with disability = 5.94% (↑, slightly above council average 5%).
- **Gender:** 52.6% female / 47.4% male.

In summary the data is showing as a Council we are performing well against benchmarks. Notable positives include decrease in travel, for both cost and supporting our Climate Change Strategy, Learning and Development engagement and apprenticeships. Absence continues to be an area which requires further consideration and we need to continue to closely monitor the use of market supplements.

Discussion by the committee included:

- Seeking clarification on the number of posts not included in the report, due to being funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – in response, this information would be supplied to the councillor after the meeting;

- Salary overall cost had increased due to promotion and recruitment of an Assistant Director, not due to headcount;
- Committee were reminded of the work undertaken to help manage staff absence, including the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), policy and processes in place, and close working between the HR business managers and Manager to support a return to work;
- Grow Our Own work included links with Devon County Council, in relation to those with care experience, this helps engage both a diverse and younger workforce;
- Higher vacancies were seen in the Streetscene service, and workforce planning was taking place to help address the needs of the service;
- Impact of absence of staff on remaining team members was discussed and acknowledged.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

The Chair congratulated Gemma Roberts on her recent promotion to the role of Assistant Director for People and Performance.

8 **People Data: April - July 2025 quarterly report**

The report presented to committee for the period of April to July 2025 was considered.

Headcount has stabilised but dipped slightly from late 2024. Vacancy recording changes explain a sharp increase in reported vacancies, following alignment between HR and Finance records. Agency use has risen slightly due to seasonal demands. Absence rates were climbing, driven by stress-related factors which had become the leading cause of long-term absence. Wellbeing initiatives and the recent staff survey will be central to addressing these challenges, with HR business partners again working closely with Directors.

Discussion by the committee included:

- In response to benchmarking questions, whilst some benchmarking was done with a diverse range of organisations, the most comparable data was with other local authorities, especially neighbouring ones;
- In respect of marketing supplements, careful management of impact and an annual review is made when those are withdrawn. The review includes assessment of impact on service delivery;
- Streetscene have a seasonal demand for agency workers; other agency staff are often put in place to cover vacancies while awaiting recruitment for key service posts. Numbers relating to the planning service would be checked as requested, and supplied to the committee.

RESOLVED to note the report.

9 **Out of Hours Policy**

The Committee were asked to approve a new corporate policy on standby and call-out (“out of hours”) arrangements, following recommendations from the 2022 Reward Review and 2023 audit recommendations.

Issues identified with the existing policy were inconsistencies, and varying rates of pay for out of hours work. Cabinet received and considered the proposals on 4 June 2025.

In response to a question on mileage rates, claiming for travel was limited to the distance between the normal place of work (council offices) and the site, in line with existing policy and employment contracts. In more recent years, many out of hours issues could be managed remotely, therefore not requiring the office to travel.

RESOLVED that

1. The new Out of Hours Policy be approved;
2. That delegated authority be given to the Director of Governance and Portfolio Holder for Council and Corporate Co-ordination to agree any minor changes to the policy, following final comments from Unison.

10 **People Strategy**

The committee were previously informed of the development of a People Strategy at their meeting in April.

This document set out the components of the strategy for 2025 to 2028, setting out the ambitions that surrounded the One Team East Devon ethos:

- Connect: areas of focus on connecting to the One Team East Devon through shared values and behaviours; total reward package; recognition; and fostering a diverse and inclusive environment;
- Grow: focus on development of “Focusing on Great Managers” programme; Grow Our Own initiative; review current “We Grow” offer;
- Thrive: focus on Change and Resilience; developing a continuous feedback cycle; safe and supported team; “Happy, Healthy, Here” initiatives

The refreshed Behavioural Principles and new Management Commitments were also set out. The Strategy is planned to be launched in October.

Comments from the committee included:

- What was the cost of developing the strategy? In response, the committee were informed that this was part of the HR budget in terms of staff time, not an additional cost to the authority;
- Key refresh to help get the best from employees;
- Suggestion to include simplicity and accuracy in all communications; and to include accountability;
- Welcomed the approach, which was good practice elsewhere.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

11 **LGR and impact on staff**

The committee were reminded of the current timeline for devolution, with new arrangements set to go live on 1 April 2028. Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2026 (TUPE) would protect existing staff, automatically transferring employment to the new employer whilst maintaining the existing terms and conditions of employment. Pension rights were protected under separate legislative provisions.

Support is available to staff via the Council’s “Happy, Healthy, Here” scheme; and the pending People Strategy, soon to be in place, were hoped to help staff navigate their way through the transition period to the new employer.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

E Rylance (Chair)
J Loudoun (Vice-Chair)
T Dumper
P Hayward
Y Levine
E Wragg

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

I Barlow
R Collins

Officers in attendance:

Matthew Blythe, Assistant Director Environmental Health
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer
Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)
Gemma Roberts, Assistant Director for People and Performance

Councillor apologies:

P Arnott
A Bailey
B Bailey
K Blakey
J Brown
N Hookway

Chair

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Planning Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 15 July 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.09 am and ended at 5.57 pm. The meeting was adjourned for lunch at 1.50 pm and reconvened at 2.23 pm.

1 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Planning Committee held on 10 June 2025 were confirmed as a true record.

2 Declarations of interest

Minute 6. 25/0007/MOUT (Major) WOODBURY & LYMPSTONE.

In accordance with the Code of Good Practice for Councillor and Officers dealing with planning matters as set out in the Constitution, the Chair, Councillor Olly Davey, on behalf of the Committee advised lobbying in respect of this application.

Minute 6. 25/0007/MOUT (Major) WOODBURY & LYMPSTONE.

Councillor Ian Barlow, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Knows the owners of the neighbouring land.

Minute 8. 25/0711/FUL (Minor) BROADCLYST.

Councillor Kim Bloxham, Directly relates Non-registerable Interest, Known to the applicant.

Minute 8. 25/0711/FUL (Minor) BROADCLYST.

Councillor Sarah Chamberlain, Directly relates Non-registerable Interest, Known to the applicant.

Minute 8. 25/0711/FUL (Minor) BROADCLYST.

Councillor Olly Davey, Directly relates Non-registerable Interest, Close friend of the applicant.

Minute 9. 25/0724/LBC (Other) SIDMOUTH TOWN.

All Councillors declared an Affects Non-registerable Interest as they were known to the applicant.

Minute 10. 23/1480/MFUL (Major) EXMOUTH HALSDON.

In accordance with the Code of Good Practice for Councillor and Officers dealing with planning matters as set out in the Constitution, the Chair, Councillor Olly Davey, on behalf of the Committee advised lobbying in respect of this application.

Non-Committee Member

Minute 8. 25/0711/FUL (Minor) BROADCLYST.

Councillor Paula Fernley, Directly relates Non-registerable Interest, Known to the applicant.

3 Matters of urgency

There were no matters or urgency.

4 **Confidential/exempt item(s)**

There were no confidential or exempt items.

5 **Planning appeal statistics**

The Committee noted the appeal statistics report and noting that the appeal for application 24/1116/OUT – Sandy Way, Kerswell had been dismissed due to the unsustainable location and the appeal for 23/1785/FUL – The Old Reservoir, Ridgeway Lane, Colyton had been allowed as the Inspector considered that the proposal would not have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the area.

The Development Manager gave an update on two appeals that had been decided after the report had been published. The first appeal for application 24/0431/MOUT – land east of Colestocks Road, Feniton for 86 dwellings was upheld because it substantially boosts the supply of houses (including Affordable Housing), leads to a betterment relating to off-site flood risk and generates moderate economic benefits despite the Inspector finding that the application was contrary to the Spatial Strategy of the current Local Plan and, that it also failed the sequential test and causes harm due to the loss of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land (BMVAL). The second appeal for an outline application 23/1276/MOUT – land adjacent to Hillscresc, Awliscombe for 20 dwellings, a village hall and farm shop was dismissed as the Inspector determined that Awliscombe was not a sustainable location for development and the development would result in harm to the landscape.

6 **25/0007/MOUT (Major) WOODBURY & LYMPSTONE**

Appliant:

Eagle Investments (SW) Ltd.

Location:

Land NE of Kings Garden and Leisure, Hulham Road, Exmouth.

Proposal:

Outline application seeking approval for access only (with matters of layout, scale, appearance and landscaping reserved) for residential development comprising of up to 75 dwellings, the formation of vehicular and pedestrian access from the adjoining Goodmores development site, public open space and other associated infrastructure.

RESOLVED:

1. The Appropriate Assessment be adopted.
2. Approved with conditions as per officer recommendation subject to a Section 106 Agreement and subject to two further conditions as recommended by South West Water relating to water conservation and water supply.
3. Delegated authority to be given to the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Manager in consultation with the Chair and Ward Members to explore further with South West Water if there is adequate capacity at Maer Lane Pumping Station to cope with additional foul drainage and if not to agree a suitably worded Grampian condition.
4. Delegated authority to assess if the Police request for S106 contributions meets the necessary tests to be required within the S106 Agreement.

7 **24/2664/MFUL (Major) BROADCLYST**

Applicant:

N/A

Location:

Land north of Saundercroft Road, Broadclyst.

Proposal:

Construction of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated infrastructure.

RESOLVED:

Approved with conditions as per officer recommendation.

8 **25/0711/FUL (Minor) BROADCLYST**

Councillors Olly Davey, Sarah Chamberlain and Kim Bloxham left the chamber for the following application and did not take part in discussions or vote. Councillor Sarah Chamberlain left the meeting following this application. Non-Committee Member, Councillor Paula Fernley spoke as the Ward Member and then left the chamber.

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor Olly Davey and the Vice Chair, Councillor Sarah Chamberlain, the Committee agreed to Councillor Mike Howe as Chair for this planning application and to Councillor Eileen Wragg as being appointed as Vice Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

Applicant:

Mr Henry Gent (Mosshayne Farm Partnership)

Location:

Mosshayne Farm, West Clyst, EX1 3TR.

Proposal:

Siting of temporary rural workers dwelling (retrospective)

RESOLVED:

Refused as per officer recommendation.

9 **25/0724/LBC (Other) SIDMOUTH TOWN**

Applicant:

Cllr Mike Goodman.

Location:

Church Cottage, Church Lane, Sidmouth, EX10 8LG.

Proposal:

Retention of various works to include: lathe and plaster ceilings replastered; insulate ceilings; strip back partition walls to stud work and reinstate; install new partition walls; replace fireplace surround with lintel and fire in living room; replaster walls and ceilings; new vent in bathroom and install new cowl.

RESOLVED:

Approved with time condition and informative as per officer recommendation.

10 **23/1480/MFUL (Major) EXMOUTH HALSDON**

Applicant:

Mr Brendan Lee.

Location:

Warren View Sports Ground, Halsdon Avenue, Exmouth, EX8 3DH.

Proposal:

Construction of new boxing gym and community sport building with associated parking and landscaping.

RESOLVED:

Approved with conditions as per officer recommendation subject to an additional condition requiring details of ball catch netting.

11 **23/0511/MFUL (Major) CRANBROOK**

Applicant:

Halland Land Management Ltd.

Location:

Land to the south of Tillhouse Road, Cranbrook.

Proposal:

Full planning permission for residential development and associated roads, access, landscaping, infrastructure and engineering works (including ground modelling and utilities).

RESOLVED:

1. The Appropriate Assessment (as set out in Appendix 1) be adopted.
2. Approved with conditions as per officer recommendation subject to a S106 Agreement with final wording delegated to the Development Manager.

12 **25/0039/FUL (Minor) DUNKESWELL & OTTERHEAD**

Applicant:

Mr & Mrs Emma & Nigel Parris.

Location:

Land adjoining Stockland C of E Primary Academy, Stockland, EX14 9EF.

Proposal:

Proposal to reinstate historic barn with extension to form dwelling with associated works.

RESOLVED:

Refused as per officer recommendation.

13 **24/2290/FUL (Minor) NEWBRIDGES**

Applicant:

Will Hallett.

Location:

Land adjacent Grove Cottage, Shute.

Proposal:

Full planning application for the construction of dwelling, within existing walls and means of access and associated works.

RESOLVED:

1. The Appropriate Assessment be adopted.
2. Refused as per officer recommendation.

14 **25/0750/FUL (Minor) SEATON**

Applicant:

Mr Justin Werb.

Location:

Barnards, Harepath Hill, Seaton, EX12 2TF.

Proposal:

Construction of self build dwelling and associated works.

RESOLVED:

1. The Appropriate Assessment be adopted.
2. Approved with conditions as per officer recommendation.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

B Bailey
I Barlow
K Bloxham
C Brown
S Chamberlain (Vice-Chair)
M Chapman
B Collins
O Davey (Chair)
P Faithfull
S Gazzard
M Howe
S Hughes
Y Levine
S Smith
E Wragg

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

I Chubb
R Collins
T Dumper

P Fernley
G Jung
A Toye
D Wilson

Officers in attendance:

Wendy Harris, Democratic Services Officer
Damian Hunter, Planning Solicitor
Wendy Ormsby, Development Manager

Councillor apologies:

D Haggerty

Chairman

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Planning Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 19 August 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.10 am and ended at 3.30 pm. The meeting was adjourned for lunch at 12.45pm and reconvened at 2pm.

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor Olly Davey, the Vice Chair, Councillor Eileen Wragg chaired the meeting and the Committee agreed to Councillor Simon Smith being the Vice Chair for this meeting.

15 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Planning Committee held on 15 July 2025 were confirmed as a true record.

16 Declarations of interest

Minute 21. 24/0687/OUT (Minor) HONITON ST MICHAELS.

Councillor Kim Bloxham, Affects and prejudicial Non-registerable Interest, Known to one of the objectors speaking against the application.

Minute 24. 25/0063/MFUL (Major) BROADCLYST.

In accordance with the Code of Good Practice for Councillors and Officers dealing with planning matters as set out in the Constitution, the Chair, Councillor Eileen Wragg, on behalf of the Committee advised lobbying in respect of this application.

17 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

18 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There were no confidential or exempt items.

19 Planning appeal statistics

The Committee noted the appeal statistics report which detailed two appeals that had been discussed at the last meeting. One appeal was dismissed for application 23/1276/MOUT – land adjacent to Hillcrest, Awliscombe and the other had been allowed for application 24/0431/MOUT – land east of Colestocks Road, Feniton.

The Committee's attention was drawn to an appeal for application 23/1269/MFUL for the construction of 42 residential units at land at south of Meeting Lane, Lypmstone which had been allowed giving weight to the Council's lack of a five-year housing land supply.

The Development Manager gave an update on an appeal that had been decided after the report had been published. The Committee were advised that application 23/2612/OUT for the construction of five dwellings at land at Lower Broad Oak Road,

West Hill had been allowed drawing attention that this application would have some bearing for one of the applications on the agenda.

20 **25/0057/OUT (Minor) WEST HILL & AYLESBEARE**

Applicant:

Mr Paul Hunt.

Location:

Land adjoining West Hayes, Eastfield, West Hill, EX11 1GG.

Proposal:

Outline application for the erection of nine dwellings, including four affordable dwellings and associated parking. Approval sought for access, appearance, layout and scale (matters reserved: landscaping).

RESOLVED:

Deferred to allow the Council's ecologist to comment on ecological impacts.

21 **24/0687/OUT (Minor) HONITON ST MICHAELS**

Councillor Kim Bloxham left the chamber for the following application and did not take part in discussions or vote.

Applicant:

Yeo/Power Family c/o Mr Geoffrey Yeo.

Location:

Land at Beggars Lane, Honiton.

Proposal

Outline application (with all matters reserved apart from access) for the erection of up to six residential dwellings accessed from Beggars Lane and associated infrastructure on land to the north of Beggars Lane, Honiton.

RESOLVED:

Approved with conditions in accordance with per officer recommendation subject to an additional condition requiring details of a water conservation strategy to be submitted prior to the commencement of development to include water butts with capacity of 110 litres per bedroom.

22 **25/1026/FUL (Other) BROADCLYST**

Applicant:

Mrs Melissa Muir.

Location:

4 Endsleigh Crescent, Blackhorse, Broadclyst, EX5 2AW.

Proposal:

Part retrospective application for the replacement of a gazebo.

RESOLVED:

Approved with conditions as per officer recommendation subject to an additional condition restricting the use of the development to ancillary purposes only.

23 **25/1191/FUL (Other) BUDLEIGH & RALEIGH**

Applicant:

Mr Peter Fitzgerald.

Location:

7 Rolle Barton, Church Hill, Otterton, EX9 7HR.

Proposal:

A wooden garden shed to be erected in the back garden.

RESOLVED:

Approved with conditions as per officer recommendation.

24 **25/0063/MFUL (Major) BROADCLYST**

Applicant:

J Davis (BW ESS Development UK Ltd.)

Location:

Land at Exeter Substation, Broadclyst.

Proposal:

Proposed development of a battery energy storage unit (BESS) including ancillary works and access arrangements.

RESOLVED:

Approved with conditions as per officer recommendation subject to conditions as referenced in the officer update which are:

- Deletion of Condition 17.
- Insertion of revised condition on landscaping and revised condition on lighting.

25 **24/2226/FUL (Minor) DUNKESWELL & OTTERHEAD**

Applicant:

Nest Modern Homes Ltd.

Location:

Land at Weston Mews, Weston.

Proposal:

Construction of three dwellinghouses (two, two storey detached and one single storey detached).

RESOLVED:

Approved contrary to officer recommendation subject to conditions which are delegated to the Development Manager in consultation with the Chair and Ward Members.

Members considered that the site is sustainable as it has adequate access by walking and public transport to local services, facilities and amenities.

Attendance List

Councillors present (for some or all the meeting)

B Bailey
I Barlow
K Bloxham
C Brown
M Chapman
B Collins
P Faithfull
D Haggerty
S Hughes
Y Levine
S Smith
E Wragg (Vice-Chair)

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

J Bailey
R Collins

Officers in attendance (for some or all the meeting)

Charlie McCullough, Senior Development Control Officer
Wendy Ormsby, Development Manager
Damian Hunter, Planning Solicitor
Wendy Harris, Democratic Services Officer
Andrew Melhuish, Democratic Services Manager
Nigel Barrett, Senior Planning Officer
Jamie Quinton, Senior Planning Officer
Tina Song-Ashdown, Assistant Planning Officer

Councillor apologies:

S Chamberlain
O Davey
S Gazzard
M Howe

Chairman

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Planning Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 23 September 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.58 am

26 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Planning Committee held on 19 August 2025 were confirmed as a true record.

27 Declarations of interest

Minute 31. 22/2306/MRES & 22/2354/MFUL (Major) BROADCLYST.

In accordance with the Code of Good Practice for Councillors and Officers dealing with planning matters as set out in the Constitution, the Chair, Councillor Olly Davey, on behalf of the Committee, advised lobbying in respect of this application.

28 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

29 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There were no confidential or exempt items.

30 Planning appeal statistics

The Committee noted the appeal statistics report which detailed appeal decisions taken since the last Planning Committee.

31 22/2306/MRES & 22/2354/MFUL (Major) CRANBROOK

22/2306/MRES (Major) CRANBROOK

Applicant:

East Devon Community Partners

Location:

Land to the North of Tillhouse Road, Cranbrook

Proposal:

Application seeking approval of the reserved matters (access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) for the construction of 31 dwellings including affordable housing, parking, roads, footpaths, landscaping, open space, associated site infrastructure, and all other associated works (including ground modelling and utilities). This is a subsequent application in respect of outline permission 03/P1900 which was accompanied by an Environmental Statement and seeks the discharge of the relevant conditions of the outline permission (11, 22, 23, 28, 36 and 37).

RESOLVED:

Appropriate Assessment adopted.

Application approved in accordance with the officer recommendation subject to a Section 106 Agreement and an additional condition as follows:

Prior to commencement of the development details of a water conservation and efficiency strategy shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The strategy shall make provision for the use of water butts of a minimum capacity of 110 litres per bedroom where practical, and these shall be installed and brought into use prior to first occupation of the dwellinghouse to which they relate and thereafter maintained and retained.

And the deletion of condition 11.

22/2354/MFUL (Major) CRANBROOK

Applicant:

Persimmon Homes South West

Location:

Tillhouse Road, Cranbrook

Proposal:

Development of residential dwellings and associated car parking, roads, access, landscaping, infrastructure and engineering works (including ground modelling and utilities).

RESOLVED:

Appropriate Assessment adopted

Application approved in accordance with the officer recommendation subject to: a Section 106 Agreement and an additional condition as follows:

Prior to commencement of the development details of a water conservation and efficiency strategy shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The strategy shall make provision for the use of water butts of a minimum capacity of 110 litres per bedroom where practical, and these shall be installed and brought into use prior to first occupation of the dwellinghouse to which they relate and thereafter maintained and retained.

And the deletion of condition 13.

32 **23/0554/MFUL (Major) CRANBROOK**

Applicant:

Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd

Location:

Land Off Court Royal and Badger Way

Proposal:

Full planning permission for residential development and associated roads, access, landscaping, infrastructure and engineering works (including ground modelling and utilities).

RESOLVED:

Appropriate Assessment adopted.

Approved in accordance with officer recommendation subject to a Section 106 Agreement and an additional condition as follows:

Prior to commencement of the development details of a water conservation and efficiency strategy shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The strategy shall make provision for the use of water butts of a minimum capacity of 110 litres per bedroom and these shall be installed and brought into use prior to first occupation of the dwellinghouse to which they relate and thereafter maintained and retained.

33 25/0081/FUL (Other) NEWTON POPPLEFORD & HARPFORD

Applicant:

East Devon District Council

Location:

1 School Lane, Newton Poppleford

Proposal:

Single storey side extension, remove existing chimney externally, off street parking space and external ramps for disabled adaptation.

RESOLVED:

Approval with conditions in accordance with officer recommendation.

34 25/0810/FUL (Other) SIDMOUTH TOWN

Applicant:

Cllr Mike Goodman

Location:

Church Cottage, Church Lane, Sidmouth

Proposal:

The retention of fencing, and proposed erection of picket fence.

RESOLVED:

Approval with conditions in accordance with officer recommendation.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

B Bailey
I Barlow
K Bloxham

C Brown
B Collins
O Davey (Chair)
P Faithfull
S Hughes
S Smith
E Wragg (Vice-Chair)

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

A Bailey
R Collins

Officers in attendance:

Thea Billeter, Cranbrook New Community Manager
Ben Chesters, Planning Officer
Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer
Liam Fisher, Senior Planning Officer
Damian Hunter, Planning Solicitor
Wendy Ormsby, Development Manager
Emerald McGuire-Febey, Assistant Planning Officer

Councillor apologies:

M Chapman
S Gazzard
D Haggerty
M Howe
Y Levine

Chair

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Strategic Planning Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 8 July 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.40 am and ended at 1.25 pm

1 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 May 2025 were confirmed as a true record.

2 Declarations of interest

Minute 6. East Devon Local Plan - Consultation feedback, timetable and future workplan. Councillor Dan Ledger, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Lives opposite a site allocation in Seaton.

Minute 6. East Devon Local Plan - Consultation feedback, timetable and future workplan. Councillor Geoff Jung, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Chair of Beach Management Plans for several areas relating to CCMA's.

Minute 6. East Devon Local Plan - Consultation feedback, timetable and future workplan. Councillor Jessica Bailey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Devon County Councillor.

Minute 6. East Devon Local Plan - Consultation feedback, timetable and future workplan. Councillor Olly Davey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 6. East Devon Local Plan - Consultation feedback, timetable and future workplan. Councillor Paul Hayward, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Devon County Councillor Axminster and an employee of Axminster Town Council.

Minute 6. East Devon Local Plan - Consultation feedback, timetable and future workplan. The Chair, Councillor Todd Olive, declared an Affects Non-registerable Interest for the Committee Members that were also a Town or Parish Councillor.

Minute 6. East Devon Local Plan - Consultation feedback, timetable and future workplan. In accordance with the Code of Good Practice for Councillors and Officer dealing with planning matters as set out in the Constitution, the Chair, Councillor Todd Olive, on behalf of the Committee advised lobbying on the site allocations in Exmouth.

Non-Committee Member

Minute 6. East Devon Local Plan - Consultation feedback, timetable and future workplan. Councillor Aurora Bailey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Ward Member for site allocation Exmo_20.

Minute 6. East Devon Local Plan - Consultation feedback, timetable and future workplan. Councillor Nick Hookway, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Exmouth Town Councillor and Devon County Councillor for Exmouth & Budleigh Salterton Coastal Division.

3 Public speaking

12 members of the public had registered to speak on minute 6 – East Devon Local Plan – Consultation feedback, timetable and future workplan.

Mr Thomas Shillitoe said that the Regulation 19 evidence demonstrated false statements and misleading evidence and that it was the responsibility for the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Manager to help the Committee to make informed decisions and not to mislead them. He urged the Committee not to be talked out of reviewing some sites and referred them to Exmo_20 which he claimed missed core evidence that demonstrated that it was not a viable site. He suggested that the reallocation sites should be restricted to sites that passed the HELAA process or were either first or second choice sites.

In response to Mr Shillitoe's submitted question 'can Mr Freeman confirm in his professional opinion if, on the 4th of February 2025 when advising Councillors at the Strategic Planning Committee, he believed that the Regulation 19 plan was sound and legally compliant?'. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Manager confirmed that he did believe that it was sound at that time but noted that there was some additional work that needed to be done and that he was confident that it will comply with all relevant legal tests by the time that it needs to be submitted for examination.

Mr Nigel Humphreys sought reassurance that the Regulation 18 process had been followed correctly in relation to site allocation Exmo_20. He referred to various Strategic Planning Committee meetings which had discussed Exmo_20 and in particular the meeting of 6 September 2022 in which documentation had specifically confirmed that Exmo_46 was being promoted instead Exmo_20. He also referred to two new sites Exmo_20a and Exmo_20b which had appeared in the report pack of the meeting on 1 November 2022 and advised that these two sites had not been mentioned or discussed. Mr Humphrey sought clarification as to when the Committee had agreed to remove Exmo_46 and reinstate Exmo_20 and when the Committee had agreed the two new sites Exmo_20a and Exmo_20b. In response the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Manager apologised for the confusion and confirmed that all the sites had been taken through the correct process advising that Exmo_46 was part of Exmo_20 which had been merged to create a larger site and then was divided up into Exmo_20a and Exmo_20b. He acknowledged there had been a lot of response for Exmo_20, which would be taken into account when preparing a future report to the actions, if any, that are needed for that site.

Mr Paul Griew, representing Sidmouth's Cliff Road Action Group addressed Policy AR03 – Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMAs) and suggested that this policy should either be dropped or amended as there was little evidence to support this policy nor does it appear to benefit any local purpose. If the Committee were minded to amend the policy Mr Griew advised that householders should be allowed to extend or alter their properties subject to the usual planning permissions at their own risk and that the policy should specifically state that the CCMA designation will be removed upon completion of these works.

Mrs Kerin Hamill said that the 1,110 comments from people commenting on Exmo_20 were being ignored and that the Local Plan was not sound as it went against many of East Devon District Council's policies. Mrs Hamill advised that the main site entrance would be onto the dangerous B3179 road and would have an adverse impact on trees, hedgerows and woodlands as well as the destruction of ecosystems by covering the site with concrete, bricks and tarmac. She pleaded with councillors to visit the site to see for themselves that the land was not suitable for development.

A statement was read out on behalf of Joanna Chalker who queried the site selection methodology which included a key criterion that the site was required to be within a 1600 metres walkable distance to services. She asked the Committee to reconsider Exmo_20 as it was incorrectly stated as being in a sustainable location as its main access point was 4340 metres from Exmouth train station and a 4 mile drive from Exmouth centre. Ms Chalker suggested that the Committee should consider Whimble for the reallocations due to its good road transport links and that it had a main line railway and was close to the secondary school at Cranbrook.

Ms Emily Glanfield submitted the following question:

Since 3rd September it has been confirmed that Exmo_20 has no meaningful vehicular access to Exmouth. It is accepted that housing would need to be concentrated on the Southern part of the site at Exmo_20, so the lack of vehicular access to Dinan Way would require cars to drive at least a kilometre in the opposite direction away from Exmouth town centre to join the main access at the B3179, a country road, before driving back down into Exmouth. The direct result of allocating Exmo_20 would be forcing cars to drive more miles, making longer, indirect car journeys from all of the proposed 700 homes. Furthermore the situation has changed significantly since 3rd September in that the long awaited Dinan Way extension is now finally underway, meaning that the Hulham road sites will link directly to the A376. Can you confirm that you still believe Exmo_20 to be the least worst option, and a sustainable and accessible location? In response, it was advised that the Committee would address this question in debate for this item.

Abi Mewse referred to cross-boundary impacts which she suggested had not been considered enough particularly when housing developments near parish borders (Cranbrook) will heavily impact neighbouring communities and services (Whimble). She addressed some procedural concerns specifically relating to Whim_08 (Bramley Gardens) that officers did not consider suitable but Committee had allocated it in the Local Plan. She referred to paragraph 5.5 of the report that suggests that allocations can no longer be challenged as they had already gone through a logical and comprehensive site allocation process which she did not agree with as the process appeared neither transparent nor evidence-led. Ms Mewse sought clarification about how and when members of the public can challenge the late-stage allocation of a site such as Whim_08 which was not supported by Planning Officers. Ms Mewse also asked a question about AI use and whether the Council had an AI policy in place to govern the ethical and responsible use of AI in planning decisions.

In response the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Manager confirmed that the procedural process had followed a very open and transparent process with all the site allocation decisions being made in public during Strategic Planning Committee and members of the public had been given an opportunity to comment on those sites through the consultations stage of the Local Plan. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Manager also confirmed that the Council did have a policy of AI use and that it was used in accordance with the Council's privacy notice published on the website.

Karin Rabik raised deep concern for Woodbury Common, which she said was one of the most highly designated conservation areas in the South West of England as it would be severely impacted by the major development of 700 houses at Exmo_20. Mr Rabik asked whether another site could be considered with less harm and risk to wildlife as the Common carried national and international ecological protection and was not only a site of specific scientific interest but also a special protection area for conservation, a nature

reserve and was also in the process of being included in the local nature recovery strategy of Devon as high value land.

Justin Shaw spoke about Whim_08 and noted that the Committee's original aspiration was to allocate sites that were recommended for allocation. However as the Committee was unable to meet the required housing numbers set by government Councillors had to reconsider sites that fell below the threshold and unfortunately Whim_08 was one of those sites.

Mr Shaw addressed the site Whim_08 and sought assurances from the Committee that due consideration will be given to tactical issues associated with this development that had originally not been recommended for development and where appropriate may be removed from the allocation. He also sought clarification on what feedback was being provided to the government to improve future housing development policy noting the feedback being captured throughout this process.

The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Manager reassured Mr Shaw that the Council had always and will always continue to push back on the government's housing numbers by pointing out the problems that East Devon District Council face with East Devon's severe environmental and infrastructure constraints. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Manager also reassured Mr Shaw that the Committee had been provided with all the necessary information for the sites to help them make informed decisions and pointed out that on occasions the Committee's views had differed from officers recommendations.

John Hamill advised the Committee that it was his fourth time addressing his concerns about the failings for Exmo_20 and felt that he was not being listened to. He referred to the 1,110 responses in the feedback report for Exmo_20 which proved that people were concerned and that he could not understand why this site was still being considered for allocation as it was clear there was overwhelming evidence against Exmo_20. He urged the Committee to listen to their electors and remove the site from the Local Plan.

Councillor Jo Yarwood spoke on behalf of the residents of Whimble raising concerns about flood risk issues and pedestrian safety for the two sites that had been allocated in the village. All the roads that lead into the village have single lane access and without pavements and that the increase in houses would lead to more cars in a village that already experiences near misses on a daily basis. Councillor Yarwood also raised a concern that the site Whim_08 would be encroaching onto the Green Wedge.

Tony Burch, a retired chartered Civil Engineer spoke about the mapping of the Coastal Change Management Areas for Cliff Road at Sidmouth. He referred to page 79 of the feedback report for Policy AR03 and opposed this policy as the Cliff Road CCMA map was not based on any erosion data that is in the LPA evidence library or elsewhere in the public domain and so it was not justified. He summarised 3 factual evidence points supporting his opposition and said in conclusion that the Cliff Road CCMA map was not justified with published erosion data and suggested that it was not sound or legally compliant and requested that the Cliff Road CCMA map be reviewed.

In response, the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Manager acknowledged the concerns raised by Mr Burch and advised that these would be discussed with the relevant officer.

There was one matter of urgency discussed under minute 276.

5 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There were no confidential or exempt items.

6 East Devon Local Plan - Consultation feedback, timetable and future workplan

The report presented by the Assistant Director Planning Strategy and Development Manager provided the Committee with feedback on the first stage of the Regulation 19 Consultation and provided an update on the timetable for the production of the Local Plan taking into account any consequential changes.

Out of the 3,510 comments received on the consultations from individuals and organisations the key issues included:

- 1,100 responses had been received for site Exmo_20 raising concerns on biodiversity, flood risk, infrastructure and procedural fairness.
- Concerns had been raised by the housing development industry about the Council's Housing Strategy
- Concerns about under-classification of Feniton and Whimple.
- Concerns about the under representation of Exmouth's strategic role
- Concerns raised about infrastructure delivery, in particular, healthcare, education and utilities.

Some other key issues raised by statutory consultees included:

- Concerns about site allocations within a national landscape.
- Potential impact of wind turbines on heritage assets.
- There is a need for transport evidence for the West of East Devon.
- Concerns raised about the absence of some detail for proposals for the new community.
- Lack of capacity in primary health care in the West of East Devon.
- There is a need for additional evidence on water quality to understand the potential impact of additional housing.
- Impact to heritage assets needs to be addressed prior to any potential development.
- The requirement of a Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Manager drew the Committees attention to paragraph 4.2 of the report that provided clarification on the implications of two stage Regulation 19 process taking into account the new version of the NPPF. The Committee noted there was a need to be mindful about minimising any significant changes to the Local Plan to help keep within the transitional arrangements as this could have an impact on the housing numbers which could then be increased by a further 25%.

The Committee's attention was also drawn to paragraph 6 of the report which addressed the ongoing evidence work. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Manager advised that he was confident that the outstanding evidence documents would be completed in time to support the Local Plan consultation and referred to the revised timetable to help get the submission of the Local Plan to examination.

These key steps included:

- Ongoing study and assessment work to be done throughout the summer.
- Committee to receive the first redraft of Local Plan in September/October 2025. (The Committee noted that an additional meeting would be required).
- The second round of Regulation 19 consultation to take into account the second new community and the outstanding evidence work to run from October to November 2025.

The Chair invited questions from Councillors which included:

- Can more details be added to the agenda paper to help identify who is making the comments that had been received during the consultation? The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Manager advised that officers would be publishing all the comments, but these were still being worked on and gave reassurance that this would be clearer in the summary report.
- Clarification was sought about whether the council would be contacting the local MPs to address the high housing target figures. Although the Chair reassured Councillors that the MPs were already well aware of the council's views and advised that he would send an email to remind them.
- Clarification was sought from the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Manager about whether it was a surprise to receive negative comments from the statutory bodies. In response he advised that some comments were a surprise and gave an example that the Environment Agency had objected to the lack of a Water Cycle Study when it was not a requirement.
- Clarification was sought on when the Committee would receive the draft final version of the Local Plan. The Committee were advised that the final version would be brought back to Committee late September/early October to be able to begin the consultation in October.
- A question was raised about the lack of coverage for the consultation as 3,510 comments was not good for the East Devon area. The Committee was reminded that the consultation was undertaken in accordance with the instructions made by the Committee and in accordance with the published statement of community involvement.
- Clarification was sought on whether the Committee would be considering any brownfield sites for allocation of development. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Manager advised that both greenfield and brownfield sites had been considered but there were very few available brownfield sites in the district.
- It was questioned whether the particular sites in Exmouth, Honiton, Feniton and Whimple that had received higher than average comments in the consultation should be revisited. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Manager raised concerns about the consequences of revisiting those sites in terms of changing those decisions as the Committee did not have all the information to make informed decisions at the meeting and that a further report would be needed.
- It was questioned whether it would still be possible to meet the deadline taking into account the amount of work that still needs to be done on the Local Plan. In response a concern was raised about the amount of work, but reassurance was given that there was a lot of work progressing by officers to meet the achievable deadline.
- Clarification was sought on the comments received for the under representation of Exmouth's strategic role. The Committee was advised that although Exmouth is

the biggest town in East Devon it has environmental and other constraints that would not allow any further development.

- From the comments received in the consultation it was questioned whether there was a need to look to review 3 specific areas around the definition of employment, the settlement boundary and the coastal change management areas (CCMAs). The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Manager reminded the Committee that all comments would be taken into consideration and sought further guidance from the Committee about whether these areas should be addressed.
- Clarification was sought on what would constitute a ‘substantive review’ detailed in paragraph 5.5. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Manager clarified that it would depend on the size of the site and whether this would have a consequence on the headroom of housing numbers. He sought guidance from the Committee for a steer on any particular sites of concern so that a further report could be brought back addressing these concerns.
- Point of Information - Lymp_01, Whim_08a, Whim_11, Feni_08, Otry_20, Exmo_17 had received above average comments and Exmo_20 had received significantly above average comments.

The Chair moved the meeting into debate and a statement was read out on behalf of Councillor Matt Hall which addressed the public perception that Local Plans focus too much on housing targets at the expense of community needs. The statement also believed that although Local Plans were essential for managing development and meeting housing needs it was crucial to ensure they are developed in a way that respect and understands the community character and needs, while making sure that local people believe that they have a stake in and a proper role in this important decision-making process.

Further comments included:

- There is a need to look at the Local Plan as a district and not just individual sites. If site Exmo_20 is removed, those houses will need to be located elsewhere.
- Ward Member for Exmo_20 thanked the public speakers for attending the meeting and supported all their comments.
- Support was expressed for Councillor Hall’s comments about respecting community character and it was suggested that Exmouth did not need Exmo_20 and could instead provide houses in existing locations.
- There is a need to listen to the public speakers. Increase the density of existing sites.
- Further study of the CCMAs was needed
- Water quality still needs to be addressed with South West Water.
- Reference was made about the duty to co-operate with other councils and it was stated that this council’s performance was 13% compared to other councils of 6%.
- It was suggested to remove wind energy and to focus solely on solar energy.
- There was a need to consider the high level of objections received for Exmo_20 and a suggestion was made to review Exmo_20. In response the Chair stated that Exmouth had currently allocated 1,455 homes in the Local Plan which was a growth rate of 10% and if Exmo_20 (700 homes) was taken out Exmouth’s growth rate would fall to 5% which was less than every settlement in the settlement hierarchy. The Chair advised that it would not be a sound decision to only review Exmo_20 and there was a need to review the sites that had received a higher number of objections that was listed earlier in the meeting.
- A direct quote made by Angela Raynor was mentioned by Councillor Paul Hayward that ‘there will be no excuses not to deliver 1.5million new homes’.

Nobody wants to cover East Devon in houses, but we have no choice – they must be built somewhere!

Councillor Ledger proposed an amendment to the second recommendation, seconded by Councillor Brian Bailey to read as follows:

That Members noted the changes to the Planning Practice Guidance regarding two stage Regulation 19 consultations and identify any areas where they would like officer advice on potential changes to the plan that are not already being considered in the work programme set out in this report. These are to be addressed in a report to a future meeting prior to the second Regulation 19 consultation with materials being presented to the Committee. These areas are as follows:

- Water Cycle Study
- CCMA's
- Duty to Co-operate
- Wind energy areas
- Sites Lymp_01, Whim_08a, Whim_11, Feni_08, Otry_20, Exmo_17, Exmo_20 and any further sites that officers feel should be brought back

Councillor Ledger advised that due to government reorganisation this was going to be East Devon District Council's last Local Plan and that this Committee had a duty to get it right now as the next one could be done by people outside of East Devon.

Further comments included:

- There is a need to look at alternative sites if these sites are taken out of the Local Plan. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Manager confirmed that the report would consider all the implications of removing a site allocation which included the housing numbers and alternative site provisions.
- The Council is in a difficult position as nobody wants to see this level of development, but we have no choice otherwise the government will end up doing this for us.
- There is a need to put some thought into providing higher density developments. In response, the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Manager addressed the difficulties in terms of the limited demand but acknowledged that this could be looked at for the second new community.
- There was a suggestion to reconsider villages and towns where communities wanted development, but permissions had been refused.

RESOLVED:

1. That Strategic Planning Committee endorse the proposed new local plan making timetable and work plan, including studies to be completed.
2. That Members noted the changes to the Planning Practice Guidance regarding two stage Regulation 19 consultations and identify any areas where they would like officer advice on potential changes to the plan that are not already being considered in the work programme set out in this report. These to be addressed in a report to a future meeting prior to the second Regulation 19 consultation materials being presented to the Committee.

These areas are as follows:

- Water Cycle Study
- CCMA's
- Duty to Co-operate
- Wind energy areas

- Sites Lymp_01, Whim_08a, Whim_11, Feni_08, Otry_20, Exmo_17, Exmo_20 and any further sites that officers feel should be brought back

7 East Devon Local Plan - Local Development Scheme

The report presented to the Committee set out the proposed revised Local Development Scheme in light of the proposed amendments to the Local Plan making timetable which now incorporated a second Regulation 19 consultation to address both the second new community and associated evidence.

RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET:

That Strategic Planning Committee recommend that Cabinet adopt the proposed new Local Development Scheme, at appendix 1.

8 Exmouth Rugby Club - Revised Project and Community Infrastructure Levy Bid

The Assistant Director – presented the minutes of an additional meeting of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Working Party held on 3 July 2025 and asked the Committee to consider the revised CIL project from Exmouth Rugby Club for a revised CIL bid that Strategic Planning Committee had previously considered.

The revised CIL bid of £100,000 was for the refurbishment of an existing building on the Rugby Club's site to provide the new changing rooms due to issues with ground works for the original proposed location.

RESOLVED:

That £100,000 be awarded in principle to Exmouth Rugby Club, with this sum to be reduced to £67,000 if it can be evidenced that the VAT on the project can be reclaimed by the Club.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

B Bailey
J Bailey
K Blakey
C Brown
O Davey
P Fernley
P Hayward
M Howe (Vice-Chair)
G Jung
D Ledger
Y Levine
T Olive (Chair)

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

A Bailey
I Barlow
C Burhop

R Collins
P Faithfull
N Hookway

Officers in attendance:

Wendy Harris, Democratic Services Officer
Ed Freeman, Assistant Director Planning Strategy and Development Management
Damian Hunter, Planning Solicitor

Councillor apologies:

D Haggerty
B Ingham
H Parr

Chairman

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Strategic Planning Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 2 September 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.05 am and ended at 4.05 pm

9 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 July 2025 were confirmed as a true record.

10 Declarations of interest

Minute 14. Newton Poppleford Settlement Boundary.
Councillor Jessica Bailey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Devon County Councillor for Newton Poppleford.

Minute 15. East Devon Local Plan - consideration of potential plan changes to allocations.

In accordance with the Code of Good Practice for Councillors and Officers dealing with planning matters as set out in the Constitution, the Chair, Councillor Todd Olive, on behalf of Committee Members advised lobbying in respect of site allocations Exmo_20, Honi_07, Honi_12, Honi_13, Honi_18, GH/ED39a, GH/ED/39b and Whim_08.

Minute 15. East Devon Local Plan - consideration of potential plan changes to allocations.

Councillor Jessica Bailey & Councillor Paul Hayward, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Devon County Councillor.

Minute 15. East Devon Local Plan - consideration of potential plan changes to allocations.

Councillor Olly Davey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 15. East Devon Local Plan - consideration of potential plan changes to allocations.

Councillor Paul Hayward, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Employee of Axminster Town Council.

Minute 15. East Devon Local Plan - consideration of potential plan changes to allocations.

Councillor Todd Olive, Affects and prejudicial Non-registerable Interest, Site allocation Whim_11.

11 Public speaking

Minute 15 – East Devon Local Plan – consideration of potential plan changes to allocations. Councillor Roy Collins expressed his deep concern about the about the global food crisis, highlighting the alarming trend of farm closures and the loss of millions of acres of productive farmland. He noted that extreme weather events are increasingly devastating crops worldwide, compounding the issue. Councillor Collins criticised current government policies, stating they are contributing to farmers abandoning their

livelihoods. He referenced that over 6,300 farming-related businesses in the UK have shut down in the past year alone. He urged the Committee to take decisive action to protect farmers and preserve farmland before the situation become irreversible.

12 **Matters of urgency**

There was no matters of urgency to discuss.

13 **Confidential/exempt item(s)**

There were no confidential or exempt items.

14 **Newton Poppleford Settlement Boundary**

The report before Committee asked Members to reconsider the proposed settlement boundary for Newton Poppleford following concerns raised by Councillor Burhop in his capacity as Ward Member about how the western side of the village would not be accessible to the centre of the village as it did not have safe footpaths.

The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and development Management explained that there were two options for consideration referring to appendix 1 which would revise the boundary to that previously recommended by officers and appendix 2 which would retain the settlement boundary as previously agreed by Strategic Planning Committee.

Councillor Burhop, Ward Member for Newton Poppleford and Harpford joined remotely to expand on his concerns explaining that the western side of the village would affect the proposed allocations Newt_04 and Newt_05 that did not have a footpath emphasising the possibility of the creation of a footpath which may or may not happen. He advised that he supported the officer recommendation to revise the boundary to that previously recommended by officers as detailed in appendix 1 which would protect the village to the west by unwanted development, and which also had the support of the Parish Council.

RESOLVED:

That the settlement boundary for the settlement of Newton Poppleford be revised to the boundary that had previously been recommended by officers as shown on the map at appendix 1 as a thick black line.

15 **East Devon Local Plan - consideration of potential plan changes to allocations**

The Committee received a presentation from the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management on the list of sites that Members had requested officers to reconsider in light of a higher number of objections received from the public and statutory consultees from the first Regulation 19 consultation.

Members noted that site Lymp_01, which had previously been suggested had been included in error and would therefore not be considered and that site Honi_18 which had not been previously mentioned had now been included as it had come to light that a petition of over 80 signatures objecting to this site had not been addressed in the feedback report which the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management offered his apologies for.

The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management reminded Members about the need to remain in the transitional arrangements introduced by the updated National Planning Policy Framework as this allowed the plan to meet only 80% of the district's currently identified housing need. He also asked Members to consider the National Planning Police Framework regarding the two-phase Regulation 19 consultation, noting its relevance to the site allocation discussion. The guidance clearly states that the content of an emerging plan must not change significantly from what was presented at the initial Regulation 19 stage as this could potentially lead to the need to find an additional 5,000 homes.

Councillor Ingham asked why the four large sites, were considered after the Committee had already gone through a detailed process of identifying a wide range of potential housing allocations in existing settlements to meet the emerging local plan target. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management acknowledged that focusing on the large sites might seem appealing, as it would reduce pressure on existing settlements. However, he explained that these sites were found to not support sustainable development over the plan period. Councillor Ingham disagreed, saying that the sites were dismissed simply because they were no longer needed to meet the housing target.

Clarification was sought from officers about what could be done to avoid the Inspector determining that the plan had undergone substantial changes. Members were advised that some changes could be made but to be mindful of making significant changes as these would change the transitional arrangements. For example, Exmo_20 would equate to 48% of the total number of homes allocated in Exmouth and this would constitute a fundamental change as this percentage of houses could not be made up elsewhere in Exmouth.

EXMOUTH

Exmo_47 – land west of Hulham Road, Exmouth.

Proposed use: residential, 15 dwellings

Main issues:

Impact of heritage assets – close to the Grade I Point in View Chapel, Grade I The Manse and Grade I A La Ronde.

Officer Recommendation:

Retain Exmo_47 as an allocation for 15 dwellings though with policy refinement to follow to more fully emphasise heritage protection matters.

Exmo_20 – land at St Johns, Exmouth.

Proposed use: mixed use development, 700 dwellings

Main issues

Harm to the Pebblebed Heaths SAC/SPA

Loss of biodiversity, ancient woodland and wildlife corridors

Impact on heritage assets

Flood risk

Poor access from B3179

Unsustainable location

Procedural flaws

Mineral constraints beneath the site

Main issues addressed:

400m development buffer to be provided from the boundaries of the site to the Pebblebed Heaths to coincide with some of the higher more open parts of the site.
Create a vehicular access off the B3179 to the north eastern corner of the site to run through the 400m exclusion zone.

Mineral resource assessment to be undertaken to ensure mineral safeguarding.

Detailed work completed on heritage assets in terms of visual connectivity

Officer Recommendation:

Retain Exmo_20 as an allocation for 700 dwellings with amended policy wording to address heritage and mineral safeguarding.

Exmo_17 – land to the south of Littleham, Exmouth.

Proposed use: mixed use/residential, 410 dwellings

Main issues:

Within designated National Landscape

Potential harm to the setting of St Margaret and St Andrew's Church and surrounding historic landscape

Traffic access

Local infrastructure and services pressure

Main issues addressed:

Creation of a 250m buffer between the site and church to reduce adverse impact on the setting.

The more sensitive areas of the site will be left as open space.

Officer Recommendation:

Retain Exmo_17 as an allocation for 410 dwellings.

Exmo_08 & 16 – Littleham Fields, Exmouth

Proposed use: Residential, 45 dwellings combined

Main issues:

Harm to the setting of Grade II listed farmhouse and the Maer Valley landscape

Impact on wildlife and biodiversity

Concerns on local infrastructure

Impact on roads, schools, sewage and water infrastructure

Potential flooding issues

Traffic congestion

Main issues addressed:

Farmhouse does not sit in isolation of development so additional impact of additional development is reduced

Visual impact varies at different times of the year

Benefits outweigh the harm as in a relatively sustainable location.

Officer Recommendation:

Retain Exmo_08 & 16 as an allocation for 410 dwellings.

Exmo_18 – Littleham Fields, next to Liverton Business Park, Exmouth

Proposed use: Employment

Main issues:

Southern part of the site is adjacent to the National Landscape

Main issues addressed:
Policy to mitigate landscape impacts.

Officer Recommendation:
Retain Exmo_18 as an employment allocation limited to 1.8 hectares.

Public Speaking

Nigel Humphrey strongly opposed the continued inclusion of Exmo_20 in the local plan advising that despite over 20 documented issues the report remains unclear and contradictory. The report warns of risk from “significant changes” without defining what those are. He reminded the Committee that a year ago officers did not recommend this site, yet it was approved without full understanding. Since then, more issues have emerged, raised not only by residents but also by statutory bodies including Natural England, Historic England, Devon Wildlife Trust and the Environment Agency. Over 1,100 objections were submitted during consultation and even members of the Committee have expressed regret over its approval and the only justification for keeping it in appears to be meeting government housing numbers and avoiding delays. Mr Humphrey urged the Committee to reject the site and make a responsible decision.

John Hamill also strongly opposed to the allocation of Exmo_20 and reminded the Committee that at the last meeting the Chair had said he had not voted for this site, Councillor Brian Bailey at the meeting in February said that he wished he had never voted for it and a year ago officers did not think this site should be allocated. Devon Wildlife Trust, East Devon National Landscape, Natural England and Historic England all oppose this site. No-one wants Exmo_20. Mr Hamill urged the Committee to follow their own common sense and reject it.

Councillor Nick Hookway, as the Devon County Councillor for Exmouth and Budleigh Coastal Division raised concerns regarding highways and access issues related to proposed site allocations, particularly Exmo_17 and Exmo_20. For Exmo_17, improvements to the local road network and national cycle routes were essential especially where the route passes through Bidmead sheltered housing as increased cycling traffic poses risks to vulnerable residents. Whilst he supported the proposed cycle route amendments connecting to the South West Coast Path there was still no mention of improved access to Devon Cliffs Holiday Park, Castle Lane or the new road mentioned in the neighbourhood plan. Also the proposed roundabout at Salterton Road and Liverton Business Park deserves greater attention, especially as it could serve multiply sites. Turning to Exmo_20 he had deep concerns about the access via the B3179 due to its environmental sensitivity and proximity to the heathland and widening the road would be unacceptable. The report’s suggestion that ‘mitigation measures may be required’ is a gross understatement as Exmo_20 risks turning a valued natural area into suburban sprawl, damaging tourism and wildlife. He urged the Committee to take a strategic, joined-up approach to consider placemaking and shared infrastructure across sites, rather than treating them in isolation. In response to Councillor Hookway’s comments about a new roundabout at Salterton Road the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised that this can only be required if it was necessary to make the development acceptable in highway terms and currently the Highway Authority does not consider it essential so it cannot be enforced through planning policy. He also addressed his concerns about the impact of increased vehicular movements on the Pebblebed Heaths and advised that consultations were currently assessing this and preparing a mitigation strategy and their findings will be added to the evidence base before the next Regulation 19 consultation.

Questions from Members included:

- In response to a question about whether the impact on wildlife and woodland could be mitigated for Exmo_20, officers advised that the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA), which forms part of the evidence base, concluded that with proposed mitigations, the site is currently acceptable. However, further work is ongoing, particularly around vehicle emissions and their effect on the heathland but at this stage, there is no environmental barriers to allocating the site.
- In response to a question about whether it could be possible to get a connection into St John's Road via parcel 12 on the diagram, officers advised that vehicle access was not feasible (as shown on page 38 of the agenda) but pedestrian and cycle access is expected to improve site connectivity.
- In response to a question about whether it could be possible to consider limiting the speed limit to 40mph limit on the B3179 officers advised that this would be addressed at the planning application stage.
- Clarification was sought on the current percentage of dwellings in Exmouth
- In response to a question about type of mineral was beneath Exmo_20, it was advised that it was sand and gravel and that it was owned by the landowner.

Comments during debate included:

- Serving on this Committee is incredibly difficult as every time we try to move forward with the plan the housing numbers shift, public concerns grow, and no community wants development near them. Nobody wants to lose farmland and landscapes, but we must face the fact that we have a legal duty to deliver housing numbers set by government, even if we disagree with them. East Devon is rich in heritage and protected landscapes, but government policy does not recognise this. We have a chance to deliver 80% of the required housing, it is not perfect and not easy but rejecting the plan risks losing control entirely and having to find 5,000 more homes. Removing Exmo_20 means finding 700 homes elsewhere. This is a tough position, but we must make the best decision for all of East Devon, not just one town.
- It was suggested that a compromise could be reached for site Exmo_20 and to just allocated housing on the south side of Exmo_20 as the north side would be more difficult. In response the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management explained that by taking into account the 400m buffer zone and the mineral extraction zone means that development on this site would only be on the south side.
- A concern was raised about Exmouth's sustainability as the further out you go the more difficult it becomes.
- Totally against this site as it appears that officers are bending over backwards to try and make Exmo_20 work and there is a limit to what you can do and what you cannot do because the main road.
- Reference was made to the comments made by officers about the inability to access through Exmo_18 due to the water course and it was suggested to join together Exmo_20 and Exmo_18 to provide funds for a bridge which would help solve the access issue. It is important to try and look at all potential issues and outcomes.

RESOLVED:

To retain site allocations Exmo_47, Exmo_20, Exmo_17 Exmo_08, Exmo_16 and Exmo_18 in the Local Plan.

AXMINSTER

Axmi_01a – land west of Musbury Road.

Proposed use: 2-hectare employment,

Main issues:

Flood risks

Archaeological interest on the site for the two World War II pill boxes and the potential route of the Fosse Way Roman Road, the route of the Axminster and Lyme Regis light railway, a trackway for prehistoric flint and medieval pottery.

Close to two Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

Main issues addressed

The site owner was requested to undertake the necessary archaeological works, but it was not proceeded.

Officer Recommendation:

Remove Axmi_01a as an employment allocation due to the constraints.

Axmi_02, Axmi_08 and Axmi_09 – land east of Musbury Road.

Proposed use: residential, 438 dwellings

Main issues included:

Heritage and archaeological sensitivity due to proximity to Roman Fort and Fosse Way on the northern part of the site

Flood risks

Road safety concerns on A35

Road safety and access issues on Musbury Road

Inadequate sewerage infrastructure and surface water flooding

Main issues addressed

Further archaeological work to be carried out.

Officer Recommendation:

Retain Axmi_02, Axmi_08, Axmi_09 as a combined allocation for 438 dwellings subject to archaeological concerns not establishing an unreasonable constraint to development (this information is not currently available)

Public speaking

Simon Coles from Carney Sweeny spoke on behalf C G Fry & Son who were promoting these sites for development confirmed that a GFS survey had been completed on the northern part of the site and that a trenching plan of 30 trenches has been agreed with the County Archaeologist which would commence in September and the results will be provided in November.

Questions from Members included:

- Clarification was sought about the November timing for the results of the archaeological works as the plan had to keep to a strict timeline. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management confirmed that it was later than he hoped but that some initial findings may provide clarity.

RESOLVED:

To remove Axmi_01 as an employment allocation and retain Axmi_02, Axmi_08 and Axmi_09 as an allocation for 438 dwellings subject to the archaeological findings.

HONITON

Honi_07, Honi_12 and Honi_13 – land adjacent/near to St Michaels Church.

Proposed use: residential, 111 dwellings combined.

Main issues included:

Honi_12 is dependent on Honi_07 for access

Concerns about landscape and heritage impact due to proximity to listed buildings

Legal compliance concerns over the consultation process and late inclusion of Honi_12

Impact on the Blackdown Hills National Landscape

Partly adjacent and seen within the context of the East Devon National Landscape

Officer Recommendation:

Remove sites Honi_07, Honi_12 and Honi_13 from the plan.

Honi_18 – land at Kings Road, Hale Close, Honiton.

Proposed use: residential, 136 dwellings

Main issues included:

An error had occurred in the feedback report that had not identified that a petition had been submitted including over 80 signatures objecting to this site.

Road safety and access issues.

Impacts to environment and wildlife

Heritage and visual impact concerns

Site abuts the Blackdown Hills National Landscape

Main issues addressed

National Highways and Police recommend introducing a new speed limit extending the existing 30mph limit in a south easterly direction up the A35.

Officer Recommendation:

Retain the allocation of site Honi_18 for 136 dwellings within the plan.

GH/ED/39b – land south of Northcote Hill (south of railway) & GH/ED/39a (north of railway)

Proposed use: residential, 100 dwellings

Submissions on behalf of the developer made provision for up to 300 dwellings on the site. Further work indicates to accept the increase capacity in a reasonable landscape sensitive way, and which could help deliver improvements to walking, cycling and bus access which are currently poor.

Officer Recommendation:

Retain the site GH/ED/39a and increase the allocation to 115 dwellings and retain site GH/ED/39b and increase the allocation to 195 dwellings.

Public speaking

Dan Rogers from Bell Cornwall spoke on behalf of Coombe Estate and expressed disappointment on the proposal to remove Honi_07 and reminded Committee that it was in a highly sustainable location, close to public transport, services and town facilities, it scored high in the HELAA process, that it was a second choice site in the Regulation 18 consultation and at the meeting in September 2024 officers and Committee endorsed to allocate for the site for 30 dwellings. Overtime Honi_07 was merged with Honi_12 to form a larger allocation which the Coombe Estate had concerns about as Honi_12 is more

prominent and many of the issues in the officer's report seems to stem from combining the two sites. Mr Rogers addressed the two main objections raised for landscape impact and heritage concerns advising that Honi_07 was well screened by mature trees and additional planting could further reduce visual impact and that the concerns for the nearby church gates and cottage listed could be mitigated with open space and planting. Mr Rogers urged members to retain Honi_07 and consider increasing allocations elsewhere in Honiton.

Ben Luxton from Stags spoke on behalf of the landowners for Honi_12 and expressed disappointment on the proposal to remove the allocation saying he did not agree with the officer recommendation as the site was fundamentally deliverable. He addressed the main issues, advising that the access was fully supported via Honi_07 from Weatherall Road and that the landowners were happy to proceed with the policy as drafted. Mr Luxton disagreed with the heritage concerns at the site sits further away and benefits from strong existing buffers and which could also be potentially facilitated referring to the previous speaker's suggestion of heritage mitigation for Honi_07. He suggested that appropriate policy wording could be amended to require a full heritage assessment at the planning stage which would address the heritage and landscape concerns.

Stuart Lees, a Honiton resident spoke about a petition he had put together objecting to Honi_18 with over 80 signatures from residents and that every single person expressed their concerns about the traffic flow and the safety of the A35 as it comes down into Honiton and he urged the Committee to go back and look at this in light of strong public opinion to rethink the flawed traffic plan as the road is not safe, extremely busy and dangerous.

Simon Coles presenting the site owners spoke about Honi_18 and acknowledged the residents' concerns about road safety. He advised that although there had been no highway objections raised by the Highways Authority he suggested that the road speed could be reduced to slow down the traffic coming down the hill and that the landowners would maintain full and meaningful engagement with the community when the time comes if the allocation is retained.

Bethan Haigh spoke on behalf of Taylor Wimpey promoting GH/ED/39a and GH/ED/39b and supported the officer's recommendation to increase the allocations advising that technical evidence shows that these increases can be comfortably accommodated. She advised that planning permission had already been granted for GH/ED/39a and that the landowner was currently preparing an outline planning application for GH/ED/39b advising that Devon County Council were supportive of the proposed transport strategy that includes signaling under the railway bridge, and extending the footpath into Honiton.

Questions and comments from Members included:

- In response to a question about the public transport for the Northcote Area it was advised that this would be resolved at the planning application process stage.
- A Honiton Ward Member questioned why the Ward Members and Honiton Town Council had not been consulted about Honi_18 when it was agreed to be reconsidered. The Ward Member also suggested that the public had been kept in the dark about the plan when the site was sneaked in last year. In response the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy & Development Management advised that it had been acknowledged in the report that the site was not part of the Regulation 18 consultation, but it was part of the Regulation 19 consultation which had undergone a lot of publicity.

- It was questioned whether the long of difficult process of the local plan had confused the public as some sites that the public thought were safe had ended up in the plan. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management sympathised with the public trying to engage and following the process and agreed that there were lessons to be learned with the different stages of the consultation.

Councillor Mike Howe proposed the officer recommendation as written which was seconded by Councillor Olly Davey.

Further comments included:

- Heavy traffic comes along Kings Road, and the visibility is horrendous.
- In response to the question about where would the 30mph speed limit be extended to slow down the traffic for Honi_18, the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management did not have the answer but reminder members that the Police and the Highways Authority were happy in principle so it would be hard to reject the site on highway safety grounds.

The following amendment to the motion was proposed by Councillor Colin Brown proposed and seconded by Councillor Kevin Blakey. Councillor Brown advised that he could not support the officer recommendation as in his opinion Honi_07, Honi_12 and Honi_13 were closer to amenities with good bus services, it was close to the train station and within walking distance to the town centre.

To retain Hon_7, Honi_12 and Honi_13 as a combined allocation in the plan.

Comments made by Members on the amendment included:

- It was suggested that as St Michaels Church was the issue it would be better to look at the sites separately instead of all together to see if the heritage impact can be mitigated.
- The landscape impact is high for Honi_13 compared to Honi_07 which is a very sustainable site.
- To assist with the debate the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management provided some context to how the heritage and landscape impacts differed between the three sites. This included Honi_07 being the most sensitive on the historical environment and both Honi_12 and Honi_13 being more sensitive on the National Landscape.

Councillor Paul Hayward supported Honi_7 and Honi_13 as allocations as these two sites combined could provide some residential dwellings that were in keeping with the heritage assets and proposed a further amendment to retain Honi_07 and Honi_13 and to remove Honi_13, seconded by Councillor Mike Howe.

The Chair sought advice from the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management who advised that he stood by his previous comments as including these sites in the plan could not be justified.

RESOLVED:

1. To remove Honi_12 as an allocation in the Local Plan.
2. To retain Honi_07, Honi_13, Honi_18, GH/ED/39b and GH/ED/39a as allocations in the Local Plan.

SEATON

Seat_13a – land west of Axeview Road.

Proposed use: residential 39 dwellings

Main issues:

Archaeological interest on the site for the adjacent Roman and earlier settlement at Honeyditches Scheduled Monument

Main issued addressed

Further archaeological work to be undertaken.

Officer Recommendation:

That should archaeological work come back and set out a robust case to allow for development in the site Seat_13a should be allocated in the plan. If not, the allocation should be deleted.

RESOLVED:

That should archaeological work come back and set out a robust case to allow for development in the site Seat_13a should be allocated in the plan. If not, the allocation should be deleted.

FENITON

Feni_08 – land adjacent to Beechwood.

Proposed use: residential 83 dwellings

Main issues:

Flooding

Sewage

Traffic

Sustainability

Main issued addressed

Although the site originally performed well in assessment especially its location and public transport one key change is that planning permission was granted on appeal for land at Colestock Road which had previously been rejected. During that appeal the Council defended refusal based on concerns about the scale of growth in Feniton being a tier 4 settlement, but the Inspector considered that the level of growth was appropriate which the Council must now take into consideration.

Officer Recommendation:

Retain Feni_08 as a housing allocation for 83 dwellings

Otry_20 – land to the south east of Bridge Cottages

Proposed use: employment 4.64 hectares

One of the few villages' employment sites allocated for development in the plan and would be consistent with the spatial strategy to increase settlement self-containment and meet the needs of the community with no significant adverse development impacts.

Officer Recommendation:

Retain Otry_20 as an employment allocation.

Olly Ansell from Grassroots Planning spoke on behalf of the landowners and applicant for Feni_08 advising that a planning application was currently submitted in line with the allocation for 60 dwellings and to include 50% affordable housing and a sustainable drainage system to reduce the volume of water flowing off the site.

Honiton Ward Member, Councillor Roy Collins reminded the Committee that the land around Feniton where the developments are proposed was either grade 1 or grade 2 agricultural land which would grow good crops.

RESOLVED:

Retain Feni_08 as a housing allocation for 83 dwellings and retain Otry_20 as an employment allocation.

WHIMPLE

Whim_08a – land west of Bramley Gardens
Proposed use: residential 50 dwellings

Main issues:

Green wedge

Flood risk

Impact on wildlife

Lack of safe pedestrian access and procedural issues in allocation

Main issued addressed

Further flood modelling will be needed and would come forward through any planning application process.

Although there was a slight incursion into the Green Wedge the Committee previously concluded that this would not materially impact on those issues.

Officer Recommendation:

Retain Whim_08a as a residential allocation of 50 dwellings

Whim_11 – land at Station Road

Proposed use: residential 33 dwellings

Main issues:

Flood risk

Impact of protected trees

Traffic and pedestrian safety

Land of Local Importance designation

Main issued addressed

Revised policy wording to reflect the comments about the Land of Local Importance

Further flood modelling will be needed and would come forward through any planning application process.

Officer Recommendation:

Retain Whim_08a as a residential allocation of 50 dwellings

Public speaking

Simon Coles from Carney Sweeny representing the landowners for Whim_08 and Whim_11 concurred with the reports advising that the sustainable developments would provide much needed affordable housing. He confirmed that all the technical surveys

and assessment would be undertaken on both sites to demonstrate safe walking routes to the village centre, ecology etc and to alleviate the risks of flooding he advised that all new homes would be kept outside of the flood zone. He also advised that Whim_08a would also be an opportunity to create a highly attractive corridor of green and blue infrastructure. The landowners are committed to fully engage with the parish council and the local community to help get things right and to help create a community orchard and provide safe connections to the village centre.

Justin Shaw, a resident of Whimble acknowledged the challenges the Committee faced and acknowledged the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management response about whether Green Wedge provides a moratorium on planning and housing development in the area. He appealed to the Committee to decline Whim_08 referring to Green Wedge and coalescence between Cranbrook and Whimble and sought clarification about where the expansion of Whimble would stop. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management was unable to confirm what would happen to Whimble in future Local Plans and was unable to confirm what planning applications might come forward but did give reassurance that there was a substantial Green Wedge between Whimble and Cranbrook to prevent coalescence from happening. In response Mr Shaw advised that even a small loss of a Green Wedge could set a precedent to suggest it is ok to gradually chip away and if it happens on both sites, over time, it could lead to two areas merging. By allowing even a small erosion now, are we accepting that future outcome?

Councillor Yarwood representing the parish council made representation on behalf of the residents of Whimble advising that the concerns previously raised by the community still stand and were on record. One of the most pressing concerns is about pedestrian safety and as this is already a serious issue in the village a speed watch initiative was launched due to dangers posed by traffic entering and exiting the village which has at least 4 or 5 key pinch points where the road narrows to a single lane and no pedestrian footpaths.

On behalf of the residents Councillor Yarwood asked:

How will the council mitigate the increased risk to pedestrian safety? New developments often use shared surfaces to slow down traffic and reduce the separation between cars, pedestrians and cyclists.

How will footpaths be introduced in areas where roads are already too narrow for safe walking? This is a common issue in many villages as there is often a lack of footpaths in tier 4 settlements, particularly on narrow lanes. However as vehicle speeds in villages are usually low many people are comfortable walking along these lanes.

How will the inevitable hard landscaping from new homes and parking areas not increase flood risk? Hard landscaping can be designed to allow water to drain properly using sustainable drainage systems.

Councillor Todd Olive spoke about Whim_08 and acknowledged the concerns raised about Whimble merging with Cranbrook. He said in his opinion 50 houses that had been previously agreed for this site was too many especially considering the findings in the latest flood risk assessment and proposed two changes to the policy which was seconded by Councillor Brian Bailey.

The two changes were:

- to add wording to ensure development does not cross the western ridgeline, which visually separates Whimble and Cranbrook
- to reduce the number of homes from 50 to 30 which was more appropriate for the site's size and character

Councillor Blakey, Ward Member for Cranbrook supported the proposed amended policy wording as this would mean a visual split between Cranbrook and Whimple and that the roof lines for the new development in Whimple should be kept down to a level so that the view on the ridge line remains the same and which would be feasible with the topography that already exists.

Councillor Howe did not support the proposed wording to reduce the number of houses from 50 to 30 as this number had not been properly assessed and suggested an amendment to change in the wording 'up to a maximum of 50' which would then allow the planning application to determine the quantity.

The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management explained that officers had applied a consistent methodology when assessing housing numbers across all sites. He expressed support for Councillor Howe's suggestion, noting that it aligned with this established approach.

The Chair of Planning Committee also supported Councillor Howe's revised policy wording, noting that officers had confirmed the proposed number was a reasonable allocation for this site.

The Planning Solicitor provided some further guidance and strongly recommended support for Councillor Howe's amendment advising that there did not appear to be a clear rationale for selecting 30 dwellings and that in contrast specifying 'up to 50 dwellings' would align with officer's advice that offers a more consistent approach.

In light of the advice received Councillor Olive, as the proposer accepted the amendment made by Councillor Howe, which was also accepted by Councillor Brian Bailey, as the seconder.

RESOLVED:

Retain Whim_08a as a residential allocation subject to revised policy wording:

- to add wording to ensure development does not cross the western ridgeline, which visually separates Whimple and Cranbrook
- include wording 'up to a maximum of 50 dwellings which was more appropriate for the site's size and character

Councillor Todd Olive left the chamber for site allocation Whim_11 and did not take part in the discussions or vote.

RESOLVED:

Retain Whim_11 as a residential allocation for 33 dwellings.

Clge_25a – next to Darts Farm.

Proposed use: employment

Main issues included:

Flood risk

Highways

Archaeology concerns

Main issues addressed

Awaiting additional information for the archaeology on the site

Officer Recommendation:

Wait for further information before drawing conclusions on the potential allocations for this site.

RESOLVED:

To wait for further information before drawing conclusions on the potential allocations for the site.

16 **East Devon Local Plan - Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMAs)**

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

17 **East Devon Local Plan - Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation**

The report presented to the Committee outlined the current position and proposed changes regarding gypsy and traveller site provision within the Local Plan, including risks, policy amendments and site allocations.

The Local Plan identifies a need for 29 Gypsy and Traveller pitches over the plan period which would be met through 15 pitches at the second new community, 5 pitches east of the M5 and 15 pitches at Cranbrook. Although this addressed the quantity it did not address the timing and it was noted that most pitches would not be delivered in the first five years. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised that to address the short-term gap site Brcl_26 – Langaton Lane, Pinhoe had been proposed however due to unresolved issues and the absence of a willing landowner it was now recommended that site Brcl_26 be removed from the plan and to rely on windfall sites in the short-term.

In addition to the deletion of site Brcl_26 it was also recommended to make some changes to Policy HN09: Gypsy and Traveller Sites as set out in the report which represented the objections received, including a representative of the Gypsy and Irish Travellers and new travellers in Devon and Cornwall and a Charity called Traveller Space.

Comments and questions from Committee Members included:

- Clarity was sought on the policy changes to HN09 and whether long-term vacancy sites should be protected regardless of the current need, especially with the new town development increasing availability. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised there is a clear need for these sites now and that need will remain unmet until new communities are fully established. It was suggested that the sites that have been left vacant were due to wealthy landowners having no intention of using them which in practice means the Council has already lost those sites.
- We need to be minded that sometimes travellers do not want to use the sites that local authorities have allocated for them. It can appear pointless and a waste of time doing all this work for something that is almost superfluous.

RESOLVED:

That site allocation Brcl_26 be deleted from the Local Plan and to amend the related plan policies as set out in the report.

18 **East Devon Local Plan - Duty to Co-operate**

The report presented to Committee summarised the duty to cooperate current position which identified key actions needed to progress the plan.

These included:

- Housing requirements – uncertainty from other local planning authorities about whether they will be able to meet their housing requirements.
- Employment land - East Devon objected to employment land provision in the Exeter Regulation 19 plan on the basis that it failed to allocate. Members noted that discussions were progressing on Statements of Common Ground to set out the respective positions of the two authorities and delegated authority was sought to the given to the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management to sign it.
- Transport issues related to growth in the West End – work is ongoing on the Greater Exeter Transport Study and will be brought before Committee at the next meeting.
- Implications of additional traffic for the Pebblebed Heaths – work is ongoing working towards a Mitigation Strategy and will be brought to Committee in due course.
- Water quality – Additional work is still needed to be completed to align with the current site allocations in the Local Plan and to understand the impacts on transmission infrastructure.
- Green and blue infrastructure.
- Control of pollution.
- Water quality issues.

The Chair strongly endorsed the recommendations as set out in the report and proposed the recommendations subject to an amendment to the fourth recommendation to read:

4. That Strategic Planning Committee note the update on the Water Cycle Study and agree to include a strategic policy on water quality, as generally described in paragraph 6.3 of this report, the details of which would be finalised following the completion of the water cycle study.

Comments and questions by Committee Members included:

- Clearer wording in the policy is needed to help major developers understand what is required to improve the water environment. This would ensure expectations are understood and met.
- Struggling to understand the Exeter City Council comments on pages 108 and 109. What is meant by 'Greater Exeter' as there is no defined area? In response the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management explained that it dates back to the Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) during the work on the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan which covered the whole area of Devon.

RESOLVED:

1. That the issues highlighted in the report be noted, particularly those matters that remain unresolved.
2. That the addition of explanatory text to the local plan to deal with any future significant under delivery of housing in East Devon, or requests from other authorities to help meet their unmet housing requirements, as set out in paragraph 2.3 of the report be agreed.
3. To note that there continue to be concerns with Exeter City Council's approach to employment land provision in the Exeter Plan which are being clarified through a

Statement of Common Ground. Delegated authority to be granted to the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning to sign a Statement of Common Ground with Exeter City Council which reflect the Council's position as previously agreed by the Committee.

4. That the update on the Water Cycle Study be noted and to include a strategic policy on water quality, as generally described in paragraph 6.3 of this report, the details of which would be finalised following the completion of the water cycle study be agreed.

19 **East Devon Local Plan - policy for wind farms and turbines**

The report presented to Committee provided further information on policy options for addressing proposals for wind turbines and wind farms in East Devon.

The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management reminded the Committee that as the new NPPF published in 2024 had introduced a greater support for wind energy and removed the need for specific area allocations it was proposed to adopt a criteria-based policy which would respond to Historic England's feedback, align with the evolving direction of national policy and address the committee's discomfort with identifying specific areas.

Comments from Members included:

- Do not agree with the comments from Historic England as it does not mean they will not be tested again at the planning stage just like solar farms are.
- Could the Council take a hybrid approach and have a criteria-based policy as this way we are not endorsing them outright? In response the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised that this could potentially open up other sites to come forward and was less restrictive but that it would not be technically viable other than on a small domestic basis.
- Support was expressed for a criteria-based policy.

RESOLVED:

That the changes to the plan in respect of wind turbines and wind farms as set out in the report be endorsed.

Attendance List

Councillors present (for some or all the meeting)

B Bailey
J Bailey
K Blakey
C Brown
O Davey
P Fernley
P Hayward
M Howe (Vice-Chair)
B Ingham
Y Levine
T Olive (Chair)
H Parr

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

R Collins
P Faithfull
N Hookway
M Rixson

Officers in attendance:

Ed Freeman, Assistant Director Planning Strategy and Development Management
Matthew Dickins, Planning Policy Manager
Damian Hunter, Planning Solicitor
Wendy Harris, Democratic Services Officer

Councillor apologies:

D Haggerty
G Jung
A Bailey (non-committee member)

Chairman

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Strategic Planning Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 30 September 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 12.22 pm

20 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 September 2025 were confirmed as a true record, subject to Councillor Geoff Jung being added to the list of apologies.

21 Declarations of interest

Minute 26. Coastal Change Management Areas

In accordance with the Code of Good Practice for Councillors and Officers dealing with planning matters as set out in the Constitution, Councillors Geoff Jung and Todd Olive advised that they had been lobbied by residents regarding coastal change management areas.

22 Public speaking

Mr Shillitoe had request to speak on agenda items 1 and 7. He expressed his concerns over the minutes of the last meeting. He felt that there was an inherent conflict with EXMO 20 and that the site was currently not legally compliant, due to there being no mitigation strategy, and no HRA to support the Local Plan. He felt that the maps used were inconsistent, misleading and conflicting. He challenged the officers and urged councillors to make informed decisions with all the information available to them.

Mr Hamill had requested to speak on agenda item 7 and began by listing what he regarded as EXMO 20 failings. He went on to describe the role of a councillor and urged members when considering Marlcombe not to repeat what he perceived to be the errors of the March consultation. He suggested that EXMO 20 be removed from the second consultation and that the numbers be incorporated into Marlcombe.

Mr Humphrey spoke on two areas, the Regulation 19 process and the draft Local Plan. In relation to the Regulation 19 consultation, he stated that it had been six months since the consultation had finished and he had yet to receive any responses to the questions or comments asked. He asked when responses to the comments would be published. In relation to EXMO 20 Mr Humphrey commented that he believed that there were direct conflicts with the draft Local Plan, which had been agreed by the Strategic Planning Committee. He asked when the developers' Regulation 19 information or submissions needed to align with the draft Local Plan and added that he felt that the draft Local Plan should be agreed so that EDDC could control and deliver the best possible developments for the communities. Taking into account that the Plan would not be adopted until 2027, Mr Humphrey also asked whether a developer could submit an application for a site within the draft Local Plan for it to be approved by EDDC before the Plan had been adopted.

Councillor Roy Collins stated that he was a proud Devonian and felt that the countryside was being ruined by developers carrying out Government policy. He commented that there were more vacant homes than homeless people worldwide and that in the UK there

were 1 million empty homes and the birth rate was falling. He asked why more homes were required and stated that by 2050 nearly 25% of agricultural land would disappear and that farmers could not produce food for the nation if the land was being developed on. He felt that EDDC had done nothing to protect agricultural land. He suggested increasing housing numbers on other sites to save agricultural land.

The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Services replied to Mr Humphrey's questions. The draft Local Plan had received over 3000 comments and responses would not be made on a 1-2-1 basis. Officers would be responding to comments through the many reports coming to the Strategic Planning Committee and in the second Regulation 19 consultation. Developers were entitled to promote additional development, so there was no need for developers' plans to align with the plans in relation to EXMO 20 before the draft Local Plan was adopted. It was clarified that a further version of the EXMO 20 plan would be brought to a future meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee to be considered and agreed.

23 **Matters of urgency**

There were no matters of urgency to discuss.

24 **Confidential/exempt item(s)**

There were no confidential or exempt items.

25 **Marlcombe SPC Report**

The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Services' report sought members' agreement to changes to Policy WS01 within the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan to reflect further work that had taken place on the new community including reference to its name, Marlcombe, and specific policy requirements that had emerged through work on the masterplan and other work for the new town.

Members agreement was also sought to consult on the proposed masterplan and associated vision document, which set out its evolution. A similar document had also been prepared to show the work on assessing and mitigating the impacts of the development on transport infrastructure as well as a strategic outline business case for the development of the new town. These documents were also envisaged to form part of the second Regulation 19 consultation albeit in the case of the strategic outline business case, only the executive summary was intended for consultation purposes. This was to ensure that the development of Marlcombe was supported by appropriate planning policy and associated evidence and guidance documents and that the vision and strategy for its delivery was fully explained to consultees through the upcoming second Regulation 19 consultation. It was noted that Regulation 19 consultation was likely to commence in November 2025 for a six-week period.

Members were asked to review and consider the following:

- Masterplan
- Transport vision.
- Strategic outline business case.
- Revised vision.
- Revised policy WS01.
- Infrastructure delivery plan.

During his presentation the Assistant Director - Planning Strategy and Development Services explained that Marlcombe would have neighbourhood centres, employment land provision and employment within the town centre and two park and ride facilities which would provide focus points for public transport. Marlcombe's challenges included:

- Topography
- Heritage
- Landscape
- Flooding
- Utilities
- Noise and air quality
- Airport safeguarding
- Land control

Key changes included:

- Provision of land for wastewater facilities.
- Material recycling facilities.
- Balancing employment land with more employment adjacent to A30.
- Renewable energy facilities.

The engagement timeline was outlined:

- January – March 2021 issues and options.
- November 2022 – January 2023 Regulation 18 consultation.
- September 2024 Masterplan consultation.
- February – March 2025 Regulation 19 consultation.

The site allocation masterplan:

- Retained the principle of the three neighbourhoods.
- The town centre was located with visibility and prominence on key routes, very much at the heart.
- There was a balance of employment spaces north and south.
- A proposed key route which brought out access onto the A3052.
- Opportunities to deal with the topography of the site, although some challenges remained.
- Park and ride facilities both north and south.

Transport vision:

- Key features were around internalisation of trips through phased delivery of services and facilities alongside the housing, ensuring that as the new homes were built the town had the employment spaces, the community facilities and the infrastructure that it needed.
- If trips were internalised and out-commuting minimised the town would have sustainable travel movements, so creating 20-minute neighbourhoods.
- The town was designed to be very compact, self-contained and internalising trips where possible.
- There were park and ride facilities to the north and south.
- There was an internalised circular bus route.
- Looking to link into Digby and Sowton railway station as well Cranbrook.
- The transport vision was making the most of transport links in both directions.
- Some improvements to the road networks were required.

The strategic outline business case was a key document in terms of delivery of the Marlcombe scheme. It needed to secure a delivery vehicle and to ensure central Government funding.

Discussion included:

- The importance of design and local influence on that. Members questioned how much control on architectural style EDDC would have. A design code would be developed and EDDC were exploring the role of the master developer position.
- There should be different products in Cranbrook and Marlcombe and they should not compete with each other.
- The first units in Marlcombe were likely to come on site in 2031.
- Allotment allocation – these were included in the land budget and were regarded as key to the new town.
- Parking requirements of workplaces – this would be considered further as work progressed and it was possible to develop policy guidance.
- There were a number of challenges with housing numbers. The build rates were set as they were, with conservative numbers as it was very hard to predict when delivery might start and the speed at which it would take place. There was a need to strike a balance between being ambitious and being conservative about delivery rates so that EDDC was not entirely dependent on Marlcombe in achieving the 5-year housing supply.
- In terms of the infrastructure delivery plan, the cemetery should be included on the same level of importance as play areas. It was confirmed that cemeteries were included within the wider infrastructure list. Members felt play areas, allotments and amenity green space should be regarded as critical. The issue was what was to be delivered and when. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Services clarified that the items regarded as critical in the master plan were statutory requirements. The report did not include a definition of what was regarded as critical. It was suggested that the prioritisation of items be removed from the infrastructure delivery plan, however they were regarded as helpful when allocating finite funding.
- Providing adequate sewage services. The key thing was to set aside sufficient areas of land. EDDC was continuing to work with South West Water on providing improved facilities in the district.
- The development corporation would be crucial.
- Communications were vital, especially around specific areas such as sewage and proposed solutions, transport, affordability, local facilities including schools, governance, and the wider civic proposition with Cranbrook. This should be a top communications priority for the Council.
- Housing need, land use across the nation and density of development at Marlcombe were all debated.
- Government funding would be key on delivering aspirations. It was unclear at present as to the level of funding but Marlcombe had new homes programme support.

It was noted that the revised vision had been made more locally specific, but the focus of the vision had remained. During the meeting clarification was sought on the number of properties to be provided and the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Services agreed to amend the vision statement to incorporate ‘at least 10,000 properties’. Members debated the classifications given in the infrastructure delivery plan for Marlcombe, included as Appendix 2 to the report, and were reminded that it was an iterative process, with the infrastructure delivery plan being under continued review. Officers were thanked for a fantastic report and vision.

RESOLVED: that members of Strategic Planning Committee:

1. Agreed that the revised vision statement for Marlcombe be included in the second Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan for consultation.
2. Agreed that the revised wording for Strategic Policy WS01 included as Appendix 1 to the report be included in the second Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan for consultation.
3. Agreed that the appended Masterplan Vision (including any agreed revisions to the vision referred to in recommendation 1), Transport Vision and Strategic Outline Business Case - Executive Summary documents in relation to Marlcombe new town form part of the evidence base for the second Regulation 19 consultation on the new Local Plan planned for Autumn/Winter 2025 subject to delegated authority to the Assistant Director –

Planning Strategy and Development Management in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning to agree any minor changes.

4. Considered and commented on the emerging Infrastructure Delivery Plan for Marcombe included as Appendix 2 to the report.

26 **Coastal Change Management Areas report**

The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Services' report set out information and recommendations in respect of where Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMAs) were defined, the justification for this and the policy relating to CCMAs.

The CCMA boundary defined in the first Regulation 19 plan was largely based on work undertaken by the university of Plymouth. It was acknowledged that new national coastal erosion risk management mapping (NCERM) had been recently updated, but it was too late for this work to be taken into account at that time. The boundaries had now been redefined to generally account for both the University of Plymouth work and the NCERM. In the vicinity of Cliff Road in Sidmouth, the line is redrawn to align with new national coastal erosion risk mapping lines (though noting that these were similar to those shown in the first Regulation 19 consultation plan).

One option highlighted in the report and considered by the committee was to use both the Plymouth work and the NCERM to inform the plan and to take whatever was the more landward extent of the area identified as being potentially affected by coastal change. In their representation on the local plan the Environment Agency recommended this as the appropriate course of action.

The Coastal Change topic paper concluded that the CCMA boundaries should be defined by using both the Plymouth University and the NCERM evidence and the most landward boundary should be taken to define the extent of the CCMA, in accordance with the advice of the Environment Agency. The only exception to this approach was in the vicinity of Cliff Road, Sidmouth, where it was recommended that the NCERM was used to define the boundary. This designated a far smaller area of land than identified by the Plymouth work and was justified on the basis that key decisions on the beach management plan happened after the conclusion of the Plymouth work. Sidmouth had been subject to detailed study and analysis in the recent past that justified taking a localised approach in this area. The line was very similar to that shown in the previous consultation plan, which was based on the beach management plan, but using the NCERM mapping overcame criticisms of the evidence underpinning the beach management plan.

Members were asked to consider revisions to Policy AR03. The proposed changes made it clearer that the implementation of coastal management schemes would be taken into account when determining when coastal change could be expected, alongside NCERM and the University of Plymouth work. Changes had also been made to simplify the text in relation to what kind of development might be acceptable according to when coastal change was expected. The proposed change to clause E made the policy compliant with national advice.

Officers were thanked for their report and for reviewing the coastal change areas.

RESOLVED: that Strategic Planning Committee endorse the officer recommended changes to the CCMA boundary and related plan policy as set out in the report.

27 **Response to Dorset Local Plan Options Consultation**

The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Services’ report outlined the key issues arising from the Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation 2025 that were of relevance to East Devon District Council. It sought agreement on a formal response to be submitted to Dorset Council, focussing on cross-boundary matters including housing growth at Lyme Regis, landscape and infrastructure impacts, and shared environmental designations such as the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site and National Landscapes.

Key issues for East Devon included:

- Growth at Lyme Regis and impact on Uplyme.
- Housing numbers and infrastructure.
- National landscapes and the Jurassic Coast.
- Flexible settlements policy.
- Strategic heathland recreation migration.

The full proposed response to the consultation was included in the report and addressed the consultation questions which were of relevance to East Devon:

- Q3: Settlement hierarchy.
- Q8: Infrastructure delivery.
- Q12: Flexible settlements policy.

RESOLVED:

1. that Strategic Planning Committee agreed the proposed response to the Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation 2025 as set out in paragraph 3.2 this report and authorised the Planning Policy team to submit it to Dorset Council.
2. that Strategic Planning Committee give delegated authority to the Assistant Director- Planning Strategy and Development Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning to agree a Statement of Common Ground with Dorset Council covering the issues set out in this report.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

K Blakey
O Davey
P Hayward
M Howe (Vice-Chair)
B Ingham
G Jung
D Ledger
T Olive (Chair)
H Parr

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

P Arnott
I Barlow
R Collins
P Faithfull

Officers in attendance:

Ed Freeman, Assistant Director Planning Strategy and Development Services

Damian Hunter, Planning Solicitor
Andrew Melhuish, Democratic Services Manager

Chris Knott, Consultant
Simon Phillips, Consultant

Councillor apologies:

C Brown
P Fernley
Y Levine

Chair

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cranbrook Placemaking Group held at Conference Room, Younghayes Centre, Cranbrook on 4 August 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 9.30 am and ended at 11.09 am

12 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 June 2025

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 June 2025 were agreed as a true record.

In response to two questions raised about whether there was a procedure in place to follow up on actions agreed at previous meetings and about the timely publication of the minutes, the Director of Place explained that there were current capacity constraints that were limiting the ability to complete all actions in a timely manner. The Director of Place gave assurance that an update on the Community Connector position would be provided at the next meeting in October.

13 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interests.

14 Public speaking

There were no members of the public present.

15 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

16 Confidential/exempt items

There were no confidential or exempt items.

17 Education provision

The Chair welcomed Simon Niles, DCC Service Lead – School, Organisation, Planning and Admissions to the meeting who gave an update on the current position in Cranbrook for primary, secondary and special school provision outlining:

- Challenges to existing early years and childcare provision due to families buying their first homes which will inevitably lead to pressure for primary school places. There is now a need to deliver the next phase of an additional primary school at the Cobdens expansion area in September 2027
- It is anticipated that 2026 will be a difficult year for school admissions.
- Phased expansion of the Cranbrook Education Campus will increase capacity to 1,300 students. Further work will be needed to improve the kitchen facilities
- The Cranbrook Special School is very problematical as the free school programme is currently under review by the national government. DCC have requested regular updates from the Department of Education.
- A feasibility study is in progress for expanding Rockbeare C of E Primary School to create another class of 20 children

Responses to questions from members of the group included:

- It was noted that there was a betterment for the existing facilities at Rockbeare C of E School.
- In response to whether there was a plan for secondary school capacity due to the bulge of young people at primary school, the Group was reassured that the Campus had sufficient capacity to maintain inclusive communities.
- In response to whether it would be better to have smaller schools, Simon Niles questioned their financial sustainability and the significantly increased costings of building smaller schools.
- It was noted that the catchment area for Stone Barton, which was split in half, had been resolved and would be moved so it fell within Cranbrook Education Campus catchment.
- A concern was raised about the phasing of smaller developments and when trigger points for education contributions/provision would be reached.
- It was queried whether DCC's pupil ratios aligned with those new published by the Department of Education and whether they risked under-estimating the likely number of pupils over the short, medium and long term.
- It was noted that the capacity for the secondary school was for a maximum of 1,300 places.
- It was questioned whether the opening date of September 2027 for the Cobden's primary school was realistic.
- It was noted that DCC received regular data drops from the NHS in terms of place planning and there were no concerns for the cohorts coming forward.

RESOLVED:

That the education briefing paper be noted.

18 **London Road upgrades**

Devon County Council's Principal Planning Officer gave a brief summary of the current London Road footway/cycleway improvements which was in line with the Cranbrook Plan requirements to deliver sections of the London Road that were not covered by the developer's proposals.

Responses to questions from members of the group included:

- It was queried whether Rockbeare Parish Council had been included in communications about the improvements.
- In response to a question about whether shared footpaths/cycleways should be reconsidered as they are dangerous for pedestrians which also resulted in them being used for car parks, the Group were advised that improvements were in line with revised guidance of the LTN120.
- It was noted that land at Ingrams should not be referred to as Cranbrook United Football Club.
- Group Members were supportive of viewing the improvement plans so as to have an input into the design.

The Group agreed to invite Chris BurrIDGE-Barney, DCC Transportation Planning Officer to give a presentation setting out the details for the proposed footpath/cycleway.

RESOLVED:

1. To invite Chris Burridge-Barney, DCC Transportation Planning Officer to attend a future meeting to give a presentation on the detail of the proposed improvements and to consider inviting Rockbeare Parish Council as the adjoining parish council.
2. Devon County Council's Principal Planning Officer to liaise with the New Community Manager about the CIL funding agreement.

19 **Update on leisure and health and wellbeing projects**

The Group received a brief verbal update from the Director for Place on the leisure and health and wellbeing projects outlining the pressure for primary care space and the business case to secure funds for a combined health and wellbeing campus and centre. He advised that a workshop took place last week to help bring all parties with an interest in the town centre together and that a further workshop would take place to progress the proposals.

The Chair advised that EDDC's Cabinet were due to have a briefing this week to discuss the working plans for the leisure centre project.

RESOLVED:

A written report would be brought to the next meeting in October.

20 **Community Governance Review**

The Group noted that the Community Governance Review was now live.

RESOLVED:

The Director for Place to confirm the potential impact to the timescales if the consultation runs for 3 months.

21 **Implementation Plan**

Group Members received the Implementation Plan and updates were provided on the following:

- Cranbox – the risk around the timing of the transfer of the land was currently being considered if the project went forward during the preconstruction stage.
- Extra Care Housing – land transfer not yet completed.
- Town Centre planning applications – Taylor Wimpey Sales Office has temporary planning permission until 22 August 2025.

RESOLVED:

Director of Place to follow up on enforcement.

- Phase 2 retail acquisition – land being marketed but no interest. The Group agreed to consider a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to acquire the units.

RESOLVED:

Director for Place to explore a CPO to acquire the units.

- Town Centre highway uplift works – discussions over timetable of works.

RESOLVED:

The New Community Manager to update at the next meeting.

Non-Group Member, Councillor Peter Faithfull requested that adjoining parish councils for expansion areas 1-4 be consulted and invited to take part in discussions

RESOLVED:

That the Implementation Plan be noted.

22 **Forward Plan**

The Group received the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED:

The Group noted the Forward Plan subject to the discussions on the London Road upgrades and the amendment to the Management of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace – preferred approach being moved forward to 6 October 2025.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

Kevin Blakey (EDDC)
Kim Bloxham (EDDC)
Todd Olive (EDDC)
Leslie Bayliss (CTC)
Henry Gent (DCC)

Also present (for some or all the meeting)

Simon Niles, DCC Service Lead – School, Organisation, Planning and Admissions

Officers in attendance:

Andrew Wood, Director of Place
Alexandra Robinson, Deputy Clerk, Cranbrook Town Council
Nicola Wilson, Principal Planning Officer (DCC)
Janine Gardner, Clerk to Cranbrook Town Council
Wendy Harris, Democratic Services Officer

Apologies

S Hawkins
S Ratnage
N Harnett
T Billeter
E Freeman

Chair

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Leisure Strategy Delivery Forum held at Online via Zoom app on 16 September 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.06 pm and ended at 7.59 pm

17 Minutes of the previous meetings held on 11 June 2025 and 19 June 2025

The minutes of the previous meetings held on 11 June 2025 and 19 June 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record.

18 Declaration of interest

Minute 25. Update on Playing Pitch Audit.
Councillor Mike Goodman, Councillor is a member of Sidmouth Croquet and Tennis Club.

19 Public Speaking

No members of the public had registered to speak at the meeting.

20 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

21 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There were two items to be considered in private session (minutes 27 and 28 refer).

22 LED Facilities and Activities report June - August 2025

The LED Regional Manager presented this report which provided an update on facilities and activities including centre improvements and membership challenges, key achievements, special events and initiatives and community health and wellbeing.

During the discussion it was noted that pickleball is a popular and growing sport. LED has launched this across all sites and, as part of its development plan, will be bringing booking online, rather than by phone as at present.

There were no further questions or discussion points and the report was noted.

23 LED KPI Dashboard August 2025

The Forum received and noted key details of the performance of LED Community Leisure for August 2025.

Discussion and clarification included the point that at the meeting on 11 June, LED officers advised that they would look to manually extrapolate data specific to Axminster

Leisure Centre, in order that this can be reported to the Forum. This point to be followed up for future meetings.

There being no further questions or discussion points, the report was noted.

24 **Update on Cranbrook Leisure, Health and Wellbeing Campus**

The Leisure Manager presented this report which provided an update on the progress with the Cranbrook Leisure Centre, part of Cranbrook Leisure, Health and Wellbeing Project.

Discussion and clarification included the following points:

- The date at which the indexation of figures in the Addendum started would be checked for clarification;
- Assurance was given that EDDC meet the costs of the leisure centre only and that Devon County Council and the NHS will meet the costs of their own provision;
- The feasibility study had only recently been completed and would form some of the background to the forthcoming Cabinet report;
- EDDC Officers have been liaising regularly with Sport England contacts.

The Forum noted the progress being made by the Cranbrook Leisure Centre Project Team.

It was agreed to recommend to Cabinet and then onto Council to endorse the Addendum to the Leisure Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION to Cabinet and then onto Council:

That the Addendum to the Leisure Strategy be endorsed.

25 **Update on Playing Pitch Audit**

The Leisure Manager presented this report which summarised the key findings of the 2025 Playing Pitch Audit of current facility provision, which would form part of the evidence plan for the emerging local plan. The Leisure Manager advised that, due to the wide geographical spread of the district, scenario testing had been broken down into sub areas, west, central and east, which were in line with planning areas. Details of the sub areas would be circulated after the meeting. Scenario testing for each of the eight towns in East Devon would be used to inform current and future provision, with the caveat that this was subject to feasibility and funding.

The report explained how the outcomes would also inform the update to the Playing Pitch Strategy, which would be drafted for consultation in the autumn, prior to adoption.

Discussion and clarification included the following points:

- Funding and location would be challenges for future provision delivery;
- Town and Parish Councils had been involved in the audit process and would be contacted again for further consultation on the Strategy.

The Forum noted the findings of the 2025 Playing Pitch Assessment and Appendix which would be used to review the Playing Pitch Strategy to be submitted to the Forum later this year prior to adoption.

26 **Property and FM Team Update Report Q1 2025/26**

The Assistant Director, Place Assets & Commercialisation presented this report which summarised corporate property and FM activities for the first quarter of financial year 2025/26 (April to June 2025) and listed the tasks for the second quarter of 2025/26 (July to September 2025) on LED operated properties.

The report also provided an update on ongoing capital projects on LED operated properties and presented a comparison of maintenance spend and income from years 2019/20 to 2024/25, excluding the Covid years. The Assistant Director identified areas where the report differed from the format and content of previous reports.

Discussion and clarification included the following points:

- It was noted that there is typically a budget overspend on maintenance for LED and dual use buildings and that LED's contribution does not fully cover costs;
- Budget setting was based on previous years' costs with an uplift, rather than a required budget;
- It was noted that LED also incurs reactive maintenance costs which should be fed into the budget reporting for EDDC to show the full cost of maintenance.

The Forum noted the contents of the report.

The public part of the meeting concluded and the meeting went into private session (Part B).

27 **Flamingo Pool update**

The Leisure Manager presented this update report and invited representatives of the Flamingo Community Pool to speak.

The Forum discussed the report and relevant considerations at length. At 7:33pm Councillor Simon Smith left and the meeting became inquorate.

28 **Leisure review update**

As the meeting was inquorate this item would be discussed at the next meeting.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

M Goodman
S Hawkins (Chair)
P Hayward
S Smith

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

I Barlow
R Collins
P Faithfull
M Hall

S Jackson
V Johns

Officers in attendance:

Mike O'Mahony, Senior Leisure Officer
Tim Child, Assistant Director Place, Assets & Commercialisation
Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer
Andrew Wood, Director of Place

Councillor apologies:

P Arnott
K Bloxham
N Hookway
F King
J Loudoun

Chair

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 10 July 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.45 pm

1 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 January 2025 were agreed and signed as a true record.

2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Public speaking

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

4 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

5 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There were no confidential or exempt items.

6 Decisions made by Cabinet called in by Members for scrutiny in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules

There were no decisions made by Cabinet called in by Members for scrutiny.

7 Annual complaint monitoring and service improvement report 2024/25

The Monitoring Officer presented the annual complaint monitoring and service improvement report for 2024/25.

It was noted that the increase in complaints year on year was consistent with national figures. It was no surprise that the highest number of complaints received related to planning and housing, and it should be borne in mind that improvements to the housing service were still on-going. It would, therefore, take some time to see a reduction in the number of housing complaints. Recent recruitment to fill staff shortages in the planning service was starting to prove beneficial with regard to reducing planning related complaints.

The Assistant Director for Housing (Regulatory Landlord Services Unit) advised that additional staff resource had been brought in to handle complaints and that the backlog

of complaints at the end of last year had now been cleared. Feedback from tenants showed that changes to the housing service were now having a positive impact.

The Monitoring Officer advised that the latest report from the Housing Ombudsman was expected later in July. The annual performance report from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for 2024/25 was available and showed of the three complaints investigated, that one was upheld and there was a 100% satisfactory remedy rate.

Discussion and responses to questions from Councillors included the following points:

- Regarding the Housing Action Plan referred to by the Assistant Director for Housing, it was agreed that this would be shared with the Housing Review Board;
- It would have assisted the Scrutiny Committee to have had the Action Plan included with the report to enable Councillors to see what was now being done differently from previous years when the same actions had been repeated year on year;
- It was noted that increased resources enabled problems to be addressed, which was preferable to encouraging residents to complain;
- The Committee would welcome more information on how the service was being proactive in preventing complaints being made in the first instance;
- Regarding staff vacancies, the Assistant Director advised that a permanent member of staff had now been recruited to the post of Housing Performance Lead and would start at the beginning of August;
- It was noted that a significant improvement had been made regarding anti-social behaviour complaints, following improvements as a result of an Ombudsman ruling in 2023;
- It was noted that the highest dissatisfaction related to housing repairs and all complaint learning was fed into operational meetings with contractors;
- A more detailed breakdown of the nature of complaints related to housing repairs would be helpful for Councillors, as the substance of complaints was variable;
- It was queried whether complaints related to the length of time taken to start repairs, or the quality of the repair itself;
- Regarding the checking of the quality of repairs, standard level repairs cannot be checked due to the volume undertaken. Higher value repairs and major works are monitored closely by EDDC surveyors during and after completion of the repairs;
- Regarding Councillors submitting enquiries on repairs, the Assistant Director advised that the Councillor enquiry form goes to the same officer each time for consistency of response;
- The Council could be more proactive when communicating with tenants in the same location when repairs or works are being carried out on houses of the same age. In response to this point, the Assistant Director advised that a whole house approach was preferable and that a report would be presented to the Housing Review Board regarding the holistic management of assets;
- It was queried whether there was a target for response times. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the target for stage 1 complaints was 10 working days and for stage 2 complaints 20 working days;
- The Councillor enquiry form was not for members of the public. The public could engage with the Council in various other ways;
- Regarding penalties for the contractors undertaking repairs, there was provision for compensation where repairs were sub-standard;
- The Assistant Director advised that a software system for carrying out transactional surveys, which would allow for live feedback from tenants every time a repair was completed, had been considered last year but was too expensive. Other options were currently being considered;
- It was suggested that more information on context and scale of the complaints would be helpful for Councillors eg. What was the ratio of service requests to complaints;
- Concern was raised regarding the cost of tenants having to move out of their homes when repairs were being undertaken. It was noted that trying to find suitable alternative accommodation could be difficult and could add to the length of time for repairs to be

completed and to the cost of the repair. It was queried whether this was something which the Housing Review Board already scrutinised or not;

- There was discussion regarding whether the Scrutiny Committee could provide assistance to the Housing Review Board by way of a TaFF to scrutinise certain elements. Concern was expressed that the Scrutiny Committee should not interfere with the work of another committee. The feedback from the Peer Review supported the separation of the three scrutiny function committees. It was noted that the Housing Review Board could meet more than four times per year if required, but that was a decision for that committee.

It was agreed that the annual complaint monitoring and service improvement report for 2024/25 be noted.

8 **Changes to Agricultural Property Relief and Business Property Relief**

The report noted that the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 30 January 2025 had considered a scoping report regarding the impact of reforms to agricultural property relief and business property relief from inheritance tax. These had been announced by the UK Government at the Autumn Budget 2024. The proposed changes had proved to be particularly controversial with the farming community and had prompted a subsequent motion from Council on 4 December 2024.

The proposed scope of work focused on gathering evidence around the likely impact that the forthcoming changes would have on the District, particularly in relation to family farms. The report before the Committee provided an update on this activity following engagement with the National Farmers Union.

Discussion and questions from Councillors included the following points:

- Prior to 1997 all farms had to complete a census. This had recently been re-introduced to enable the Government to collect detailed information;
- The National Farmers Union only represented a proportion of farmers, with other organisations such as the Country Landowners Association also providing representation;
- The report made clear that the Council was not in a position to influence the Government, despite the Council's concern for the impact of the changes on farmers in the District;
- Even if the Committee had been able to obtain information on the impact of the changes on family farms in the District, the Council would still not be able to influence the Government's decision.

AGREED

It was agreed that the Committee noted the contents of the report and acknowledged the lack of granular level data through which to accurately measure the likely impact of the proposed changes in relation to inheritance liabilities for farming enterprises in the District.

It was further agreed to make the following recommendation to Council:

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

RECOMMENDED THAT:

1. This issue is best addressed at a national level, taking a lead from the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee report, and

2. 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.

9 **Update on progress with the Scrutiny Action Plan**

The Democratic Services Manager had provided an update on progress with the Scrutiny Action Plan following the recommendations from the Scrutiny Review as follows:

Recommendation 1 – Review Terms of Reference of the three committees to ensure they operate in a complementary manner

Annual Council approved a change in membership to be 15 councillors on Overview Committee and Scrutiny Committee. HRB to be 15 made up of 8 councillors and 7 tenant/independent representatives.

As part of the review of the terms of reference, the Constitution Working Group was considering:

- Frequency of meetings – 4 per year
- Quorum – 4 councillors
- Terms of Reference would set out specific functions of each committee and a complementary listing shared by all 3 committees

Recommendations from Constitution Working Group will be presented to Council in October.

Recommendation 2 – Scrutiny Support

The three DSOs who support scrutiny have undergone training and are now providing support as part of their roles. Further development to follow.

Short term investment was no longer available in light of Local Government Reorganisation.

Supporting effective work programming and working up scoping documents is ongoing.

Recommendation 3 – Senior Officer Support

Director assigned to each committee

- Scrutiny Committee – Andy W/Melanie W
- Overview Committee – Simon Davey
- HRB – Catrin Stark

Directors were starting to hold meetings with Chairs

Recommendation 4 – Learning & Development

CfGS training session on work programming had been held in November 2024

Spotlight sessions had started and were taking place to brief committees on topics: recent sessions include planning enforcement and parking charges for motorhomes; a session on public conveniences would be held on 15 July

Recommendation 5 – Prioritising Work

A meeting was being arranged with Chair and Vice Chair of each committee to co-ordinate work programmes across the 3 committees

Recommendation 6 – Cross Party meetings

Cross party pre-meetings to be held as and when required (will depend on the items coming forward to committees)

Recommendation 7 – Development Support

Officer training to be made available in September to give officers an understanding of the role of the 3 overview and scrutiny committees

Recommendation 8 – Having an impact

Work is under way to identify how recommendations from overview and scrutiny are tracked

Publicity from overview and scrutiny reviews would be put out through social media, recent example being the outcome from the Coach Tourism TAFF.

Follow up:

It was noted that currently there is no process in place to agree whether a pre-meeting should be held before a Committee meeting and when this should take place. The Democratic Services Officer would follow this up with the Democratic Services Manager.

The update was noted.

10 Work programme

During the discussion on the work programme, the Monitoring Officer advised that recent work had been undertaken to ensure that when proposals were brought forward, they were supported by officer advice and information so as to make any subsequent scrutiny work meaningful and effective.

The following items for the work programme were discussed and agreed:

- To request that the latest report on consultancy and agency spend is brought to the October meeting;
- Scoping document on the impacts of the previous ban on the use of glyphosates requested for the September meeting, with a view to receiving a report in October;
- Request that the Deputy Monitoring Officer takes the item on Devon County Council's responses to planning applications back to the Strategic Planning Committee.

Subject to the above items, the work programme was agreed.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

I Barlow
K Blakey
J Brown
B Collins
M Goodman (Chair)
V Johns
Y Levine
D Mackinder (Vice-Chair)

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

C Brown
R Collins

Officers in attendance:

Tracy Hendren, Chief Executive
Sarah Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer
Andrew King, Assistant Director for Housing (Regulated Services)
Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)

Councillor apologies:

M Chapman
O Davey
A Hall
M Hall

Chair

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 4 September 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.31 pm

11 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 July 2025 were agreed and signed as a true record.

12 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

13 Public speaking

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

14 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

15 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There were no confidential or exempt items.

16 Decisions made by Cabinet called in by Members for scrutiny in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules

There were no decisions made by Cabinet called in by Members for scrutiny in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure rules.

17 East Devon Safeguarding annual review 2024-25

The Portfolio Holder for Council, Corporate and External Engagement introduced this item, commended the report to the Committee and thanked staff for their vigilance in safeguarding work.

The Assistant Director Environmental Health introduced the report which outlined the safeguarding work undertaken by the Council in 2024-25. Key points in the report were highlighted.

Discussion and responses to questions included the following points:

- Councillors with concerns regarding anti-social behaviour were advised to contact the Anti-social Behaviour and Community Safety Lead Officer. Community Safety Groups [formerly Local Action Groups] had started to meet again recently and bring together various local agencies to tackle issues such as anti-social behaviour;
- It was estimated that the number of referrals which proceed as safeguarding cases was approximately 1/5th, which was in line with the national average;

- Regarding training for Councillors, Officers were working with the Democratic Services Manager to improve take up of mandatory safeguarding training;
- It was noted and agreed that it would be desirable and appropriate to update Councillor training by June 2026 to bring this in line with the requirement for staff to undertake safeguarding training every three years;
- It would be beneficial to identify the level at which Councillors had been trained through external providers to ensure that Council training was appropriate;
- Councillors who had not undertaken training would be followed up to either complete mandatory safeguarding training, or provide evidence of training undertaken elsewhere;
- It was noted that work undertaken by the Anti-social Behaviour and Community Safety Lead had assisted with improved staff awareness and confidence to report safeguarding concerns;
- The report demonstrated the importance of safeguarding to the Council.

The Chair thanked Officers for the report and the Committee noted the activity that had taken place with regards to safeguarding delivery for 2024-25.

18 **Review of emergency planning and responses 2024-25**

The Portfolio Holder for Council, Corporate and External Engagement introduced this item and commended the report to the Committee.

The Assistant Director Environmental Health introduced the report which outlined emergency planning and response work undertaken in the year 2024-25. Key points were highlighted and it was emphasised that capacity within teams would need to be considered in the near future to ensure that teams are appropriately resourced going forward.

Discussion and responses to questions included the following points:

- It was suggested that the Councillor newsletter would be an appropriate place to raise awareness among Ward Members of the need for Town and Parish Councils to plan for emergencies;
- Town and Parish Clerks could be asked to add emergency planning to their council agendas to increase preparedness;
- Concern was raised with regard to the likelihood of a terrorist attack. Officers assured Members that the Council is aware of such issues and that the Emergency Duty Officer would receive notifications in the event of malicious or harmful threats;
- With regard to Martyn's Law, now enacted as the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, further work with various teams is required to understand how EDDC's public buildings and spaces will be affected by the legislation;
- A number of learning points had emerged from the Newton Poppleford flood event in 2023 and there is a review process built into the Local Resilience Forum work which provides feedback;
- It was welcomed that some parishes are working together to build resilience;
- It was suggested that an emergency planning pack or training video could be produced for Town and Parish Councils, and attention was drawn to the Devon Communities Together website which holds details of current live emergency plans;
- It was noted that the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Officer is regularly in contact with East Devon Parish Clerks to raise awareness of emergency planning and support and resources available.

It was agreed to recommend to Officers that regular updates are included in the Councillors' newsletter.

The Chair thanked Officers for their informative report and details of the work being undertaken behind the scenes.

The Committee noted the activity that has been taken with regards to Emergency Planning and response delivery for 2024 – 25.

19 **Scoping document - impact of the ban on the use of glyphosate**

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the scoping document and drew Councillors' attention to the proposed timescale which allowed for consultation with Ward Members to understand fully any specific problem areas.

Discussion and responses to questions included the following points:

- If the review proceeds, it would be preferable to consider the report in February 2026 ahead of the year's growing season;
- The impact on biodiversity should be included when considering glyphosate use;
- Consideration should be given to the distinction between weed growth which is causing damage in certain areas or is viewed by residents as unsightly;
- The report should include the effectiveness of alternative methods of weed control;
- There should be clarity regarding land which is the responsibility of Devon County Council rather than EDDC land;
- Undeveloped EDDC land would be included in the review subject to Officer capacity;
- The duty of care to employees when using glyphosate should be recognised;
- The management of wildlife improvement areas requires a high level of staff resource;
- The review should include the Cabinet report of March 2022 and the agreed points from that meeting.

It was agreed to proceed with the review on the basis of the scoping document and the above points, with a report to the Committee in February 2026.

The Chair thanked the StreetScene Operations Manager for attending the meeting.

20 **Work Programme**

The work programme was amended to include the report on the impact of the ban on use of glyphosate coming to the February 2026 Committee. The work programme was then agreed.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

I Barlow
K Blakey
O Davey
M Goodman (Chair)
D Mackinder (Vice-Chair)

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

R Collins
R Jefferies
J Loudoun
M Rixson

Officers in attendance:

Matthew Blythe, Assistant Director Environmental Health
Sarah Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer
Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)
David Whelan, Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Officer
Julia Woodbridge, StreetScene Operations Manager

Councillor apologies:

J Brown
B Collins
A Hall
M Hall
M Hartnell
V Johns
Y Levine

Chair

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Overview Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 17 July 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.35 pm

35 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 March 2025

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 March 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record.

36 Declarations of interest

Minute 40, Exmouth Motorhome Parking – Overnight Stopovers
Cllr Tim Dumper, Affects Non-Registerable Interest, Former member of the Exmouth Town Council Motorhomes TAFF.

Minute 40, Exmouth Motorhome Parking – Overnight Stopovers
Cllr Paula Fernley, Affects Non-Registerable Interest, Has a campervan.

Minute 40, Exmouth Motorhome Parking – Overnight Stopovers
Cllr Geoff Jung, Affects Non-Registerable Interest, Sat on the Exmouth Town Council Motorhomes TAFF.

Minute 40, Exmouth Motorhome Parking – Overnight Stopovers
Cllr Steve Gazzard, Affects Non-Registerable Interest, Member of Exmouth Town Council and member of the Exmouth Town Council Motorhomes TAFF.

37 Public Speaking

Two members of the public had registered to speak at the meeting.

Mr Robert Kathro spoke in connection with Exmouth Motorhomes Parking – Overnight Stopovers item (minute 40 refers). He outlined shortcomings with the public consultation, including the data collection exercise and reporting and analysis of the results. Mr Kathro also spoke of issues around fire safety, rule breaking, lack of enforcement, and financial questions, many of which were identified within the report but to which credible and meaningful solutions were not provided. He requested that the Committee rejects the proposals before them and suggested that they needed to be reworked.

The Democratic Services Officer read out a statement of behalf of Mr Sav Spall, concerning Exmouth Motorhomes Parking – Overnight Stopovers (minute 40 refers). Mr Spall strongly opposed the policy of allowing overnight stopovers for motorhomes on the seafront and in Maer Road Car Park. He outlined examples of inconsiderate behaviour and unsafe practices which were not being policed, and parking restrictions which were not being enforced. He asked why out of town car parks were not being used to accommodate vehicles, given this would be easier for the Council to regulate and would make owners have to walk through the town to the seafront, providing footfall for shops, cafes and restaurants. Mr Spall referred to the public consultation which he said should

have been a fair and democratic process but in effect, served only to promote and entice motorhomes and campervans to the seafront.

38 **Matters of urgency**

There were no matters of urgency.

39 **Confidential/exempt item(s)**

There were no confidential/exempt items.

40 **Exmouth Motorhome Parking - Overnight Stopovers**

The Parking Services Manager presented his report which set out recommendations for a number of proposed changes to the overnight stopover arrangements for motorhomes in two Exmouth car parks, following public consultation. The recommendations had been formally endorsed by Exmouth Town Council in April 2025.

The Chair welcomed Exmouth Town Councillor Fred Caygill who was attending as an external witness in his capacity as Chair of Exmouth Town Council's Motorhome Task and Finish Forum (TAFF). A briefing paper provided by the Town Council had been published with the agenda papers and Cllr Caygill verbally outlined the background and context to the TAFF's recommendations.

Discussion and clarification included the following points:

- The council's current policy on motorhome parking is set out in the Parking Strategy.
- Some members were of the view that motorhomes on the seafront should be banned. On visiting Exmouth, they were surprised at the number of motorhomes in the area, taking up spaces which could otherwise be used by local families who want to enjoy the beach.
- Other members noted that campervans are popular worldwide and it is not feasible to ban them. The Council needs to cater for them which in turn helps the local population who do not want campervans parked outside their driveways and on residential streets.
- There is dedicated parking enforcement daily except for Christmas Day; however, there is no resource for enforcement beyond 6pm and into the night.
- Members noted that RingGo would prevent people from paying to stay for more than 3 consecutive nights but were concerned that no enforcement is in place to stop people from returning after 6.00pm, and parking overnight for free. The Parking Services Manager responded that from experience, most people are conscientious and observe the restrictions. He added that enforcement officers are active from 6.00am.
- It was suggested that 2 consecutive nights would be more appropriate for stopovers, still allowing people to stay and enjoy the town and seafront.
- The Council has committed to accept payment by cash for as long as practically possible; however, it is intended to only take payment by RingGo for motorhomes parking, as a specific and bespoke solution to the particular problem of people parking for longer than the maximum stay restrictions.
- Some members were of the view that Queen's Drive Echelon is unsuitable for campervans and motorhomes. Spaces cannot accommodate vehicles of the size which typically have on-board facilities, and the closest public toilets are closed overnight from 10.00pm. The Parking Services Manager responded that there is an expectation for people to be responsible and use the facilities for waste disposal as they need them. There is no requirement for their vehicles to be self-contained, however he felt the nature of the recommendations would naturally attract vehicles that have on-board facilities.
- Members felt that the overnight stopover fee was too low at £15.00 for 24 hours given that it costs £8.00 to park a car for the day, and motorhomes would benefit from

enhanced facilities. It was suggested to set the fee at £20.00, with the £5.00 uplift to be ringfenced to increase enforcement activity, in the most appropriate way.

- Members proposed that the overnight stopover arrangements are monitored and reviewed annually at the appropriate scrutiny committee.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet:

Improvements to overnight stopover arrangements as follows:

1. Install a drive-over grey wastewater (shower and dishwater) disposal point in Maer Road car park
2. Install a chemical toilet waste disposal point in Maer Road car park – connected directly to the sewerage network
3. Install a fresh water tap in Maer Road car park
4. Reduce the maximum permitted number of consecutive overnight stays to 2 nights, with no return within 72 hours.
5. Improve the signage stating the rules and restrictions for overnight stays within both car parks – including ground markings along Queen's Drive Echelon to designate bays suitable for overnight parking, stipulating a safe distance between vehicles.
6. Trial RingGo only payment for overnight parking sessions to prevent vehicles remaining on site for longer than the maximum permitted number of nights
7. Increase the overnight stopover fee to £20.00 (currently £11.00) per night in recognition of the additional costs incurred in managing, maintaining and installing the physical improvements to the overnight parking arrangements.
8. The uplift in charging to be ringfenced to increase enforcement activity.
9. A yearly review to be carried out by the appropriate scrutiny committee.

The Chair thanked Cllr Caygill for his contribution to the meeting.

41 Review of Petition Scheme

The Democratic Services Manager presented this report which set out proposed changes to the Petition Scheme for the Committee's consideration.

Members were invited to comment on the proposed wording, for submission to the Constitution Working Group which would make a final recommendation to a future Council meeting.

The Democratic Services Manager informed the Committee that implementation of the new e-petitions platform was delayed. It had been intended to introduce the platform on the Council's website by 30 May 2025, and the Democratic Services Manager stated that he would provide an updated timeline by email to the Chair, during the week commencing 21 July 2025.

Discussion included the following points:

- The e-petitions platform is an additional offering to members of the public but the Council will continue to accept hard copy petitions.
- Costs for the e-petitions platform are yet to be confirmed.
- In the Democratic Services Manager's experience where authorities have an e-petitions scheme, this has not led to a significant increase in petitions submitted.
- Need to be careful with the wording in the petitions scheme so as not to set a public expectation that the Council will fix an issue over which it has no control.
- At section 3.2 of the scheme which covers Petitions for Council Debate, consider setting the signatures threshold at a percentage of the population rather than a fixed number, given the chances of getting 1,500 signatures in a village will be quite slim, relative to a town.
- Review whether section 3.3 is needed, in relation to petitions calling for Council employees to give evidence at any meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

- In reference to section 5.12 concerning petitions which the Monitoring Officer may decline to accept, it would be appropriate for this to be subject to Member oversight, in the interests of transparency.
- Consider setting out in the Petitions Scheme what this Council does not do, given that people often do not know what individual councils do.

42 **Animal Licensing and Enforcement Policies**

The Assistant Director – Environmental Health presented this report which proposed service-specific policies relating to Animal Licensing and Animal Enforcement, to ensure a consistent and effective approach to animal related enforcement.

In discussion, it was suggested to put out communications to promote awareness of the policies among the general public.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet:

1. To formally adopt the draft Animal Enforcement Policy
2. To formally adopt the draft Animal Licensing Policy

43 **Work programme 2025 - 2026**

Members received and noted the Overview Committee's Work Programme for 2025-2026.

Having reviewed the Cabinet Forward Plan, the Chair suggested adding the Public Spaces Protection Orders consultation to the Committee's work programme, for a future meeting.

Members also considered a proposal form submitted by Cllr Geoff Jung concerning beach hut arrangements and charging review of current agreed policy. It was agreed to add this item to the Committee's work programme, for scoping work to be undertaken.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

B Collins
R Collins
T Dumper (Vice-Chair)
P Fernley
A Hall (Chair)
M Hall
Y Levine
D Mackinder
D Wilson

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

P Faithfull
S Gazzard
G Jung

Officers in attendance:

Matthew Blythe, Assistant Director Environmental Health

Simon Davey, Director of Finance
Richard Easthope, Parking Services Manager
Sarah James, Democratic Services Officer
Andrew Melhuish, Democratic Services Manager

Representatives of Exmouth Town Council in attendance:
Cllr Fred Caygill, Chair of the Exmouth Motorhomes Task and Finish Forum

Councillor apologies:
A Bailey
B Bailey
D Haggerty
M Hartnell
J Heath

Chairman

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Audit and Governance Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House on 24 July 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 2.30 pm and ended at 4.30 pm

1 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 20 March 2025 were confirmed as a true record.

2 Declarations on interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Public speaking

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

4 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

5 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There were no confidential or exempt items.

6 Internal Audit Annual Opinion 2024/25

The Assistant Director, SWAP Internal Audit Services, Lisa Fryer, presented the report which highlighted that the Internal Audit function played a central role in corporate governance by providing assurance to senior management and the Audit and Governance Committee.

Under the *Application Note: Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK Public Sector* issued by CIPFA, the chief audit executive (SWAP Assistant Director) must provide an overall conclusion on the effectiveness of the Council's internal control environment. This conclusion was the Internal Audit Annual Opinion. The Annual Opinion was informed by the work SWAP had completed as part of the 2024/25 Internal Audit Plan. Furthermore, the Annual Opinion supported production of the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

The Assistant Director, SWAP Internal Audit Services, advised that there was a good basis for the opinion as the Internal Audit Plan had been substantially delivered.

During the discussion, it was noted that advisory matters do not receive an assurance opinion. Items marked confidential in the report would be brought to a future meeting.

Concern was expressed regarding risks to business continuity for Strata and it was noted that Strata was audited separately by the Devon Audit Partnership. A report would be brought to a future Committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Internal Audit Annual Opinion for 2024/25 be noted.

7

Internal Audit Progress Report - Quarter 4 2024-25

Connor McLaughlin Nester, SWAP, presented the Internal Audit Activity Progress Report for quarter 4, 2024-25 and highlighted key points from the report.

The Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Officer advised that recovery time objectives set out in service plans were being reviewed against those set out by Strata to ensure that there were no discrepancies.

During the discussion, it was noted that the InPhase performance management system was still not operational. The Information Governance Board had been tasked with oversight of responsibilities under the Transparency Code.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the progress against the 2024/25 Internal Audit Plan as of 3rd July 2025, and the findings reported.

8

External Audit Plan 2024 - 2025

The Key Audit Partner, Peter Barber, from Grant Thornton presented the External Audit Plan 2024 – 2025 and highlighted key points.

Discussion included the process whereby the Actuary for the Devon Pension Fund provided details of the net position for EDDC to ensure that this is properly reflected in EDDC's accounts.

The Chair thanked Mr Barber for his report and noted the progress being made.

RESOLVED:

That the External Audit Plan 2024 – 2025 be noted.

9

Risk Report quarter one 2025/26

Joanne Avery the Interim Performance & Risk Team Leader presented the Risk Information for the first quarter of 2025/26 financial year. This provided an overview of strategic and operational risks, and was supplied to allow the Committee to monitor the status of these risks. This followed the full review of risks by responsible officers during May/June 2025. Most of the reviews were completed by the responsible officers with the Interim Performance & Risk Team Leader. The report also provided a timetable for future reporting.

It was agreed that the Chair, the Vice-Chair, Cllr Goodman and Mr Rob Wood would meet with the Interim Performance and Risk Team Leader to consider the full risk register.

The Chair thanked the Officer for their report.

RESOLVED:

That the current status of the strategic and operational risks following the full risk review undertaken in May/June 2025 be noted.

10 **Draft Statement of Accounts 2024/25 including Annual Governance Statement**

The Finance Manager updated Members on the draft statement of accounts 2024/25 which were made available on the Council's website from 30 June 2025. The period of public inspection ran until the 11 August 2025. The appointed auditors Grant Thornton LLP were due to commence the 2024/25-year end audit in October 2025 and an expected close out by December 2025.

It was agreed that a session be arranged prior to the next Committee meeting to inform members of the accounts in greater detail as they are complex and prescribed. This could be undertaken as a Councillor Lunchtime Learning session as well as an Audit & Governance session.

RESOLVED:

1. That the draft statement of accounts 2024/25 had been signed by the S151 Officer and that it was noted that this had been brought to the Committee for comment.
2. That it was noted that the audited statement of accounts 2024/25 would be presented to the Committee for approval following completion of the audit.

11 **Financial Monitoring report update 2025/26 - verbal update**

The Finance Manager provided a verbal update regarding financial monitoring for quarter 1 to the end of June 2025. There were no material concerns or recommended actions. The Housing Revenue Account was materially on budget. Further information on financial monitoring was included on the Cabinet agenda for 30 July. A review of capital expenditure projects would be undertaken this year in light of local government reorganisation.

The Chair thanked the Finance Manager for the update.

12 **Audit and Governance Forward Plan**

Audit and Governance Committee Forward Plan items to be considered at the next committee included:

- Internal Audit Plan 2025-26
- Internal Audit Activity Progress report
- External Audit Progress report and Sector update
- External Audit Accounts 2024/25 verbal update
- Financial Monitoring report update 2025/26
- Treasury Position Review
- Strata Annual Internal Audit report 2024/25
- Partnership Review 2024
- External Auditor's Annual Report
- External Audit Committee update

- External Audit Accounts 2024/25 verbal update
- Annual Report - Delivery Plan for Fraud, Corruption & Compliance Strategy

It was noted that this would be a long agenda and consideration would be given to bringing forward the start time of the meeting to accommodate this.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

I Barlow
C Brown
C Burhop (Chair)
R Collins
O Davey (Vice-Chair)
C Fitzgerald
M Goodman
Y Levine

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

J Loudoun
G Jung

Officers in attendance:

Peter Barber, Key Audit Partner, Grant Thornton
Lisa Fryer, Assistant Director, SWAP Internal Audit Services
Connor McLaughlin Nester, Senior Auditor, SWAP
Simon Davey, Director of Finance
Tracy Hendren, Chief Executive
John Symes, Finance Manager
Matthew Blythe, Assistant Director Environmental Health
David Whelan, Anti-Social Behaviour & Community Safety Co-Ordinator
Alethea Thompson, Democratic Services Officer
Robert Wood, Independent Person

Councillor apologies:

K Bloxham
F King

Chair

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Audit and Governance Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House on 18 September 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 1.40 pm and ended at 2.56 pm

13 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 24 July 2025 were confirmed as a true record. The Chair gave an update to the actions taken from the minutes and thanked the Finance Manager for the accounts training given to the Committee.

14 Declarations on interest

There were no declarations of interests.

15 Public speaking

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

16 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

17 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There were no confidential or exempt items.

18 Internal Audit Plan 2025-26 - SWAP

The Chair welcomed Rich Clark the CEO of SWAP to the meeting.

Connor McLaughlin Nester - Senior Auditor, SWAP, presented the report stating that SWAP Internal Audit Services had prepared the proposed Internal Audit Plan for Half 2 of 2025/26 (1 October 2025 to 31 March 2026). SWAP now required formal approval from the Audit and Governance Committee to proceed with the Plan.

The Chair reminded Committee members as well as non-committee members that they could contribute to the future direction of the Internal Audit Plan with what they think the Committee should be looking at.

RESOLVED:

That the 2025/26 Half 2 Internal Audit Plan be noted.

19 Internal Audit Activity Progress report

Connor McLaughlin Nester - Senior Auditor, SWAP, presented the report which outlined their progress in delivering the 2025/26 Half 1 Internal Audit Plan and provided a summary of outstanding internal audit actions as of 29 August 2025.

During discussion concern was raised to any audit actions over 12 months old that were still outstanding.

The CEO SWAP informed the Committee that he was also the Local Government representative on the Internal Audit Standards Board. He stated there was a specific obligation for heads of audit to highlight to organisations that were exposed to unacceptable risks, either an overdue action or also in the aggregate e.g. the number, volume or interaction risks were creating. This was not the position for EDDC in the report presented. The overdue actions presented; either individually or in the aggregate, were not exposing the Council to an unacceptable level of risk by SWAP's estimation.

The Chair was surprised the Council had not been undertaking credit checks on suppliers. He said regular checks should be undertaken to the financial viability of key suppliers to identify any potential risks.

RESOLVED:

That the progress against the 2025/26 Internal Audit Plan as of 29 August 2025 and the findings reported be noted.

20

External Auditor's Annual Report Year ending 31 March 2025

Grant Thornton's Key Audit Partner Peter Barber and Joanne Taylor, Senior Manager for Value for Money presented the Interim External Auditor's Annual Report Year ending 31 March 2025. In summary, their work had identified a continued positive direction of travel during 2024/25, with the Council making further progress since last year in strengthening Value for Money arrangements. Whilst stakeholders could take assurance from these improvements further work was required to develop fully effective arrangements.

The Chair stated that this report as well as the report from SWAP gave external confirmation of the progress that the Council was making to its financial performance to which he found assuring.

RESOLVED:

That the External Auditor's Annual Report Year ending 31 March 2025 be noted.

21

External Audit Accounts 2024/25 - Finance Manager and Grant Thornton verbal update

The Finance Manager EDDC and Peter Barber from Grant Thornton gave a verbal update. Both were positive to the work ongoing and hitting priority dates and continuing to work for preparation to the audit requests to hit the deadline of 29 September 2025. Peter Barber stated the aspiration was for all work required to give an opinion for 2024/25 accounts, being completed by the external deadline of 27th February 2026.

22

Audit and Governance Forward Plan

Audit and Governance Committee Forward Plan items to be considered at the next committee included:

- Internal Audit Plan Progress report 2025/26
- External Audit Progress report and Sector update
- Financial Monitoring report update 2025/26 and Treasury Position Review
- External Audit Accounts 2024/25 verbal update
- Partnership Review 2024
- Annual Report - Delivery Plan for Fraud, Corruption & Compliance Strategy
- Strata Annual Internal Audit report 2024/25
- Review of confidential internal audit reports (to be in Part B)

Attendance List

Councillors present:

I Barlow
C Brown
C Burhop (Chair)
R Collins
O Davey (Vice-Chair)
C Fitzgerald
Y Levine

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

B Bailey

Officers in attendance:

Robert Wood, Independent Person
Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer
Peter Barber
Simon Davey, Director of Finance
Connor McLaughlin Nester
John Symes, Finance Manager
Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)
Rich Clark
Joanne Taylor, Grant Thornton

Councillor apologies:

K Bloxham
F King

Chair

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of South and East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee held at Otter Room (Ground Floor), Blackdown House, EDDC at Border Road, Heathpark Industrial Estate, Honiton, EX14 1EJ on 24 July 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 2.47 pm

1 Minutes of the previous meeting

Minutes of the South East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee meeting held on 24 October 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.

2 Declarations of interest

None.

3 Public speaking

None.

4 Matters of urgency

None.

5 Confidential/exempt items

None.

6 Exe Estuary Patrol Boat - proposed pilot scheme

The Committee were asked to consider a proposal for a 12-month pilot arrangement for the shared use of the Exeter Port Authority (EPA) rigid inflatable boat (RIB), workboat, associated training provision and plan for the existing Patrol Boat. The pilot was expected to commence on the 1 August 2025.

The proposed agreement offered operational and financial advantages compared to the current arrangements:

- Primary use of the *Exe Harbour Launch*, with the *Exe Harbour Workboat* available when joint patrols are not feasible or as backup.
- Guaranteed maximum of forty patrol days within a 12-month period.
- Vessels fuelled and maintained in a ready-to-use state.
- Annual provision of four training days with EPA instructors.
- Insurance cover provided by EPA for both vessels.
- All maintenance, servicing, and anti-fouling included in the agreement.
- Greater operational flexibility and responsiveness through use of a RIB.
- Lower risk of damage and easier handling associated with a RIB.
- Potential for resale of the existing SEDW patrol vessel should the pilot prove successful — proceeds could contribute to multiple years of charter fees.

- Savings from the release of the current Exmouth Marina berth, which would no longer be required.

The Committee were pleased with the proposed arrangements and recognised the operational advantages the pilot could yield.

Resolved:

1. Noted the proposed 12 month pilot arrangements for the shared use of the Exeter Port Authority (EPA) rigid inflatable boat (RIB), workboat, associated training provision and plan for the existing Patrol Boat, commencing 1 August 2025;
2. Approves expenditure of £9,500 as set out in Section 3, to cover the use of EPA vessels, fuel, personal protective equipment, and associated boat cramage and cradle costs;
3. Received a follow-up report following completion of the 12 month pilot to review outcomes and inform future decision making.

7 Update on SANG delivery

The Green Infrastructure Project Manager gave the Committee an update on the delivery of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace – SANG:

- Greenspace Project (SANG) Officer now in place, with initial focus on proposals for Exmouth SANG, progression of Exeter Valley Park Projects and work with East Devon's planners to ensure the next phases of Cranbrook's Developer provided SANG (which will deliver over 78Ha of SANG) meet Natural England requirements;
- Dawlish Country Park, Ridgetop Country Park and Cranbrook Country Park were identified as Strategic SANG sites in the Mitigation Strategy and have been delivered to date. The final phase of Ridgetop Country Park is being completed, and the next phases of SANG at Cranbrook are being developed within each of the extension phases;
- Following a site options appraisal exercise potential sites for a Strategic SANG in Exmouth had been identified. Once an in-principle agreement with landowners is in place the proposals will be put forward to the Committee;
- Discussions on the potential to bring forward enhancement projects to Exeter Valley Parks to increase their functionality as SANG have taken place;
- Work is progressing on site at Clyst Meadows (10Ha SANG at Broadclyst Station), with expectation that the main contract will commence in shortly, and is likely to be completed next year with an anticipated opening date of September 2026. Further hedgerow planting to the edges of the site with volunteers over the winter are planned;
- Work is underway to understand the quantum of Strategic SANG required to meet residential allocations in the emerging Local Plans, and estimated costs for the delivery and management of these. A report will come forward to the Committee, setting out the requirements and estimated costs, alongside a proposed funding strategy for the partner authorities;
- congratulations to Cranbrook Town Council - Cranbrook Country Park has just won a Green Flag Award for the second year running.

The committee noted the report and the team were thanked for their efforts.

8 Habitat mitigation team update

The comprehensive update report before Members set out a month by month account of the initiatives and events undertaken, updated with statistical detail on interactions with the public and views of social media posts. This covered the Wildlife Wardens team work, and Devon Loves Dogs.

The sign up of the Exe Estuary Management Partnership events had been lower in recent months. In response, the 15 sessions offered to schools may have to be revisited as not offering enough choice to local schools for attending – this offer could be reviewed.

Some discussion took place on negating some of the negative comments that had come up as a result of the recruitment advertising for Devon Loves Dogs. The Chair shared his experience of the positivity of the events and alternatives offered to dog walkers when beach restrictions were in place. Communications in the media were not branded with the Councils or associated environmental health enforcement but with the southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk or Devon Loves Dogs branding as appropriate.

The Chair thanked officers present for their continued success and good results from their hard work.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the update.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

G Jung (Chair)
R Williams (ECC)
G Taylor (TDC)

Officers in attendance:

Matthew Diamond, ECC
Neil Harris, Habitat Regulation Delivery Manager
Rebecca Heal, Solicitor
Anne Mountjoy, Growth Point Communications Officer
Paul Osborne, Green Infrastructure Project Officer
Charles Plowden, Assistant Director Countryside and Leisure
Claire Spence, Wildlife Warden
Julie Owen, Project Officer Devon Loves Dogs

Chair

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Standards Committee held at Blackdown House, Honiton on 17 July 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.04 am

1 Minutes of the previous meeting

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

2 Declarations of interest

None.

3 Public speaking

None.

4 Matters of urgency

None.

5 Confidential/exempt item(s)

None.

6 Gifts and Hospitality Protocol for Members update

The revised protocol was presented to Committee for recommending forward to the Constitutional Working Party for inclusion in the revision of the Constitution. Included were suggestions made by a meeting of some of the Standards Committee members in April which was inquorate.

Additional comments on the protocol included minor amendments to the wording on paragraphs 8.8, 9.2, 10.1, 10.3 and 11.

RECOMMENDED to the Constitutional Working Party for recommending forward to Council, the Gifts and Hospitality Protocol for Members for inclusion in the revised Constitution.

7 Review of Member Code of Conduct

The periodic review of the Code of Conduct had been undertaken. No changes had been made to the Model Code issued by the Local Government Association since May 2021. Whilst there had been recognition of some confusion from both the public and elected members on the definitions of "other registerable interest" and non-registerable interests" to date, it was considered that having a national based model outweighs those disadvantages. The pending local government reorganisation was also considered as a factor in weighing up any changes to the existing code.

On balance, the recommendation was that no changes should be made to the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council in May 2022.

RECOMMENDED no changes at the current time to the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council in May 2022.

8 **Draft Annual Report to Council**

The committee agreed to put forward their Annual Report to the next scheduled meeting of Council in October 2025.

Suggestions were made for emphasising the sharing of good practice examples for training purposes, both from previous case decisions from other authorities, and from case law. Stress on the low attendance of District Councillors was also welcomed in the report and that issue had been raised with the Group Leaders.

RESOLVED for the Annual Report of the Standards Committee to be put to Council for their October meeting.

9 **Code of conduct complaints update**

The report gave details of complaints covering the period April 2025 to July 2025.

Members of the committee congratulated the team involved, both officers and the work of the Independent Persons, which had led to the reduction of complaints received, due to effective engagement in pre-complaint discussion.

Improvements to the related web pages also helped manage expectation of the process.

The committee noted the report.

10 **Standards Committee Work Programme**

The committee agreed the 2025/26 work programme. The update report on gifts and hospitality would be included for the November scheduled meeting of the committee.

11 **Standards update**

The committee were updated on planned code of conduct refresher training for all District Councillors later in the year.

The committee proceeded to discuss two recent cases for training purposes after the meeting was closed by the Chair.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

E Rylance (Chair)

T Dumper

S Hughes

J Loudoun

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

R Collins

Officers in attendance:

Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

Katie Webb, Property Lawyer

Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)

Councillor apologies:

J Bailey

J Whibley

Chair

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Asset Management Forum held at Online on 29 September 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 9.30 am and ended at 10.33 am

9 Notes from the previous meeting held on 16 June 2025

The notes of the previous meeting held on 16 June 2025 were agreed.

10 Declarations of interest

Minute 14 and 15

Cllr Barlow; ANRI; Member of Sidmouth Town Council

Cllr Davey; ANRI; Member of Exmouth Town Council

Minute 16

Cllr P Hayward; ANRI; Role as employee of Town Council

11 Public speaking

None.

12 Matters of urgency

None.

13 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There was one item, listed under minute 17.

14 Property and FM Team update

The Principal Building Surveyor/Team Lead summarised the report that highlighted corporate property and FM activities for the 1st quarter of financial year 2025/26 (April to June 2025) and listed the tasks for the 2nd quarter of 2025/26 (July to September 2025). The report also provided an update on ongoing capital projects and capital bids approvals for 2025/26.

Questions included:

- Clarification on replacement thermostat mixing valves on showers;
- Clarification on handover of toilets at Foxholes complete with testing certification – testing on water supply would be carried out annually

The Forum noted the report.

15 Estate Team update

The Senior Estate Surveyor's report provided an update on the areas of work the Estates Team were involved in:

- New industrial units at Redgates in Exmouth had now been completed and transferred to the Council.
- Following vacation of two units at Riverside Workshops by a single tenant, the team recently undertook a marketing exercise to identify new tenants for the units, this had been successful and terms agreed with two new tenants.
- The Units at Redgates and Riverside, form part of the Council's larger industrial portfolio which consists of 48 Industrial units, 11 Compounds and 9 ground leases spread over 10 sites across the district.
- The team recently negotiated a rent review in respect of the Council's Waste and Recycling facility.
- The ongoing roll out of new and improved communications networks continues to provide increasing numbers of cases where wayleaves and easements are sought in respect of the page 26 installation of new equipment.
- Through the disposal of surplus assets, the team had generated capital receipts totalling £236,600 so far this financial year.
- Work was continuing on the new Asset Management Plan and a draft plan would be available at a future Forum meeting.

The Forum noted the report.

16 **Placemaking and Major Projects Team update**

The Corporate Lead Major Projects and Programmes' report provided a summary of the more high-profile projects that the Major Projects & Programmes Team were currently involved in delivering. The update report included:

- Depots review
- Exmouth Placemaking Plan (EPP)
- Stalled Employment Sites
- Cranbox, Cranbrook

Question included:

- Clarification on progress with the Depot Review, with consultant work now concluded and a report pending to Cabinet by the end of the year, taking account of a revised approach in light of local government review;
- Cranbox transfer of land was ongoing and officers did not expect any further issues to slow progress on delivery.

The Chair welcomed the progress on the Cranbox project.

The Forum noted the report.

The meeting went into private session.

17 **Hayne Lane, Honiton**

The Development Delivery Project Manager and the Corporate Lead - Major Projects report provided the Asset Management Forum with an update on the work undertaken to support the delivery of the Hayne Lane site, and overview of the next steps needed to deliver employment space.

The Forum noted the report and

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet

- That a budget of £30,000 is made available to provide legal and commercial advice to support the delivery of the site.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

T Olive
P Arnott
P Hayward (Chair)
S Hawkins
G Jung

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

I Barlow
R Collins
O Davey
C Fitzgerald
N Hookway

Officers in attendance:

Andrew Champion, Development Delivery Project Manager
Naomi Harnett, Corporate Lead (Interim) – Major Projects & Programmes
Rob Harrison, Senior Estates Surveyor
Jorge Pineda-Langford, Principal Building Surveyor, Property & FM
Tim Child, Assistant Director Place, Assets & Commercialisation

Chair

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group held at Online via Zoom app on 9 September 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 10.55 am

1 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 March 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record.

2 Declarations of interest

Cllr A Bailey – Minute 6; Affects Non-Registerable Interest: Member of Exmouth Town Council.

Cllr O Davey – Minute 6; Affects Non-Registerable Interest: Member of Exmouth Town Council.

Cllr N Hookway – Minute 6; Affects Non-Registerable Interest: Member of Exmouth Town Council and Member of Devon County Council.

3 Public speaking

No members of the public had registered to speak at the meeting.

4 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

5 Confidential or exempt items

There were no confidential or exempt items.

6 Update report on the revised draft Exmouth Placemaking Plan

The Corporate Lead – Major Projects and Programmes introduced this item which provided an update on the revised draft Exmouth Placemaking Plan.

The Placemaking Consultant, Mr David Thompson from WSP delivered a presentation on the revised draft Placemaking Plan with a summary of the changes, an overview of the updated document, a summary of key priorities and next steps.

Discussion and clarification included the following points:

- The revised Placemaking Plan does not include any suggestions for which car parks would be appropriate for rationalisation but it acknowledges that there is a reliance on parking for the success of the town, and the amount of parking overall should not be reduced.

- The Plan contains a strategic objective to improve the wayfinding between the Exmouth Gateway area at the train station, to the estuary, to create a positive connection around the coastline towards the seafront.
- The Plan aims to highlight the positive features which already exist in the town and to identify areas for improvement such as the need for more bicycle parking.
- It is intended to take a holistic approach to the town's signage strategy, working with stakeholders at the current three levels of local government.
- The Plan will emphasise the need to engage with County Highways and providers of public transport in order to reduce congestion and the level of car use.
- There is a strategic objective which seeks to support business and property owners in the town, to make use of empty and underused premises.
- The Plan identifies the conflict that needs addressing between cyclists and pedestrians especially on the seafront and at the Exmouth Gateway, and this links with improving signage and public realm.
- The creation of a rail link park and ride system which utilises the Sowton Park and Ride and the train service from Digby and Sowton to Exmouth, could help to reduce traffic coming into the town. It was suggested to improve the walk from the Sowton Park and Ride Car Park to the train station, and to consider a shuttle bus link from Exmouth station to the seafront.

The Chair thanked Mr Thompson for the presentation and Members noted the revisions made to the Exmouth Placemaking Plan.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

A Bailey
O Davey
T Dumper
A Hall
N Hookway (Chair)
T Olive
G Deasy (Exmouth Town Council)
D Conduit (Exmouth Town Council)

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

I Barlow
M Hall

Officers in attendance:

Naomi Harnett, Corporate Lead (Interim) – Major Projects & Programmes
Marie Ainsworth, Place & Prosperity Officer
Louie Belfield
Tim Child, Assistant Director Place, Assets & Commercialisation
Sarah James, Democratic Services Officer
Sarah Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer
Katie Webb, Property Lawyer

Also in attendance:

Lisa Bowman, Town Clerk, Exmouth Town Council

Chair:

Date:



Report to: Council

Date of Meeting 15 October 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release n/a

Annual Report of the Standards Committee

Report summary:

This report sets out the work of the Standards Committee for the civic term 2024-2025.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

That Council note the Annual Report, outlining the work undertaken by the Standards Committee for the civic term 2024 – 2025.

Reason for recommendation:

To inform Council of the work of the Standards Committee during the year.

Officer: Melanie Wellman, Director Governance (melanie.wellman@eastdevon.gov.uk)

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Climate Action and Emergency Response
- ☐ Coast, Country and Environment
- ☒ Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- ☐ Communications and Democracy
- ☐ Economy
- ☐ Finance and Assets
- ☐ Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities
- ☐ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk;

Links to background information n/a

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☒ A supported and engaged community
 - ☐ Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
 - ☐ Resilient economy that supports local business
 - ☒ Financially secure and improving quality of services
-

Report in full

1. The Standards Committee

1.1 The Standards Committee believes that high ethical standards are crucial in the work of any public body and that robust application is important. This summary report shows how the Committee has undertaken these tasks during the last 12 months and how it continues to contribute to and offer direction to shape the governance, culture, and ethos of the organisation.

1.2 The Standards Committee comprises of 7 elected councillors (plus one reserve); Co-opted non-voting members include 2 Independent Persons; 3 Independent Representatives; and 3 (one currently vacant) Town/Parish Representatives.

1.3 Members of the Committee work together to promote the importance of high standards of behaviour and systems of governance to create a climate where complaints or problems are rare. The Chair of the Committee is held automatically by the Chair of the Council recognising the impartiality of that role. The Council has long recognised the added value brought by an independent voice on its Standards Committee, reinforced by the Co-opted Membership.

2. Purpose and Remit of the Committee

2.1 The Committee acts as champion of the Council's ethical standards and is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct. The Constitution makes it clear that any member of the public may complain to the Monitoring Officer about an alleged breach of the Members' Code of Conduct. The Council has in place appropriate arrangements for dealing with complaints against Members and a mechanism to deal with allegations that Members may have breached the Code of Conduct. The Council has appointed 'Independent Persons' in line with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011. More information about the Code of Conduct and the complaints process can be found on the Council's website.

2.2 The remit of the committee includes:

- (a) Advising on the discretionary elements of the Local Code of Conduct; including monitoring and updating.
- (b) Advising on the implementation of the Local Code of Conduct, including the training of Members in matters of conduct and advice to Members on such issues as the treatment of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and personal interests and more general conduct issues.
- (c) To the extent allowed by law, making arrangements for Members to receive dispensations to speak on, or participate in, matters in which they have interests.
- (d) Appointing such Sub Committees (including Membership thereof) as appropriate to discharge the functions.

2.3 As part of the Committees role, the training of District, Town and Parish Councillors on the Code of Conduct is an important function. A number of sessions were provided following the last elections in 2023 and further sessions will be offered between September and November this year.

3. Meetings in 2024/25

3.1 The Committee met twice in 2024/25, two meetings were cancelled and there were no Standards Assessment Sub-Committee meetings to assess complaints or Standards Hearings Sub-Committee meetings to hear complaints. It is unfortunate that two meetings were inquorate

this year due to insufficient attendance of District Councillor members on the Committee. Whilst those in attendance still met, decisions could not be taken and some reports have had to come back to a subsequent meeting. All Group Leaders have been reminded of the importance of their councillors giving priority to these meetings.

4. Monitoring of complaint caseload

4.1 The committee continued to monitor at each meeting the scale and type of complaints under the Code of Conduct, in order to identify any trend or emerging issues that warranted further action or support. This has included adaption of the reporting mechanism to the committee to provide enough detail on trend without impacting on confidential information and ensure that the Committee is open and transparent.

4.2 In 2024 the Monitoring Officer received nine Code of Conduct complaints. Five of those related to District Councillors and 4 related to Town and Parish Councillors. Three of those complaints alleged lack of courtesy and respect, three alleged use of position and 2 alleged bullying and harassment.

4.3 Following an initial assessment of the complaints and consultation with one of the Independent Persons, informal resolution occurred in two cases and no further action was taken in the remainder. No complaints were referred for investigation.

4.4 In terms of number of complaints, the 9 in 2024 compared with 12 in 2023, 32 in 2022, 27 in 2021 and 36 in 2020. This shows a clear reduction in the number of complaints being made year on year. This is due, in part, to a reduction in the number of complaints coming forward but also is due to the work being carried out by the Monitoring Officer and their team, in trying to resolve issues before they escalate to a formal complaint.

4.5 In terms of the number of complaints being referred for investigation, there were 8 in 2020, 4 in 2021, 5 in 2022 and none in 2023 and 2024. Again, this also shows a reduction in the number of investigations needing to be undertaken.

5. Resolving complaints before they escalate presentation

5.1 A presentation on the potential ways of resolving complaints before they escalate was presented to the Committee by the Monitoring Officer. The same presentation had been shared with DALC at their conference and means of dissemination were discussed.

6. Response to Government consultation on changes to the Standards regime

6.1 A detailed response was compiled between the Monitoring Officer and the committee in response to the government consultation on changes to the Standards regime which included the following aspects for reform:-

- Reintroduction of suspension powers;
- Disqualification for repeat offenders;
- Right of appeal;
- National Appeals body;
- Mandatory minimum Code of Conduct;
- Interim suspension powers:-
- Empowering victims.

The outcome of the consultation is awaited.

7. Re-appointment of Independent Persons, Independent Representatives and Town/Parish Representatives

7.1 The Independent Representatives, Independent Persons and Town/Parish Representatives play a critical role on the Committee and their input is highly valued by the Committee. With the exception of one Independent Representative and one Parish Representative, these appointments were made in 2021 for a period of four years. It is critical therefore that we have a process in place to ensure that these positions are re-advertised and recruited to, to ensure we maintain this critical input and are compliant with the Localism Act 2011.

7.2 The Committee are therefore in the process of re-advertising the roles. The first recruitment exercise unfortunately resulted in a lack of applications and therefore the roles are being re-advertised with those small number who applied the first time, being put forward for consideration as part of that process. We have revisited the recruitment process so that the vacancies will be more widely advertised, including in local newspaper(s). The existing representatives will remain in their highly valuable roles until either re-appointed or new representatives appointed. Shortlisted applicants will be interviewed by a Sub-Committee of the Standards Committee and appointment of the recommended candidates made by Full Council.

8. Dispensations

8.1 Dispensations were granted to dual-hatted County councillors and to councillors who also work for another local authority in Devon, to allow them to speak and vote on any matter before the Council and / or Committee relating to local government reorganisation in Devon. This ensures that residents are not disenfranchised and those councillors can continue to play a key role in debating what is a matter of key significance for everyone residing in East Devon.

9. Looking Ahead

9.1 Looking ahead, much of the work of the Committee is demand led. However, it will continue to monitor elected councillor's performance at meetings of the Council, Cabinet and Committees (whether remote or in person) and adherence to the Council's ethical governance framework. It will also identify and support provision of regular training and refresher events for elected councillors of the Council (particularly on the importance of the Code of Conduct and high standards of ethics and probity), as well as ensuring that the Committee itself remains updated on best practice in the local authority sector.

9.2 Following the government consultation, it is hoped that changes will be made, in the near future, that will enhance the Standards regime and enable tougher sanctions to be imposed by Standards Committees in the more serious cases of breaches of the Code of Conduct and which lead to improvements in councillor performance generally.

9.3 In order to keep members of the Committee fully informed on standards issues, the Committee will receive regular updates on emerging best practice elsewhere in the country from other authorities' standards decisions and caselaw and will also look to share that best practice with Town and Parish Councils.

Financial implications:

There are no financial implications directly arising from this annual report.

Legal implications:

There are no legal implications directly arising from this annual report.



Report to: Council

Date of Meeting 15 October 2025

Heading/Title: Allocation of Committee places for 2025/2026.

Cabinet Member(s): Council and Corporate Coordination (Councillor John Loudoun) and Communications and Democracy (Councillor Sarah Jackson)

Director/Assistant Director: Governance (Melanie Wellman)

Author and Directorate: Andrew Melhuish (Democratic Services Manager – Governance Directorate)

Contact Details andrew.melhuish@eastdevon.gov.uk

Key decision No

If a Key Decision has it appeared on Forward Plan N/A

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Report Summary and Recommendations/Decision

This report sets out proposed allocation and appointment of members for seats on the Council's committees following a change in membership of the political groupings on the Council. This has seen changes made to the Conservative Group and Independent Group and an ungrouped councillor joining a group, with the details of those changes set out in this report and in the supporting documents.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Council:

1. Notes the political balance of the Council and agrees the proposed allocation of committee places as set out in this report and at Appendix 1.
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.

1. Background

Allocation of Committee Places

1.1 Each year Council adopts the Constitution thereby confirming the committee structure, size and terms of reference of the committees and the proposals set out in this report and its supporting documents reflects the details contained in the updated Constitution approved at Annual Council in May 2025.

1.2 Where membership of East Devon District Council is divided into political groups the Council is required to review and allocate the total number of seats on committees in accordance with the strength of each political group. The number of members of each political group on the Council results in the following political balance:

Democratic Alliance = 30 members

Conservative = 14 members

Independent Group = 11 members

Cranbrook Voice = 3 members

Independent Councillor Group = 2 members

The Democratic Alliance form the majority administration from 2023 to 2027. This report has been prepared on the basis of the political groups reflecting the position set out above.

1.3 The above political balance results in the following entitlement to seats for committees where political balance rules apply:

Political Group	Number of Councillors	Entitlement to committee places	Overall entitlement
Democratic Alliance Group	30	58	50%
Conservative	14	27	23.3%
The Independent Group	11	21	18.1%
Cranbrook Voice	3	6	5%
Independent Councillor Group	2	4	3.3%
Totals	60	116	100%

2. Appointments / Allocation of places

2.1 This report presents an analysis of the committee seat allocation based on the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The Act outlines principles to ensure fair and democratic representation across council committees. These principles include:

- Preventing domination by a single group: No single political group should hold all committee seats.
- Ensuring a majority group enjoys a majority on all committees. The majority group in the council should maintain a majority in each committee.
- Aggregating all committee places and allocating fair shares. Committee seats should be distributed proportionally to each group's representation in the full Council.

- Ensuring fairness on each committee: Each committee should reflect the overall council composition as closely as possible.
- 2.2 The table set out in Appendix 1 shows the proposed seating arrangements on each committee and includes a detailed breakdown of the seating allocations. Figures have been rounded and the need to round seat allocations to whole numbers can create mathematical imbalances. Ensuring every group is represented on every committee is not always feasible, especially for smaller groups.
- 2.3 These figures are within acceptable limits and comply with the 'so far as reasonably practicable' clause of the Act. The allocation ensures that no single group dominates all committees, the majority group (Democratic Alliance Group) retains a majority control, and smaller groups are fairly represented.
- 2.4 The principles set out above have been applied in the following sequence:
 - i. Calculate the total number of seats with votes on all the committees.
 - ii. Calculate the proportion that each political group forms of the total membership of the council. Reserve an appropriate number of seats for any members not in a political group.
 - iii. Apply those proportions to the total number of committee seats to give the aggregate entitlement of each group; the requirement to apply the proportions 'so far as reasonably practicable' can be met by rounding down fractional entitlements of less than half, and rounding up entitlements of a half or more; if this results in a greater aggregate than the number of seats available, the fractional entitlement(s) closest to half should be rounded in the other direction until entitlements balance the available seats.
 - iv. Apply the proportions to the number of members on each committee to give provisional entitlement to seats on that committee.
 - v. If the provisional entitlement gives only one group seats on the committee, adjust the entitlement so that the next largest group has a seat.
 - vi. Finally, adjust the seats on each committee so that the total allocated to each group is as near as possible to their aggregate entitlement, whilst preserving the results reached at steps (iv) and (v) thus applying principle 3 as set out above.
- 2.5 This means that the committees are set out as proportionately balanced, but the numbers across the committees are then altered, whilst trying to ensure the committees keep to this proportionality as far as is possible, to ensure that the total number of all of the committee places when taken together are politically balanced.
- 2.6 The Council is free to adopt any aggregate number of places on committees as long as it follows the principles set out above and the sequence outlined in steps (i) to (vi) in 2.4. This has been developed in line with the recommendations of the political group leaders.
- 2.7 Appendix z sets out the political group leaders proposed nominations to the committee places. When approving Appendix 1 the Council will meet the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 which requires the application of certain rules to the appointment of council committees. The Schedule provides for:
 - (a) The appointment of members to the committees (Appendix 1).
 - (b) The appointment of Chairs and Vice Chairs is not affected by the changes proposed in this report.
- 2.8 Full Council may waive the political balance rules for any committee(s) where the Council wishes to appoint an alternative number of members from political groups. In

order for political balance to be waived no member must vote against this motion, an objection by a single member would make it necessary to apply political balance rules.

- 2.9 It is proposed that the Council delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer to make in-year changes to committee appointments in accordance with the wishes of the political group leader that relates to the relevant place(s) on a committee.

3. Reasons for Recommendations/Decision

- 3.1 To ensure that the Council's governance framework is up to date and reflects the current political balance within the Council and to enable the required appointments to be agreed for the civic year.

4. Options

- 4.1 As this is a requirement of legislation and the Council's Constitution no other options were considered.

5. Relevance to Council Plan/priorities

Set out how report links to the Council Plan/priorities:

- ☒ A supported and engaged community that has the right homes in the right places, with appropriate infrastructure
- ☒ A sustainable environment that is moving towards carbon neutrality and which promotes ecological recovery.
- ☒ A vibrant and resilient economy that supports local business, provides local jobs and leads to a reduction in poverty and inequality.
- ☒ A well-managed, financially secure and continuously improving council that delivers quality services

Having an up to date Constitution ensures the Council is able to support its Council Plan and priorities through the governance arrangements set out in the Constitution.

6. Financial Comments/Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report as the budget for special responsibility allowances and basic allowances is from within existing budgets.

7. Legal Comments/Implications

- 7.1 Under Section 9P of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council is required to prepare and keep up to date a Constitution containing the standing orders of the Council and such other information as is required or desirable.
- 7.2 The rules governing the allocation of seats on Committees and Sub-Committees to political groups are set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989

and regulations made thereunder including the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990. The provisions of the 1989 Act include the requirement that, where Members of the Council are divided into political groups, then the membership of its committees and sub-committees must reflect the political balance of the Council as a whole. The proposals set out in this report comply with the Council's Constitution.

8. Risk Implications

- 8.1 It is important that the Council keeps its Constitution up to date to reflect best practice and any changes in legislation.

9. Equality Implications (Public Sector Equality Duty)

- 9.1 No specific negative equalities implications have been identified with the proposals set out in the new Constitution. Decisions taken by the Council, in accordance with its Constitution, will consider equalities implications and have due regards to its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010. The arrangements for committee meetings will take full consideration of equalities and public accessibility requirements. An Equalities Impact Assessment is not considered necessary for this decision as there are no direct impacts.
- 9.2 This report ensures that the political balance of the committee allocations is in line with the relevant legislation and guidance.

10. HR and Workforce Implications

- 10.1 There are no HR and Workforce implications arising from the recommendations in the report.

11. Community Safety Implications (Crime and Disorder)

- 11.1 There are no Community Safety Implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

12. Climate Change Implications

- 12.1 There are no Climate Change implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

13. Health & Safety and Health & Wellbeing Implications

- 13.1 There are no public health, health and safety or health and wellbeing implications arising from the recommendations in this report.
- 13.2 There are no safeguarding issues that may arise from the recommendations in the report.

14. Procurement and Social Value implications

- 14.1 There are no procurement and social value implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

15. Land and Buildings (non-housing)/Asset Management Implications

- 15.1 There are no land and buildings/asset management implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

16. Overview and Scrutiny Committees Comments/Recommendations

- 16.1 N/A.

17. Digital and Data

- 17.1 N/A

18. Consultation and Engagement

- 18.1 Consultation on the proposals contained in this report with the Group Leaders, Constitution Working Group, Standards Committee and independent Remuneration Panel.

19. Communications

- 19.1 Details of the appointments will be made on the Council's website.

20. Next Steps

- 20.1 To update the Council's website to reflect the recommendations arising from this report, including notifying relevant officers and external organisations (Outside Body appointments) of the recommendations.

21. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Allocation of Committee places.

22. Background Papers

- 22.1 None.

Appendix 1 - Allocation of Committee Places (September 2025)

1. Each year Council adopts the Constitution thereby confirming the committee structure, size and terms of reference of the committees and the proposals set out in this report and its supporting documents reflects the details contained in the updated Constitution.
2. Where membership of East Devon District Council is divided into political groups the Council is required to review and allocate the total number of seats on committees in accordance with the strength of each political group. Following changes to the membership of the political groups on the Council it is necessary to review the total number of seats on committees. A number of changes have taken place with councillors moving to another political group on the Council since the Annual Council meeting on 14 May 2025.
3. The table below shows the position following the Annual Council meeting in May 2025.

Political Group as at 14 May 2025	Number of Councillors	Entitlement to committee places	Overall entitlement
Democratic Alliance	30	61	50.85%
Conservative	15	30	25.42%
Independent Group	9	15	15.25%
Cranbrook Voice	3	7	5.08%
Independent Cllr Group	2	2	3.38%
Ungrouped Cllr	1	0	1.69%

The following table sets out the changes to political groups since the Annual Council meeting in May 2025:

Political Group as at 15 October 2025	Number of Councillors	Entitlement to committee places	Overall entitlement
Democratic Alliance	30	60	50%
Conservative	14 (-1)	27	23.3%
Independent Group	11 (+2)	21	18.3%
Cranbrook Voice	3	6	5%
Independent Cllr Group	2	4	3.3%
Ungrouped Cllr	0 (-1)	0	0%

This reflects Councillor Bonetta, previously an up grouped councillor, joining the Independent Group and Councillor Aurora Bailey moving from the Conservative Group to the Independent Group.

4. This document presents an analysis of the committee seat allocation based on the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The Act outlines principles to ensure fair and democratic representation across council committees. These principles include:
 - Preventing domination by a single group: No single political group should hold all committee seats.
 - Ensuring a majority group enjoys a majority on all committee. The majority group in the council should maintain a majority in each committee.
 - Aggregating all committee places and allocating fair shares. Committee seats should be distributed proportionally to each group's representation in the full council.
 - Ensuring fairness on each committee: Each committee should reflect the overall council composition as closely as possible.

5. The Democratic Alliance form the majority administration from 2023 to 2027. This report has been prepared on the basis of the political groups reflecting the position set out above.

6. The above political balance results in the following entitlement to seats for committees where political balance rules apply:

Political Group	Number of Councillors	Entitlement to committee places	Overall entitlement
Democratic Alliance Group	30	58	50%
Conservative	14	27	23.3%
The Independent Group	11	21	18.3%
Cranbrook Voice	3	6	5%
Independent Councillor Group	2	4	3.3%
Ungrouped	0	0	0
Totals	60	116	99.9%

7. The following table sets out the proposed seating arrangements across all committees. Figures have been rounded and the need to round seat allocations to whole numbers can create mathematical imbalances. Ensuring every group is represented on every committee is not always feasible, especially for smaller groups.
8. These figures are within acceptable limits and comply with the 'so far as reasonably practicable' clause of the Act. The allocation ensures that no single group dominates all committees, the majority group (DAG) retains majority control, and smaller groups are fairly represented.

Proposed total and target committee seat allocations:

Political Group	Democratic Alliance Group	Conservative	The Independent Group	Cranbrook Voice	Independent Councillor Group	Un-grouped	Total
Seats held on the Council	30	14	11	3	2	0	60
% of seats on Council	50%	23.3%	18.3%	5%	3.3%	0	99.9%
Totals	61	30	22	6	1	0	120
Adjustment to meet target allocation	-3	-3	-1	0	+3	0	-4
Target allocation	58	27	21	6	4	0	116

If the above table is used as the starting point:

The Democratic Alliance have 58 seats, based on their entitlement of 7.5 members for the committees where membership is 15, they can then choose either 7 or 8 members for each of the five remaining committees (8 members on two and 7 members on three, a sub total of 37 giving a final total of 58).

The Conservatives have 28 seats, based on their entitlement of 3.5 members for the committees where membership is 15 they can then choose either 3 or 4 members, subject to the availability following allocation of seats to the Democratic Alliance Group .

There are a number of assumptions for the Conservatives, but these are interchangeable, for example both Planning and Audit and Governance could be 3 (rather than 4 and 2). Assuming the total of assumptions is the same, 10 seats are allocated, and the group is entitled to a further 18 seats from the five remaining committees ie. Based on entitlement of 3.5 members for the committees where membership is 15, 4 members on three committees and 3 members on two committees.

Continuing the assumption for the Independent Group, 7 of 21 seats are allocated, leaving the remaining entitlement of 14 seats to be allocated across the five committees as 3 members on 4 committees and 2 members on one committee.

Continuing the calculations for the final two groups is somewhat an academic exercise as there are so many variables. For example, if the Democratic Alliance, Conservatives, and Independent Group all put 8, 4 and 3 members respectively on one of the committees where membership is 15, then places on that committee would not be available to Cranbrook Voice or Independent Councillors Group.

Applying the above rationale would give a proposed committee seat allocation as follows:

Political Group	Democratic Alliance Group	Conservative	The Independent Group	Cranbrook Voice	Independent Councillor Group	Un-grouped	Total
Seats held on the Council	30	14	11	3	2	0	60
% of seats on Council	50%	23.3%	18.3%	5%	3.3%	0	99.9%
Standards Committee (7 seats)	4 (3.5)	2 (1.6)	1 (1.2)	0 (0.35)	0 (0.23)	0	7
Housing Review Board (8 seats)	4 (4)	2 (1.8)	1 (1.4)	0 (0.4)	0 (0.26)	0	7
Audit & Governance Committee (10 seats)	5 (5)	2 (2.3)	2 (1.8)	0 (0.50)	0 (0.33)	0	9
Overview Committee (15 seats)	8 (7.5)	4 (3.5)	3 (2.7)	1 (0.75)	0 (0.49)	0	16
Scrutiny Committee (15 seats)	8 (7.5)	4 (3.5)	3 (2.7)	1 (0.75)	0 (0.49)	0	16
Strategic Planning	8	4	3	1	0	0	16

Committee (15 seats)	(7.5)	(3.5)	(2.7)	(0.75)	(0.49)		
Personnel Committee (15 seats)	8 (7.5)	4 (3.5)	3 (2.7)	1 (0.75)	0 (0.49)	0	16
Licensing & Enforcement Committee (15 seats)	8 (7.5)	4 (3.5)	3 (2.7)	1 (0.75)	0 (0.49)	0	16
Planning Committee (16 seats)	8 (8)	4 (3.7)	3 (2.8)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.53)	0	17
Totals	61	30	22	6	1	0	120
Adjustment to meet target allocation	-3	-3	-1	0	+3	0	-4
Target allocation	58	27	21	6	4	0	116
Overall % balance based on target allocation	50%	23.3%	18.3%	5%	3.3%	0	100%

It is necessary to determine the allocations to meet the requirement of some 15 seat committees having 8 or 7 seats for Democratic Alliance and 4 or 3 seats in the case of the Conservative Group, figures highlighted to show which committees are affected. The aim will be to meet the target allocations shown in green as this provides an overall balance across the committee seat allocations.

Method of calculating the allocation of places to political groups.

The principles set out above can be applied in the following sequence:

- i. Calculate the total number of seats with votes on all the committees.
- ii. Calculate the proportion that each political group forms of the total membership of the council. Reserve an appropriate number of seats for any members not in a political group.
- iii. Apply those proportions to the total number of committee seats to give the aggregate entitlement of each group; the requirement to apply the proportions 'so far as reasonably practicable' can be met by rounding down fractional entitlements of less than half, and rounding up entitlements of a half or more; if this results in a greater aggregate than the number of seats available, the fractional entitlement(s) closest to half should be rounded in the other direction until entitlements balance the available seats.
- iv. Apply the proportions to the number of members on each committee to give provisional entitlement to seats on that committee.
- v. If the provisional entitlement gives only one group seats on the committee, adjust the entitlement so that the next largest group has a seat.
- vi. Finally, adjust the seats on each committee so that the total allocated to each group is as near as possible to their aggregate entitlement, whilst preserving the results reached at steps (iv) and (v) thus applying principle 3 as set out above.

This means that the committees are set out as proportionately balanced, but the numbers across the committees are then altered, whilst trying to ensure the committees keep to this proportionality as far as is possible, to ensure that the total number of all the committee places when taken together are politically balanced.

The council is free to adopt any aggregate number of places on committees as long as it follows the principles set out above and the sequence outlined in steps (i) to (vi). This has been developed in line with the recommendations of the political group leaders.

Report to: **Council**

Date of Meeting 15 October 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



Recommendation from Cabinet on 30 July – Local Development Scheme

Report summary:

This report sets out the Cabinet recommendation to Council arising from their consideration of a report on 30 July 2025 on the Local Development Scheme.

Note: The references in this report to Paper A relate to the relevant report considered by the Cabinet with recommendations for Full Council to consider and are appended to this report for reference.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

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

Reason for recommendation:

To ensure adoption of a new Local Development Scheme.

Officer: Andrew Melhuish, Democratic Services Manager (andrew.melhuish@eastdevon.gov.uk)

Report to: Strategic Planning Committee

Date of Meeting 8 July 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



East Devon Local Plan – Local Development Scheme

Report summary (and report details in full):

This report sets out details of a proposed revised Local Development Scheme (attached as Appendix 1) – this forms the formal project plan for future local plan production. A revision is needed to the existing Local Development Scheme in light of proposed amendments to the local plan making timetable, as reported separately to the committee. The timetable now incorporates a second reg 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.

The Council constitution requires that Cabinet endorse the new Local Development Scheme and recommend it to Council, hence the recommendation.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

That Strategic Planning Committee recommend to Cabinet that the proposed new Local Development Scheme, at Appendix 1, is adopted.

Reason for recommendation:

To ensure adoption of a new Local Development Scheme.

Officer: Ed Freeman – Assistant Director Planning Strategy and Development Manager

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Assets and Economy
- ☐ Communications and Democracy
- ☒ Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- ☐ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- ☒ Environment - Nature and Climate
- ☐ Environment - Operational
- ☐ Finance
- ☒ Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning

☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: No specific risk impacts are identified.

Links to background information Links are contained in the body of the report.

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☒ A supported and engaged community
 - ☒ Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
 - ☒ Resilient economy that supports local business
 - ☒ Financially secure and improving quality of services
-
-

Financial implications:

There are no direct financial implications identified within the report. (AB/24/06/2025)

Legal implications:

The legal implications are set out in the proposed revised Local Development Scheme attached as Appendix 1 to this report (002533/24 June 2025/DH).

East Devon Local Development Scheme – July 2025

The work programme for planning policy production in East Devon



Contact details

Planning Policy Team
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Honiton
EX14 1EJ

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This East Devon District Council Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out a programme and timetable for production of future planning policy documents by the Council.
- 1.2 East Devon District Council has resolved that this new LDS should take effect from 15 October 2025. This LDS covers the time period from Summer 2024 through to 2027, it is envisaged however that it will be revised and superseded before this end date.

2 The stages in Development Plan Document preparation

- 2.1 Development Plan Documents (DPDs) sit at the top of the hierarchy of District Council planning policy documents, on adoption they form part of what is defined as the Development Plan. The term 'local plan' is often used interchangeably with DPD and the Council has an adopted plan (which is a DPD) called the 'East Devon Local Plan'.
- 2.2 DPDs are of fundamental importance in respect of informing prospective developers of the types of development and locations for development that are likely to be appropriate and they are the key policy documents used in determining planning applications. DPDs also inform communities, infrastructure and service providers and other council and wider service providers of development proposals. There are specific legally defined procedural steps that need to be complied with by the Council in order to produce a DPD, some of these are referred to in this LDS, however for a more complete picture see: The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended), noting that future changes may be made: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/767/contents>
- 2.3 In this LDS we set out dates for undertaking key stages in production of any DPD. The stages we report on are summarised below:
 - Issues Consultation – this is the starting point where comments on general issues and plan scope are sought. At this stage of plan making potential options and alternatives for development may be identified.
 - Draft plan – this is where a draft version of the plan or some other consultation document or documents are produced and feedback is sought.
 - Publication – this is the plan that the Council intend to submit for examination. The plan is made available and formal objections and other responses are sought from at this stage. Anyone can comment.

- Submission – the publication plan, the evidence supporting the plan and the formal responses to the plan are submitted to the government who appoint an independent inspector to consider the soundness of the plan. The examination of a plan, carried out by a Planning Inspector, starts at plan submission.
- Examination – as part of the examination process there will typically be hearing sessions at which the Inspector will lead discussion on the contents of the plan, this helps the Inspector prepare their report.
- Adoption – the Council receive a report from the inspector and can then, assuming earlier tasks do not need to be revisited, adopt the plan.

2.4 It is stressed that the above stages are a much-simplified version of what happens in plan making, however they give an overview of plan preparation timelines. Government plan making regulations and legislation (and other guidance) should be reviewed for a complete picture of legislative processes that have to be followed.

3 The adopted East Devon Local Plan, the Villages Plan and the Cranbrook Plan

3.1 There are three existing current East Devon District Council adopted DPDs:

- The existing East Devon Local Plan, covering most policy matters across the district, was adopted on the 28 January 2016.
- An East Devon Villages Plan, adopted on 26 July 2018, has a much more narrowly defined remit of defining Built-up Area Boundaries around selected village settlements and it defines retail policy for Beer and Colyton.
- The Cranbrook Plan covers development matters at the new town and was adopted on 19 October 2022.

3.2 It should be noted that policies in local plans should be reviewed at least every five years to assess whether they need updating, and the reasons for decision should be published. A formal review of the adopted East Devon Local Plan was undertaken in 2020/21.

4 Future Development Plan Documents in East Devon

4.1 This LDS sets out that from now, through to 2027, there will be one further DPD that will be produced by the Council, summary details with dates set against key stages, are set out below. It should be noted that the dates (year and months or season/part of year) provided are based on what we currently know or best estimates, changes over time are, however, possible.

- 4.2 **East Devon Local Plan 2020 to 2042**– the expectation is that this plan will address all Development Plan matters, alongside and in many cases in conjunction with the Cranbrook plan for matters Cranbrook, that fall to the responsibility of East Devon District Council. The following is the timetable for production:
- Issues Consultation – completed in January 2021.
 - Draft plan – the first consultation was completed in January 2023 and there was further consultation in summer 2024.
 - Publication – Regulation 19 consultation:
 - Main – was concluded in March 2025.
 - Further – projected to start in Autumn 2025.
 - Submission – Spring 2026.
 - Examination, including Inspector’s Hearings – 2026.
 - Adoption – 2027.
- 4.3 The above timetable sets out two stages of Publication consultation. The first was for the full local plan. We did, however, reserve the position to undertake some plan refinement. This was specifically so for the second new community and this relates to evidence relevant to plan policy. The second round of consultation will provide scope to make potential further changes to wider elements of the plan and consult on these.
- 4.4 It should be noted that the intent is that the new local plan will supersede and replace in its entirety the existing local plan and also the villages Plan. The Cranbrook Plan will remain part of the Development Plan though some policies within it will be superseded by new local plan policies.

5 Other policy documents identified for production

- 5.1 In addition to DPDs the Council also produce a number of additional policy documents. Of greatest importance in respect of determining planning applications are Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). SPDs (or documents of a similar nature that may come in under future reforms to planning legislation) are intended to provide more detail on the use and implementation on policies in DPDs. Procedures for producing SPDs are set out in legislation and regulations and the Council has a protocol for SPD production, see:
<https://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2443645/spd-protocol-adopted-by-spc-20-march-18.pdf>
- 5.2 SPDs need to go through two stages of consultation but they are not subject to examination and therefore their preparation is shorter and simpler than DPDs; but they do not carry the same weight in decision making.

- 5.3 The Planning Policy team of the Council may also produce further guidance and advice to support and promote development and promote wider social and environmental objectives. Such guidance will not have the formal status of an SPD but we will often look to follow similar processes in production. Other services of the Council may also provide guidance documents.

6 Community Infrastructure Levy - Charging Schedule

- 6.1 In East Devon a financial charge, called a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), is placed on certain types of new development (most notably new housing) and monies raised are used to help pay for infrastructure that is needed to support development.
- 6.2 In order to be able to charge CIL the Council had to produce a charging schedule that is supported by financial viability assessment evidence, undertake consultation and take the work to Examination by an independent examiner. In this respect production of the CIL charging schedule follows a similar path to that for DPDs (but under separate legislation). The current charging schedule was approved in 2020 and applied from 1 February 2021. A timetable for production of a new CIL charging regime is to be established. Work is projected to start in 2025.

7 Neighbourhood Plans

- 7.1 Neighbourhood Plans are produced by local communities and in East Devon they are typically produced at the parish level, by parish / town councils. Neighbourhood Plans set out policies and proposals for development and in this respect, they are similar to DPDs and they follow reasonably similar stages in production (but under separate legislation). Once adopted (the technical term is that they are 'made'), they also form part of the Development Plan for the District and are used alongside DPDs, SPDs and other policy documents in the determination of planning applications.
- 7.2 For more information on Neighbourhood Plans see:
<https://eastdevon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/neighbourhood-and-community-plans/>

8 Waste and minerals planning and Devon County Council work

- 8.1 The responsibility for waste planning and minerals planning in East Devon rests with Devon County Council; they have legal responsibility for producing plans and determining planning applications for these two matters. The County Council adopted a new Devon waste plan in 2014 and adopted a new minerals plan in 2017. For more information see:
<https://www.devon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policies/minerals-and-waste-policy>

- 8.2 The adopted waste plan and adopted minerals plan are also part of the Development Plan for East Devon.

Report to: Council

Date of Meeting 15 October 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



Changes to Agricultural Property Relief and Business Property Relief

Report summary:

This report sets out the Scrutiny Committee recommendation to Council arising from their consideration of a report on 10 July 2025 on the changes to the agricultural property relief and business property relief.

Note: The references in this report to Paper A relate to the relevant report considered by the Scrutiny Committee with recommendations for Full Council to consider and are appended to this report for reference.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

1. That this 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
2. 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.

Reason for recommendation:

To provide an update on the work that has been undertaken to understand the likely impact of the proposed changes in terms of inheritance tax.

Officer: Andrew Melhuish, Democratic Services Manager (andrew.melhuish@eastdevon.gov.uk)

Date of Meeting 10th July 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Changes to Agricultural Property Relief and Business Property Relief

Report summary:

The meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on the 30th January considered a scoping report regarding the impact of reforms to agricultural property relief and business property relief from inheritance tax. These had been announced by the UK Government at the Autumn Budget 2024. The proposed changes have proved to be particularly controversial with the farming community and prompted a subsequent motion from Council on the 4th December 2024.

The proposed scope of work focused on gathering evidence around the likely impact that the forthcoming changes will have on the District, particularly in relation to family farms. This report provides an update on this activity following engagement with the National Farmers Union.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

That members;

- Note the contents of this report and acknowledge the lack of granular level data through which to accurately measure the likely impact of the proposed changes in relation to inheritance liabilities for farming enterprises in the District

Recommends to Council that;

- this issue is best addressed at a national level, taking a lead from the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee report
- 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

Reason for recommendation:

To provide an update on the work that has been undertaken to understand the likely impact of the proposed changes in terms of inheritance tax.

Officer: Andy Wood, Director of Place, email andy.wood@eastdevon.gov.uk

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

☒ Assets and Economy

☐ Communications and Democracy

☒ Council, Corporate and External Engagement

- ☒ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- ☒ Environment - Nature and Climate
- ☐ Environment - Operational
- ☐ Finance
- ☐ Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk;

Links to background information [MPs call on Government to delay changes to inheritance tax reforms until 2027 - Committees - UK Parliament](#)

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☒ A supported and engaged community
- ☒ Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
- ☒ Resilient economy that supports local business
- ☐ Financially secure and improving quality of services

Background and context

The government announced planned reforms to Agricultural Property Relief (APR) and Business Property Relief (BPR) from inheritance tax in the Autumn Budget 2024. From 6 April 2026, the full 100% relief from inheritance tax will be restricted to the first £1 million of combined agricultural and business property. The reforms have proved to be controversial and a lingering source of resentment for the farming community.

Members have signalled their concern about the potential impact of these reforms on the farming community in the District. In December 2024 Council agreed the following motion;

In light of the confusing government department figures related to the number of farms affected by the recent Budget changes, and given that farmers' IHT is not an issue that all Members will have sufficient detailed knowledge about, and in order to give maximum consideration of what positive broad support this council might provide to the district's farmers, Council agrees to refer this motion to the Scrutiny Committee requesting that it considers the motion, its recommendations and their implications and to report back to council on the outcome of its deliberations.

This Council urges Councillors to stand with Britain's family farmers, to support our rural communities, and that the Chief Executive sends a letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Minister of State for Food Security and Rural Affairs signed by all Group Leaders requesting them to reconsider the proposed changes to the Agricultural Property Relief and farming/agricultural related Business Property Relief.

Impact of the reforms in East Devon

A scoping paper was subsequently considered by the 30th January Scrutiny Committee meeting. A particular focus on this was to understand and scrutinise the likely impact of the forthcoming changes on farm enterprises in East Devon.

Subsequently contact was made with Devon County Advisor at the NFU to understand what data was available at the District level. The subsequent response is set out at Appendix A. Whilst helpful, this analysis focuses primarily on the national level. It was subsequently confirmed that

the level of granularity for data stopped at the regional level and that no district level data available to help better understand the potential impacts. This position is accentuated by the fact that the impact on specific farm enterprises will also be determined by individual succession and tax planning arrangements.

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Select Committee

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Select Committee has recently considered the issue of the planned reforms. The Committee's subsequent report (May 2025) has expressed significant concerns regarding the UK government's proposed changes to inheritance tax liabilities for farmers. This includes;

- **Lack of Consultation and Impact Assessment:** The Committee strongly criticises the government for announcing these changes in the Autumn Budget 2024 without adequate consultation, impact assessment, or affordability assessment. This lack of due diligence means the full impact on family farms, land values, tenant farmers, food security, and farmers in devolved administrations remains "disputed and unclear."
- **Risk of Unintended Consequences:** The report highlights a "considerable risk" that the reforms could lead to negative, unintended consequences for vulnerable farming groups, potentially forcing the sale of land that has been in families for generations.
- **Calls for Delay:** The EFRA Committee urges the government to delay the final announcement of its APR and BPR reforms until October 2026, with implementation pushed back to April 2027. This delay, they argue, would allow for better formulation of tax policy, proper consideration of alternative proposals, and more time for farmers to plan and seek professional advice.
- **Support for Reform (with caveats):** While the Committee acknowledges and supports the government's stated aim of reforming APR and BPR to close loopholes that allow wealthy investors to buy agricultural land primarily for inheritance tax avoidance, they emphasise that this should not come at the expense of genuine farming businesses.
- **Alternative Proposals:** The Committee notes that stakeholders, including the National Farmers' Union (NFU) and the Country Land and Business Association (CLA), have proposed alternative solutions, such as a "clawback mechanism." This mechanism would retain 100% relief at the point of inheritance but impose a tax on assets sold within a set period post-death. The Committee calls on the government to publish its evaluation and rationale for following or not following these alternative policy measures.
- **Erosion of Trust:** The report highlights a breakdown of trust between the government and the farming community due to these tax changes, alongside other policy decisions like the sudden closure of the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI). This lack of trust makes it difficult for the government to convey a positive long-term vision for the agricultural sector.
- **Impact on Mental Health:** A survey referenced in the report indicated a significant drop in farmer optimism and a negative impact on mental health following the Autumn Budget announcements, with inheritance tax changes being a key concern.
- **Data Discrepancies:** The Committee points out that the government's estimate of only 500 estates being affected by the changes is contradicted by figures from industry bodies, which suggest a much larger number of farming businesses could be impacted.

In essence, the EFRA Committee's position is that while reform of inheritance tax reliefs might be necessary to prevent misuse, the current government approach is rushed, lacks proper assessment, and risks severely damaging legitimate family farming businesses. They advocate for a pause to allow for a more consultative, evidence-based, and farmer-friendly approach to tax policy.

Conclusion

The motion agreed at full Council clearly highlights members' concerns about the potential impact of the reforms on the farming community in the District. However, following further exploration, it

is clear that there is a paucity of data from which to properly understand this issue below the regional level. The comprehensive report by the EFRA select committee also helps to demonstrate that this issue is best addressed at a national level.

Financial implications:

There are no direct financial implications on this Council from the recommendations in the report.

Legal implications:

There are no legal implications requiring comment

Appendix A

Changes to investment

Almost half of all family farms have paused or cancelled planned investment in the wake of changes announced to Agricultural Property Relief and Business Property Relief. The NFU partnered with Family Business UK and 30 other UK trade associations to assess the impact of recent changes to inheritance tax on family-owned businesses and farms. Conducted by independent consultancy CBI-Economics, the study saw more than 4,000 businesses and farms across the UK take part.

Key findings revealed that:

- 49% of family farms have paused or cancelled planned investments since the budget, while 43% say they will do so before April 2026.
- An additional 34% say they have deferred or reduced investment already.
- 14% say they plan to sell off assets or part of the farm.
- One in ten say they've downsized farming operations since the Budget and 21% plan to do so before April 2026.

More info: [200,000 jobs lost from BPR & APR Change - FBUK](#)

NFU suggest a Clawback mechanism

The NFU is proposing an alternative approach to the government's planned reforms to APR and BPR, known as a 'clawback' mechanism. We envisage the best way of meeting these aims is by way of a "clawback", where IHT is only applied to qualifying assets (those currently eligible for both APR and BPR) if they are disposed of within a seven-year period after death, and so tax is paid only when the finance is available to do so, in keeping with sound principles of taxation. Applying a clawback would maintain the ongoing day-to-day operations of businesses after a death while disincentivising the use of IHT reliefs as a tax avoidance measure. Importantly, it would still allow the Exchequer to raise the revenue it needs. Such clawback mechanisms are used in many other European countries.

AHDB analysis

AHDB analysis has found that the government's proposed changes to inheritance tax will affect more than 75% of English and Scottish farms. AHDB has calculated 42,204 out of 54,938 farms (76.8%) in England and Scotland that are 50 hectares (124 acres) or more in size will be affected.

That is 33,286 farms out of 41,602 (80%) for England and 8,918 farms out of 13,336 for Scotland (67%). The study looks at average balance sheet data mainly sourced from Defra, the Farm Business Survey and the Scottish Government.

OBR Forecast

OBR released a report : Supplementary forecast information release Costing of changes to agricultural and business property relief. See report: [Costing of changes to agricultural and business property relief: OBR supplementary forecast information release](#)

The Office for Budget Responsibility has said that government changes to inheritance tax on farms will likely leave elderly farmers horribly exposed, with no time to manage their way through the new policy. The OBR published a supplementary forecast on the costing of changes to agricultural and business property relief. In its report, the OBR says that it is 'highly uncertain' whether the measures will raise the £500m the claims it will raise.

Retailer support:

All of the UK's major supermarkets have publicly stated their shared concerns over the government's proposed changes to inheritance tax.

Some worked examples

This NFU page provides some worked examples of what the tax could mean for farmers: [What will I pay in inheritance tax on my farm under the family farm tax? – NFUonline](#)

Report to: Council

Date of Meeting 15 October 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document With Part B appendices

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release 2 years with financial data redacted



Recycling & Waste LATCo Funding Mechanism and Governance update

Report summary:

This report sets out the Cabinet recommendation to Council arising from their consideration of a report on 1 October 2025.

Note: The references in this report to Paper A relate to the relevant report considered by the Cabinet with recommendations for Full Council to consider and are appended to this report for reference.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☐ No ☒

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

That Council

- a. approve the updated Business Case at Appendix E.
- b. approve a loan of no more than £2.8 million to the LATCo.

Reason for recommendation:

To enable the legal and effective establishment of the LATCo to be ready to take over provision of recycling & waste kerbside collections and associated services from 1st July 2026. Items in this report will ensure effective and complaint governance and financial arrangements such that the company can operate.

Officer: Andrew Melhuish, Democratic Services Manager (andrew.melhuish@eastdevon.gov.uk)

Date of Meeting 1 October 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document With Part B appendices

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release 2 years with financial data redacted

Recycling & Waste LATCo Funding Mechanism and Governance update

Report summary:

Cabinet received a report in July 2025 which reviewed the updated Business Case for Future Service Provision for Recycling and Waste. Cabinet resolved to proceed with creation of a Local Authority Trading Company (LATCo) and to receive a future report outlining financing options and detailed governance arrangements. This report addresses these issues and recommends appropriate actions.

Structure and governance arrangements have been developed by legal firm Bevan Brittan, in consultation with the Recycling and Waste Portfolio Holder Group and Officers. Options for the funding mechanism have been assessed and a flexible loan arrangement has been identified as the preferred option.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☐ No ☒

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

(1) Recommend to Council

- a. Approval of the updated Business Case at Appendix E
- b. Approval of a loan of no more than £2.8 million to the LATCo

(2) Subject to 1 above that Cabinet approve the following recommendations: -

- a. To continue to progress the creation of a LATCo to take over provision of recycling & waste kerbside collections and associated services from 1st July 2026
- b. That operational activities of the LATCo are funded through a revolving credit facility with the Council.
- c. That delegated authority is granted to the Director of Place in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and Portfolio Holders for Finance and Environment Operations to make suitable arrangements and to enter into a formal loan agreement with the LATCo.
- d. That the maximum value of the loan agreement is no more than £2.8 million and that the Shareholder Committee receives a regular report on the status of the loan, to be provided by the LATCo Company Board.

(3) That a Cabinet Sub-Committee is formed to undertake the Council's role as owner of the LATCo, being the Shareholder Committee, following structure outlined in this report and the recommendations agreed within the Structure and Governance proposal agreed by Cabinet in July 2025.

- (4) That Bevan Brittan are instructed to produce the following documents for approval by the Shareholder Committee
- Articles of Association
 - Shareholder Agreement
 - Governance arrangements for the structure of the Company Board
 - Terms of Reference for the Company Board
 - Advice on the necessary actions to ensure compliance with Subsidy Control legal requirements including a submission to the UK Subsidy Register
- (5) That Bevan Brittan are instructed to develop changes to the Council's Constitution to set out
- The scope, powers and limitations of the Shareholder Committee, reflecting principles agreed by Cabinet in July.
 - The purpose, scope and limitations of the Recycling and Waste Partnership Board, following the recommendations within this report.
- (6) Cabinet (1) delegates responsibility to the Chief Executive to appoint two to three staff to act as temporary Company Directors during the formation stage of the Company, until the selection process for Non-Executive Directors is completed and (2) also delegates all future Company Board appointments and dismissals to the Shareholder Committee.

Reason for recommendation:

To enable the legal and effective establishment of the LATCo to be ready to take over provision of recycling & waste kerbside collections and associated services from 1st July 2026. Items in this report will ensure effective and complaint governance and financial arrangements such that the company can operate.

Officer: David Robertson, Project Manager. David.robertson@eastdevon.gov.uk Andrew Hancock, Assistant Director – StreetScene. andrew.hancock@eastdevon.gov.uk

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Assets and Economy
- ☐ Communications and Democracy
- ☐ Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- ☐ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- ☐ Environment - Nature and Climate
- ☒ Environment - Operational
- ☒ Finance
- ☐ Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Medium Impact

This proposal does not change the scope of services delivered to households, so has no direct equalities impacts. There are indirect benefits of operating a LATCo as it gives the Council greater control over how services are delivered, enabling equalities issues to be prioritised in strategic planning and performance monitoring. This includes creating employment and opportunities for disadvantaged groups and ensuring that services are delivered in ways which promotes equality of access. Transferring staff from both Suez and the Council's client unit is subject to strict legal

controls to ensure that their employment rights are protected. The implementation plan includes the provision of dedicated HR support throughout the process to ensure that this is delivered effectively. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out to evaluate the potential impact, consider impact and look to put measures in place where negative impact is identified. This will be a live document considered throughout implementation.

Climate change Low Impact

The climate change impacts of the LATCo were considered in the Cabinet Report July 2025; this report does not have any further impacts for consideration. Activities to improve the environmental and carbon impact of the LATCo are captured within the Strategic Objectives and will be delivered through the Company's Business Plan.

Risk: High Risk;

The risks associated with the LATCo project are being actively managed through the Project Implementation Plan. The recommendations within this report do not change the risks or control measures. The Business Case includes detailed consideration of risks and includes a risk register, shown in Appendix E.

Links to background information

Appendixes (Part B items)

Appendix A: Bevan Brittan Governance Advice Note (confidential)

Appendix B: Bevan Brittan Funding Advice Note (confidential)

Appendix C: [Structure and Governance Proposal](#) (not confidential)

Appendix D: Bevan Brittan Advice note 6th December 24 (confidential)

Appendix E: Global City Futures Business Case (confidential)

Appendix F: [Equalities Impact Assessment](#) (not confidential)

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☒ A supported and engaged community
- ☐ Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
- ☒ Resilient economy that supports local business
- ☒ Financially secure and improving quality of services

Report in full

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In February 2025 Council supported the option of setting up a LATCo to operate recycling and waste services when the current contract with SUEZ UK Ltd expires on 30 June 2026 and a further report setting out the full business case was requested to be presented to Members. In July 2025 that business case was presented to Cabinet and Cabinet approved the proposals for governance and delivery of the project of the LATCo and requested that a further report be presented back to Members before December 2025 regarding the proposed funding arrangements and further governance information.

- 1.2 This report outlines further detail of the structure and governance arrangements, making recommendations for a suitable funding arrangement and creating the governance structures necessary for the company to be created and controlled.
- 1.3 The report again includes the updated Business Case received and approved by Cabinet in July 2025, enabling Council to review the contents and gain assurance that the decision to set up a Local Authority Trading Company is the appropriate delivery model for the service when the current contract with Suez expires. Council is invited to approve that business case.
- 1.4 Recommendations in this report reflect legal advice provided by Bevan Brittan, best practice guidance published by Local Partnerships, and consultation with the Portfolio Holder group for Recycling and Waste (PHG).

2. Business Case

An outline business case (OBC) was presented to Cabinet in February 2025. This was produced by Global City Futures, a specialist consultancy with relevant experience in advising local authorities. The business case follows the 'five case model', produced by HM Treasury and considered best practice for evaluating options for public expenditure. The model evaluates the strategic, economic, commercial, financial and management aspects of the available options, resulting in a robust assessment of the available options. The OBC was based on best available information in December 2024, however Local Government Reform (LGR) and changes to operating costs have some impact on the business case. Therefore Members requested an updated version of the business case, which takes into account these changes.

- 2.1 Global City Futures have now updated the Business Case, which is linked under Background Information. The revised Business Case incorporates latest available information and reaches the same conclusion, that delivering the service through a LATCo is the best available option. Key changes in the updated Business Case are outlined below.
- 2.2 The Strategic Case for change remains broadly the same and has been refined, along with consideration of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), which is outlined in section 3 below. Another key factor in the strategic case is continued uncertainty around national policy and legislation for recycling and waste. Changes such as the Deposit Return Scheme and producer responsibility for packaging will inevitably change the volume and type of material collected, leading to changes in collection infrastructure, but the impact of these changes cannot be predicted at this stage. Operating a LATCo. gives the greatest capability to adapt resources to meet the changing needs of the operating environment.
- 2.3 The Economic Case has been updated to reflect additional information on the likely costs of each of the options appraised. The table below shows the projected net present social value of each option, showing that the LATCo delivers the highest benefit cost ratio, reflecting the more favourable social and environmental benefits it can deliver. A detailed risk analysis has also been carried out (contained within the Business Case at Appendix E), indicating that the LATCo option has the lowest risk rating of the shortlisted options.

2.3.1 Projected net present social value:

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
	Reprocure	LATCo	In-source
Incremental costs – total	-£100,580,889	-£96,476,430	-£98,281,416
Incremental benefits – total	£98,165,610	£100,259,664	£99,907,717
Net Present Social Value (NPSV)	-£2,415,279	£3,783,234	£1,626,301
Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR)	0.98	1.04	1.02

- 2.4 The Commercial Case sets out the proposed arrangements for the structure of the company and how it will be governed. This has been refined through support from Bevan Brittan and discussions with the Portfolio Holder Group. These arrangements are set out in the LATCo Structure and Governance Proposal. The Commercial Case has not been significantly changed since the proposals within the Outline Business Case.
- 2.5 The Financial Case has also been updated to reflect revised figures for operating costs of the shortlisted options. The income from material sales and trading activities is assumed to be the same across all options, however LATCo option delivers a lower operating cost, resulting in a lower overall cost over the appraisal period of 10 years. This is primarily due to the profit margin which would be applied to a contract awarded on commercial terms, and risk premiums which would be applied by all bidders. It is also worth noting that soft market testing has indicated that there are very few potential bidders for contracts of this nature, so offers on commercial terms could be worse than assumed in the modelling. The table below evaluates the costs over a 10 year period, concluding that the option to set up a LATCo is likely to be around £1.5 million cheaper.

2.5.1 Projected net operating costs over 10 years

Option		Total Cost	Income	EDDC Cost
Option 1:	New Contract	110,767,750	(42,226,349)	68,541,402
Option 2:	LATCo	109,228,416	(42,226,349)	67,002,067

- 2.6 The Management Case considers the deliverability of the project and the resourcing and risks involved in implementation and ongoing management. This was reviewed by Cabinet in July 2025 and arrangements were set in place to provide effective project management, project governance and adequate funding.

3. Funding arrangements

- 3.1 The company will require significant financial resources to fund its operations, including paying staff wages, purchasing goods and services, and maintaining vehicles. This report evaluates various potential funding structures and recommends that a revolving credit facility is used as the primary funding mechanism for costs incurred prior to invoicing. Alternative options considered are a share subscription and pre-payment under the contract to supply services. All three options require funds to be provided by the Council,

so the impact on budgets is broadly similar.

- 3.2 An alternative is for the company to obtain funds from other sources, either through capital investment in a joint ownership model, or loans from third parties. Following detailed analysis these options have been rejected prior to detailed evaluation as they are not viable.
- 3.2.1 If the Company raised money through capital investment from third parties (e.g. issuing shares), then the Council would not be exempted from requirements for competitive procurement processes for services that the Company supplies. This 'vertical or 'Teckal' exemption only applies where the company is fully in public ownership. Although it would be possible for other local authorities to jointly own the Company, this would only be appropriate where it was also providing services to them. For example, Strata is jointly owned by the local authorities that it supplies. If other local authorities wish to source services from the Company in the future then the ownership model could be adapted to accommodate this.
- 3.2.2 If the company attempted to borrow money from third parties, such as bank loans, then these would require financial guarantees from the Council and would attract less favourable borrowing costs; the company would pay a higher rate of interest on loans than the Council can achieve, and it would still have to act as a guarantor on these loans, resulting in the same risk profile.
- 3.3 Legal firm Bevan Brittan have conducted an evaluation of the three options and provided their analysis in the Appendix B Funding Advice Note. This is a confidential advice not for Members only. It focuses on the legal aspects of the option and is augmented by an analysis of wider factors conducted by Officers. The Portfolio Holder Group met in August 2025 to consider these options, with analysis presented by a Partner from Bevan Brittan. The Portfolio Holder Group's feedback and views have been incorporated into the drafting of this report. A summary of the analysis is in Table 1 at the end of this section.
- 3.4 The Company will commence delivery of recycling and waste services on 1st July 2026, resulting in expenditure on operational activities from this date. There will however need to be expenditure before this date, such as pre-payment to suppliers and operating expenses which are not covered within the project budget. It is therefore recommended that funds can be made available to the company from 1st January 2026, enabling it cover pre-trading expenditure and to enter contracts for supply of goods and services.
- 3.5 Option 1: Revolving credit facility (preferred option)**
- 3.5.1 The most suitable arrangement for the Council to loan money to the Company is through a flexible credit facility with an appropriate rate in interest applied. The company could draw on funds as required, up to an agreed maximum value. This arrangement would be flexible, enabling the company to draw more money or to repay some of the debt as required to remain solvent and secure. It is anticipated that the Company will invoice monthly in arrears, reflecting normal commercial terms. The funds would meet operational costs incurred during the lag between invoice and payment. This reflects the trading environment typically experienced by commercial organisations, aligned with the Council's aim to run the organisation on commercial principles.
- 3.5.2 The Council would source funds from internal cash balances. The Council would then be free to charge interest at a rate appropriate to recover its own borrowing costs, or lost investment income or consider a market rate. Initially, interest charges to the company will be covered by applying charges under the services contract, resulting in a financially neutral position. If however, the Company builds profitable commercial trading activities,

then higher interest rates offer a way for the Council to benefit financially in a way which is both legal and tax efficient.

- 3.5.3 If this option is chosen, then officers will be delegated authority to create a suitable lending arrangement and to provide regular reports to the Shareholder Committee which set out the funding provided, future forecasts, and an analysis of the financial health of the Company.

3.6 Option 2: Share subscription (Equity)

- 3.6.1 The Council can fund (or part fund) the company through purchasing shares, which has the effect of providing the company with money it can use for either investment or trading activities. The Council's ownership of the company can be through share capital from as little as £1, creating only a nominal value, or through a higher value which would avoid the need for money to be loaned to the company. Generally, share capital is not repayable, it is not secured, and interest is not payable.
- 3.6.2 The Council would need to source funds for this arrangement; there would be a loss to the Council – either in lost investment interest or interest paid on loans.

3.7 Option 3: Pre-payment

- 3.7.1 The Council can provide funds by agreeing that the company can charge the council in advance for the services it provides (rather than regular invoicing in-arrears), thus ensuring that it has sufficient money available to fund operating activity. In practical terms, the Company would invoice the Council for its services in advance, most likely at either three monthly or six-monthly intervals.
- 3.7.2 This option also requires a source of funding – again there would be loss to the Council – either in lost investment interest or interest paid on loans. This could be complicated by uneven cash flows for the company having to be reflected in advance charges with reconciliations back to proper invoice sums.

3.8 Preferred option - revolving credit facility

- 3.8.1 All three options offer a legal and workable mechanism to provide the Company with operational funding, however a revolving credit facility (i.e. flexible loan) provides the best approach due to several advantages:
- It is the most flexible option, allowing the value of the loan to be varied at short notice.
 - It provides greatest potential to be tax efficient, allowing the council to apply commercial rates of interest on the loan, resulting in lower corporation tax liabilities.
 - It provides greatest transparency, enabling the Council to monitor the financial health of the company.
 - It is best aligned with subsidy control duties and requirements to operate commercially, due to incorporating borrowing costs into operating budgets.

3.9 Value of loan

- 3.9.1 It is not possible to accurately forecast the value of the loan required as this is impacted by a wide range of factors which effect the operation of the Company, such as the credit terms offered by suppliers. However, when first formed, the company will have poor credit rating and suppliers are likely to insist on unfavourable credit terms or even

prepayment, therefore the company is likely to need a higher loan in its first year of trading, which will reduce as it becomes financially secure.

- 3.9.2 The company is likely to need a loan facility of up to three months of operating costs and it is anticipated that it will draw on at least one month to cover the period between invoicing the Council and receiving funds, plus one month of trading costs. A further contingency of 20 percent should be applied to this, for unanticipated circumstances. Based on an annual operating cost of £9.4 million, the maximum value of loan should be set at £2.8 million.

3.10 Process for loan to be provided

- 3.10.1 The loan facility will be provided to the Company through a written agreement which will set out the arrangements for it to be requested, provided, managed and monitored. The agreement will be produced by the Council's Director of Finance, in consultation with the Assistant Director of Streetscene.
- 3.10.2 Day to day management of the loan facility will be undertaken by the Council Finance Directorate, with no involvement by the Streetscene Team. It is important that the loan facility is managed within the Council's 'owner' function and not within the 'customer' function which is led by the Assistant Director for Streetscene. This arrangement ensures a healthy separation of functions which will support effective management controls.

Table 1: Evaluation of funding options

	Revolving Credit	Share Subscription	Pre-Payment
Flexibility <i>Can the funding be easily varied?</i>	Fully Flexible The parties can agree the value as required to maintain solvency and good credit rating	Very Inflexible Share capital can only be changed through a complex procedure	Semi-flexible The time period of pre-payment can be varied by agreement of parties
Loan interest arrangements <i>Can borrowing costs be recovered by the Council?</i>	Recovered	Not recovered	Not recovered
Financial transparency <i>Can the Council monitor changes in the financial health of the company?</i>	Fully Transparent Company solvency is inherently visible to Council through value of loan called upon	Poor Funds are supplied upfront and company relies on reports from Company	Moderate Changes in pre-payment period indicate solvency
Commerciality Is the arrangement consistent with need for company to operate commercially	Fully Commercial the Company pays interest on loans and is incentivised to reduce reliance on borrowing	Poor The company is relying on share capital to fund operational activity, so money invested can never be recovered	Poor Reliance on pre-payment is not a healthy way to run a business
Tax benefit <i>Is the arrangement tax efficient and legal?</i>	Tax efficient Borrowing costs can be offset to reduce corporation tax and varied to enhance position	Inefficient losses could be hidden by drawing on share capital to fund operations, or tax could be paid on false profit	Inefficient losses could be hidden by extending the payment period, or tax could be paid on false profit
Subsidy control status Is the arrangement consistent with subsidy control duties	Strong Borrowing costs are included in operating budgets, giving effective visibility	Weak Costs are hidden and could be excluded from commercial pricing calculations	Weak
Shareholder Committee Influence	Stronger	Weaker	Weaker

4. Shareholder Committee

- 4.1 Cabinet agreed in July 2025 that a Shareholder Committee (SHC) will be formed to undertake control of the Company. This body will be a Cabinet Sub-Committee, reflecting the constitutional requirement for control to be a function of the Executive.
- 4.2 The purpose of the SHC was outlined in the documentation supporting the July Cabinet Report and is set out in more detail in the Governance Advice Note prepared by Bevan Brittan which accompanies this report. Bevan Brittan will be commissioned to produce the detailed scope, powers and limitations of the SHC, reflecting the principles agreed by Cabinet. They will also draft proposed changes to the Constitution necessary to create and direct the SHC. The Council's Monitoring Officer will review these changes and arrange for them to be incorporated into the Constitution at the next scheduled review.
- 4.3 It is proposed that the SHC comprises up to five members of Cabinet to be determined from time to time by the Leader of Council, with a quorum of 3.
- 4.4 The SHC will also require professional and legal advice, therefore officers will be required to attend as necessary, to participate in discussions and to provide guidance. Standing invitations to receive papers and attend will be given to:
 - Chief Executive
 - Section 151 Officer
 - Monitoring Officer
 - Director of Place (*who will also attend Company Board meetings, ensuring a 'golden thread' between the Company Board and SHC*)

5. Board of Directors

- 5.1 Cabinet agreed arrangements for the Company's Board of Directors in July 2025. Details of the proposed arrangements are within the Structure and Governance Proposal which accompanied the Cabinet Report and is also attached to this Report at Appendix C. Bevan Brittan have been instructed to develop the detailed arrangements for operation of the Company Board of Directors, working in conjunction with the LATCo implementation project team and Monitoring Officer. Proposals for the scope and powers of the Board will be presented to the Shareholder Committee, who will have power to appoint/remove Directors and to create and amend the Company's Constitution.
- 5.2 Arrangements for selecting the three Non-Executive Directors and Finance Director will be proposed by the LATCo Project Team and approved by the SHC. A panel comprised of Officers including the Chief Executive and 2 Directors, 3 members of the SHC (a Cabinet sub-committee) and 2 members of the Recycling and Waste Portfolio Holder Group (PHG) will be formed to evaluate potential candidates, providing recommendations for consideration and appointment by SHC.
- 5.3 A selection process for the Company Managing Director commenced in September 2025, ensuring that an appointment can be made and commence work early in 2026, as requested by Council. This closely follows the process for appointments to senior officer posts at the Council, but is outside the scope of this process and therefore the Personnel Committee does not have a role. The selection process includes members of Cabinet, representatives from PHG, senior officers, staff from the Council and Suez, and is supported by specialist recruitment agent Tile Hill. The primary panel assessing

candidates consist of The Leader and Deputy Leader, Portfolio Holder for Environment Operations, Chief Executive and Director of Place. This process will produce preferred candidates, for consideration and appointment by the Shareholder Committee or by Cabinet on 29th October. The Managing Director will undertake dual roles of leading the Company and being a Company Director.

- 5.4 It is necessary for the Company to be created in late October so that it can appoint the Managing Director. The process for appointing Directors will not be completed by this time, therefore alternative arrangements must be made to appoint interim company Directors to the Company Board so that it can function in the short term. It is proposed that up to three members of the Council's Senior Leadership Team will be appointed as Directors, with a delegation to the Chief Executive to make these short-term appointments as a temporary measure until selection for permanent directors is completed. The SHC will have responsibility for these future permanent appointments and all subsequent ones. The Council's Executive Leadership Team have considered options for suitable candidates and propose The Director of Housing & Health be appointed to 1 position, with the Deputy s151 Officer appointed to another. This maintains the most pragmatic separation of customer and client functions for the interim period aligning with best practice as advised by Bevan Brittan. One other interim Director could be appointed if deemed necessary, however the MD will be a director once they are in post (anticipated to be Jan-March subject to notice and successful recruitment).

6. Recycling and Waste Partnership Board

- 6.1 The Recycling and Waste Partnership Board meets regularly and has been an effective forum to monitor performance by Suez, along with carrying out a wide role to support development of improvements in recycling waste services. It has developed experience and expertise which supports service delivery and enables the Council to have confidence that there is an effective route for constructive challenge, which also engages on a cross-party basis for this important frontline service.
- 6.2 When services transfer from Suez to the LATCo, the RWPB can continue its role in a very similar way to the current arrangements, acting as part of the 'customer' aspect of governance arrangements. It also plays a significant role beyond the customer/supplier relationship, actively contributing to the wider recycling and waste function of the council. This includes the council's relationship with the County Council in its capacity as Waste Disposal Authority, influencing policy decisions, and supporting the development of service improvement, innovations and improved environmental performance.
- 6.3 The RWPB has formal status recognised by the Council's Constitution and its membership is decided by Council, ensuring that it is politically balanced and outside the control of the Executive. The RWPB has a set of terms which were approved at the start of the Suez contract and are included within the contract; However, the Constitution does not currently set out the purpose, scope, powers, limitations, or structure of the Board. It is therefore helpful for this to be addressed within the wider work on governance arrangements, leading to a clearer role. Bevan Brittan will be instructed to review the arrangements within the constitution and existing terms of reference and propose improvements, which will regularise the current situation. This will include a review of the existing terms of reference and clarifying the group's structure, powers and the role of Council in appointing its members. These proposals will be reviewed by the Portfolio Holder Group and submitted to the Monitoring Officer for inclusion in the next review of the Constitution.

7. Company Constitution

- 7.1 The Company constitution will be split between the Articles of Association and Shareholder Agreement, reflecting advice from Bevan Brittan. These documents provide the means for the Council to exercise control over the Company, primarily through the SHC.
- 7.2 The Articles of Association define the rules that govern the internal management of a company. These rules set out the roles and responsibilities of directors, the rights of the shareholder(s) and procedures for meetings and decision-making. This document is filed at Company's House and can be amended by Cabinet.
- 7.3 The Shareholder Agreement sets out further details of how the company must operate and how the owner can exert power over it. This is key to the Council exerting control over the company and ensuring that it achieves its purposes. Changes to the Shareholder Agreement will be a Cabinet decision.
- 7.4 Bevan Brittan are developing the Articles of Association and Shareholder Agreement, in consultation with Officers. The Articles of Association must be submitted when the company is created in late October, so the first version will follow standard conventions. It will then be taken to the PHG for consultation and to the Shareholder Committee, which can make amendments and approve a new version. Likewise, the Shareholder Agreement will be reviewed by the PHG and approved by the SHC but will not need to be submitted to Company's House.

8. Subsidy control

- 8.1 A subsidy arises where a public authority provides support to an enterprise that gives them an economic advantage, meaning equivalent support could not have been obtained on commercial terms. The Council has duties and obligations under the Subsidy Control Act 2022 which need to be considered with respect to the operation of the LATCo. These considerations apply to all of its operations including the primary contract for supply of services to the Council, even though this contract will be awarded under the horizontal 'Teckal' exemption under procurement legislation (as now contained in Schedule 2, Part 1 of the Procurement Act 2023).
- 8.2 It is recommended that Bevan Brittan are commissioned to produce a guidance note which evaluates the risks and appropriate actions, based on the specific circumstances faced. This would enable the Council to report its position with the LATCo through the UK Government's formal Subsidy Database (where it is determined a subsidy decision has been made), ensuring that all reasonable steps have been taken to manage and control risks.

9. Company Name

- 9.1 The July Cabinet Report paper proposed that the company's name would be discussed by stakeholders at a workshop in September 2025. This process has been postponed due to focus on legal framework and governance issues essential for the creation of the company. The company will be registered with a neutral name, which can be changed when the trading name is agreed.

- 9.2 Councillors and wider stakeholders will be consulted during October on options for the name and branding. A preferred option will be submitted to the Shareholder committee, which will make the final decision on both name and branding identity.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 This report sets out a range of practical actions and decisions which are necessary to set up the Company and makes arrangements for its control by the Council. The Shareholder Committee will undertake the primary role in controlling the Company, reporting to Cabinet in the first instance and Council where appropriate. The recommendations outlined in this report will enable the legal and effective establishment of the Company, positioning it to deliver sustainable and efficient recycling and waste services for the community.

Financial implications:

The report has one new financial ask for the Council to consider in relation to this project and that is to approve a flexible loan agreement with ability for the Company to borrow up to £2.8m as a maximum from the Council. This will be on terms that are cost neutral or better for the Council.

Legal implications:

This is an important project for this Council which brings with it significant risk and opportunities. For this reason, external advice has been taken from Bevan Brittan on both the contents of this report and the structure and governance proposals for the company. The report and the proposals set out in detail the proposed structure of the company and the legal and governance arrangements that will sit behind it. As with any Company, it is a separate legal entity with its own legal responsibilities under the Companies Act 2006. The governance arrangements are there to ensure that the Council is able to hold the Company to account in the delivery of services. Members are advised to have careful regard to the contents of the various documents before making a decision on the recommendations outlined in this report.

As far as the MD recruitment is concerned, the Council (namely the Cabinet or SHC) has the power to undertake the recruitment for the MD on behalf of the company pursuant to its primary waste powers under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, powers to trade in function related activities through a company as set out in the Local Government Act 2003 (and the Local Government (Best Value Authorities) (Power to Trade) (England) Order 2009), and s.111 Local Government Act 1972, which provides that a local authority shall have power to do anything (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.

Human Resources implications:

Human resources implications of the changes were considered in the July Cabinet report, there are no further implications resulting from the recommendations within this report.



Report to: Council

Date of Meeting 15 October 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Recommendation from Cabinet on 30 July 2025 – Financial Outturn for 2024/2025

Report summary:

This report sets out the Cabinet recommendation to Council arising from their consideration of a report on 1 October 2025 on the Financial Outturn for 2024/2025.

Note: The references in this report to Paper A relate to the relevant report considered by the Cabinet with recommendations for Full Council to consider and are appended to this report for reference.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

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

Reason for recommendation:

To accord with the Council's financial regulations, the report presented the outturn position for the Council's approved budgets for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Expenditure.

Officer: Andrew Melhuish, Democratic Services Manager (andrew.melhuish@eastdevon.gov.uk)

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting 30 July 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



Finance Report: 2024/25 Outturn and Quarter 1 monitoring update

Report summary:

This report sets out the revenue budget and capital outturn positions at the end of the financial year 2024/25 and also provides a summary of the Council's financial position for quarter 1 2025/26.

2024/25 Outturn:

The 2024/25 outturn position of the General Fund is a positive one with a surplus balance for reallocation of £0.712m.

The Council has again faced a challenging year with significant service demand and inflationary pressures in the supply of goods and services. Higher interest rates during 2024/25 have had a positive impact on our investment returns which have enabled the Council to mitigate against service pressures during 2024/25 but they will remain challenging for future years given the cost-of-living crisis and the impact this has on levels of demand and cost.

The report outlines the implications of these results on the Council's reserves and makes recommendations on reserve transfers.

The Council's General Fund balance at the end of the 2024/25 financial year remains at £4.8m. This is at the top of the adopted range between 4m and 4.8m.

In respect of the capital programme, the report provides details of capital expenditure of £8.551m and capital income received of £3.564m.

The report also outlines the year end position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The positive position continues with the HRA reporting as on budget having made additional revenue contributions to capital which in turn reduces ongoing financing costs. Variance analysis provides detail with confirmation of the 31 March 2025 reserve balance position.

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Quarter 1 2025/26 indications:

The General Fund Balance is currently projected to be above the adopted level; no action is recommended for members consideration at this stage. Forecasts indicate a favourable position of £486k is predicted, portfolio totals making up £253k and financing and interest a further £233k.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) year-to-date figures, shown in the table below, up to Q1, are materially in line with the profiled budget, therefore there are no concerns or corrective recommendations to raise to members at this.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

1. That Cabinet considers and recommends to Council the outturn position for 2024/25 including the implications and proposals relating to the Balances and Reserves held by the Council.
2. That Cabinet recommend to Council the proposed reserve transfers contained within the report and give delegated authority to the Director Finance in consultation with the Finance Portfolio for any amendments to these transfers as any additional year end data becomes available.
3. The variances identified as part of the Revenue and Capital Monitoring process up to Quarter one be acknowledged.

Reason for recommendation:

To accord with the Council's financial regulations, this report presents the outturn position for the Council's approved budgets for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Expenditure.

The report updates Members on the overall financial position of the Authority and includes recommendations to reserve transfers and for corrective action, when required, for the remainder of the current financial year.

Officer: John Symes – Finance Manager, jsymes@eastdevn.gov.uk, 01395 517413

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Assets and Economy
- ☐ Communications and Democracy
- ☐ Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- ☐ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- ☐ Environment - Nature and Climate
- ☐ Environment - Operational
- ☒ Finance
- ☐ Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk;

Links to background information -

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☑ A supported and engaged community
- ☑ Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
- ☑ Resilient economy that supports local business
- ☑ Financially secure and improving quality of services

Report in full

Financial Outturn 2024/25

General Fund Position

The Council's Revenue Account, known as the General Fund, bears the net cost of providing day-to-day services. These are the portfolio/service totals identified in the Council's Income & Expenditure Account.

The Council has again faced a challenging year with significant service demand and inflationary pressures in the supply of goods and services. Higher interest rates during 2024/25 have had a positive impact on our investment returns which have enabled the Council to mitigate against service pressures during 2024/25 but they will remain challenging for future years given the cost-of-living crisis and the impact this has on levels of demand and cost.

The 2024/25 budget was set by Council with a Council Tax Requirement of £10.415m, which included a contribution to the general fund balance of £0.5m and an increase in the upper limit to £4.8m.

The following table shows the in year outturn variations versus set budgets.

General Fund Position	2024/25 Outturn	
	£m	F/A
Original Budget Requirement	10.415	
Approved Budget Variations during reporting period	-0.089	F
Revised budget Requirement	10.326	
Surplus in Year v Revised budget	-0.773	F
Final Outturn Position 31/3/2025	9.553	
Homelessness Reserve Contribution	0.150	A
Final General Fund Surplus to allocate	-0.712	F

The recommendation set before members for the allocation of the 2024/25 annual surplus of £0.712m, to be approved at Cabinet and Council, is to include the balance within the Medium Term Financial Plan Risk Reserve along with £0.150m Homelessness reserve contribution. Earmarked reserves are shown at appendix 1.

The General Funds associated Capital Programmes, which excludes HRA Capital, are showing a significant underspend in the 24/25 outturn overall, which is shown in the below table. These surpluses will be carried forward into the following years as slippage.

General Fund Capital	24/25 Outturn £'000's		
	Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def
TOTAL CAP Expenditure	8,551,003	33,230,972	-24,679,969
TOTAL CAP Income	-3,563,512	-8,922,727	5,359,215
TOTAL Net Capital	4,987,491	24,308,245	-19,320,754

The Variations against the set budget, incorporating in year approved budget variations, across the general fund and non-HRA capital programmes, are explained in the following pages and tables. Commentaries have been included at a summary level addressing material variations or issues which are relevant to, or have impact upon, the General Fund and associated capital projects within 24/25.

2024/25 General Fund Outturn Against Budget - Portfolio Table & Commentary

	Including Capital Charges				Capital Charges			Excluding Capital Charges				NOTES
Portfolio Budget - Net Expenditure	2024/25 Outturn				24/25 Outturn			2024/25 Outturn				
	Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def	%age	Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def	Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def	%age	
Corporate Business	202,067	202,006	61	0%	0	0	0	202,067	202,006	61	0%	1
Corporate Services	2,793,629	2,603,109	190,521	7%	0	0	0	2,793,629	2,603,109	190,521	7%	2
Economy And Regenrtn Portfolio	748,588	670,091	78,497	10%	211,050	277,920	-66,870	537,538	392,171	145,367	27%	3
Environment Portfolio	5,597,075	5,475,218	121,857	2%	1,326,767	1,149,170	177,597	4,270,308	4,326,048	-55,740	-1%	4
Finance	-444,342	-686,796	242,454	-55%	-34,743	10,530	-45,273	-409,599	-697,326	287,727	-70%	5
Strategic Development & P'Ship	3,275,096	3,330,469	-55,373	-2%	3,003	1,720	1,283	3,272,093	3,328,749	-56,655	-2%	6
Street Scene Portfolio	16,198,164	14,420,511	1,777,653	11%	3,844,353	2,247,090	1,597,263	12,353,810	12,173,421	180,389	1%	7
Sustainable Homes & Communitie	1,690,473	2,020,601	-330,128	-20%	52,045	31,110	20,935	1,638,428	1,989,491	-351,063	-21%	8
Portfolio Totals	30,060,751	28,035,209	2,025,542	7%	5,402,476	3,717,540	1,684,936	24,658,275	24,317,669	340,607	1%	
Reversal of Capital Charges	-5,402,476	-3,717,540	-1,684,936	31%	-5,402,476	-3,717,540	-1,684,936	0	0	0	0%	
Portfolio Totals	24,658,275	24,317,669	340,607	1%	0	0	0	24,658,275	24,317,669	340,607	1%	

Capital Charges Variations to Budget

The capital charges that are included within the budget are based off of the most up to date data available at the time, which results in the prior year's charges being included in the budget for the year ahead. This is only really effective for depreciation, being that this is a continually applicable charge year on year, with revaluation rather difficult to predict and impairments by their nature, being one off, in year impacts.

The vast majority of the capital charge variation to budget has been seen within Street Scene, more specifically within the Public Conveniences service. The approved capital programme, to invest in and update the councils public conveniences or sell them, is a forward looking program to generate revenue income from these assets going forward. Due to the nature of the assets, the investment made does not equate to added asset value, therefore capital expenditure is significantly impaired. Similarly, due to the difficulty in placing a value on such assets, impairments were also required on disposal. The below tables show the breakdown of capital charges and the most significant of the impairments associated with the assets in question.

Capital Charge	2024/25 Outturn				Asset Impaired	CAP EX	Impair-t	Other Chgs	Value
	Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def	%age					
Depreciation	3,462,328	3,707,460	-245,133	-7%	PC_Foxholes CP	405,466	-389,369	-21,267	-5,169
Revaluation	85,143	0	85,143		PC_West Walk Seaton	324,749	-324,749	-4,469	-4,469
Impairment	1,854,790	0	1,854,790		PC_East End	289,311	-278,822	-13,264	-2,775
					PC_Ace Walk Car Park	286,732	-239,129	-52,971	-5,369
					PC_Port Royal	DISPOSAL	-82,191	DISPOSAL	
					PC_Seaton Hole	DISPOSAL	-41,685	DISPOSAL	
Capital Charge Total	5,402,261	3,707,460	1,694,801	46%	Totals	1,306,258	-1,355,946	-91,971	-17,782

Portfolio Revenue Commentary - Excluding Capital Charges

1 Corporate Business

No significant variances

2 Corporate Services

The majority of the adverse variation (£140k) relates to Employee related costs. Within the Corporate Accounting Cost Centre, the salary savings anticipated due to an incomplete establishment of £400k have been offset by the provision made for the pay award leaving a net undistributed cost of £93k. The remaining difference relates to employee salary costs which have been covered from reserve contributions.

3 Economy And Regeneration Portfolio

The most significant outlier that has contributed to the outturn variation is within the Building Control area. Despite staff related savings due to Vacant posts during the year, the decrease in fees driven by a reduced volumes in the first half of the year particularly, has driven a Net deficit of £85k. This was in part reduced due to the increase in fees at the end of the year and a gradual upward trajectory in volumes. The other notable driver of expenditure increase was business rate charges on the council owned properties which were higher than anticipated.

4 Environment Portfolio

The service performed significantly better than expected with regards to their income generation and receipts, achieving £134k over and above the set budget. The most significant variances were within the EDNL team, £75k of additional grant funding received, plus £59k of additional fees and recovery of costs within the Environmental Protection team. This surplus has been partially offset by various other less significant adverse variances, most notably, £70k of additional expenditure on numerous Leisure facilities against budget on Ad hoc maintenance costs.

5 Finance

Car Parks have contributed most significantly to the deficit outturn within Finance. Income levels have been significantly lower than expected, especially for the Exmouth beach front car parks, which have seen reduced volumes due to the South West Water Sewage issues that have been prevalent throughout the summer months. This, combined with significantly higher than expected costs for the mobile payment services, has driven the deficit on the service in 2024/25.

6 Strategic Development & Planning

The two primary areas driving the material variance within SD&P were both Development Management & Planning Policy. Planning fees within Development Management were considerably lower than expectations throughout the majority of the year, with similar issues of reduced volumes experienced across the country. Income levels picked up markedly in Q4 as volumes began to increase and a few larger applications materialised. As a reaction to this, the service delayed the appointment of Senior Planning Officer posts and reduced consultancy expenditure against the provided budget, limiting the adverse impact to £0.1m from the £0.4m deficit on income alone. Further mitigation within the Planning department was seen within Planning Policy where a minor restructure further reduced the overall fee impact.

7 Street Scene Portfolio

The two primary areas of significant variation within Street Scene are refuse & recycling and the £0.3m adverse impact resulting from the delay in the anticipated savings of the Public Convenience program. Within Refuse & Recycling, the recycling materials credit income received in 24/25, predominantly from glass and cardboard sales, more than offset the annual deficit in the cost plus payment, reducing the Toilets deficit by £0.12m. Further favourable variances were seen across the service from Staff related saving to increased income levels, notable from the hire of Beer Beach and surrounding areas for filming.

8 Sustainable Homes & Community

Homelessness saw a favourable outturn variation for 24/25 of £0.3m and have therefore requested that at least £0.15m of this surplus be placed into a reserve for the future demands upon the council. An additional grant, circa £200k of Central Government allocated income, relating to Homelessness Prevention has driven the increase as it was not included in prior year announcement from which the budget was set. Further savings were seen in the year due to reductions in spend on emergency accommodation, which came in at £60k under budget due to the drive to use our own stock, the cost of which can be charged back to the individuals. The residual surplus is primarily due to staff related savings within Environmental Health.

2024/25 General Fund Outturn Against Budget - Financing, Funding & Movements in Reserves

Portfolio Totals Carried Forward	24,658,275	24,317,669	340,607

Revenue Financing & Funding	2024/25 Outturn		
	Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def
Net Interest Income	-2,975,619	-1,498,590	-1,477,029
PWLB Financing Cost	65,780	68,210	-2,430
Principal Repayment Provision	948,504	779,600	168,904
Financing Total	-1,961,334	-650,780	-1,310,554
New Homes Bonus Grant	-1,147,733	-1,147,701	-32
Rural Services Delivery Grant	-306,359	-265,000	-41,359
New & Lower Tier Services Grant	-1,785,909	-1,714,000	-71,909
New Services Grant	-18,623	-58,000	39,377
Revenue Support Grant	-277,399	-277,399	0
Government Grant Total	-3,536,023	-3,462,100	-73,923
Business Rates Income incl Surplus/Deficit	-10,920,489	-10,799,367	-121,123
Business Rates - Movement in Reserves	-289,104	-289,104	0
Council Tax Income	-10,414,911	-10,414,911	0
Council Tax Surplus/Deficit	-269,150	-251,053	-18,098
Council Tax - Movement in Reserves	155,053	155,053	0
CTAX & Business Rates Funding Total	-21,738,602	-21,599,382	-139,220

Movements in Reserves	2024/25 Outturn		
	Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def
Cont to/(from) General Fund Balance	500,000	500,000	0
Cont to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	1,215,535	805,731	409,804
Movement in Reserves Total	1,715,535	1,305,731	409,804
General Fund Outturn	-862,148	-88,862	-773,286

9 Net Interest Income

Treasury Investments - The interest income the council received in 24/25 was £2.987m versus a budget of £1.527m. The high base rates peaked during the year and began to fall, but they remained significantly higher than rates at the beginning of the decade and higher than expected at the time the budget was set. The associated impact on term deposit and money market rates, coupled with higher than expected treasury deposit levels, resulted in a significant surplus to budget.

10 Principal Repayment Provision

The two major impacts upon the Principal Repayment Provision in 2024/25 were both the General Fund's minimum revenue provision calculation, as well as the impact of the MIRs element of the IFRS16 Accounting change for loans. Where the council has treated loans as Financing, removing the operating cost versus balance sheet, interest, depreciation & MIRs elements, the associated budgets have also been adjusted. The residual variation is therefore solely the General Funds minimum revenue provision, the calculation of which is described in the latest published Treasury Management Strategy.

11 Government Grants

The timing difference between the final announcement of some of the central government grants and the councils budget setting process has resulted in a favourable variation in 2024/25 with the overall grant allocation being greater than initially expected.

12 Business Rates Income

In 24/25 business rates income increased by £1.4m to £10.9m, with a further £1.85m contribution to the Enterprise Zone reserve for the designated areas. This compares with a budgeted General Fund surplus figure of £10.8m versus £7.3m in 23/24, after taking into consideration the required Enterprise Zone allocation and volatility adjustment to offset any deficit held in the collection fund reserve.

13 General Fund Contribution

The 2024/25 budget provided for an increase in the General Fund Balance of £0.5m, increasing the upper limit to £4.8m. This decision was made due to the upcoming Central Government Spending Review in 25/26 which sets out the medium term path for public finances.

14 Earmarked Reserves Variations

The two material variations against budget, within earmarked reserve releases/contributions, relate to a lower than anticipated release of Transformation reserve funding in the year to fulfil specific projects (£0.13m) and an expected release of Revs and Bens resilience reserve which wasn't required as the anticipated deficits didn't materialise.

Portfolio & Service Name			24/25 Outturn £'000's		
			Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def
1 Corporate Services	Capital Comms Business System	Cap Ex	73,665	911,353	-837,688
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	73,665	911,353	-837,688
1 Corporate Services	Capital Ict Infra And Projects	Cap Ex	83,309	366,674	-283,365
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	83,309	366,674	-283,365
2 Community - Housing	Capital Improvements Grants	Cap Ex	654,748	1,310,547	-655,799
		Income	-615,735	-1,201,667	585,932
		Net Exp	39,013	108,880	-69,867
3 Economy & Regeneration	Capital Corp Build And Security	Cap Ex	13,116	261,738	-248,622
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	13,116	261,738	-248,622
3 Economy & Regeneration	Capital Industrial Sites	Cap Ex	60,482	230,189	-169,707
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	60,482	230,189	-169,707
3 Economy & Regeneration	Capital Public Halls Pavilion	Cap Ex	97,623	175,316	-77,693
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	97,623	175,316	-77,693
3 Economy & Regeneration	Capital Regeneration Economy	Cap Ex	1,560,703	7,027,530	-5,466,827
		Income	-886,304	-3,395,304	2,509,000
		Net Exp	674,399	3,632,226	-2,957,827
4 Environment	Capital Car Park	Cap Ex	170,410	662,353	-491,943
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	170,410	662,353	-491,943
4 Environment	Capital Countryside	Cap Ex	0	90,697	-90,697
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	0	90,697	-90,697
4 Environment	Capital Spts Centres And Pool	Cap Ex	728,525	1,391,663	-663,138
		Income	0	-132,653	132,653
		Net Exp	728,525	1,259,010	-530,485
5 Street Scene	Capital Beaches And Foreshores	Cap Ex	2,608,439	7,462,350	-4,853,911
		Income	-1,800,893	-2,535,893	735,000
		Net Exp	807,546	4,926,457	-4,118,911
5 Street Scene	Capital Cemeteries	Cap Ex	0	150,000	-150,000
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	0	150,000	-150,000
5 Street Scene	Capital Flood Alleviation Sch	Cap Ex	1,059,233	3,486,155	-2,426,922
		Income	0	-1,238,000	1,238,000
		Net Exp	1,059,233	2,248,155	-1,188,922
5 Street Scene	Capital Parks And Pleasure Grn	Cap Ex	193,172	730,649	-537,477
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	193,172	730,649	-537,477
5 Street Scene	Capital Play Equipment	Cap Ex	334,823	1,666,313	-1,331,490
		Income	0	-158,630	158,630
		Net Exp	334,823	1,507,683	-1,172,860
5 Street Scene	Capital Public Conveniences	Cap Ex	454,558	3,197,881	-2,743,323
		Income	-260,580	-260,580	0
		Net Exp	193,978	2,937,301	-2,743,323
5 Street Scene	Capital Refuse And Recycling	Cap Ex	458,196	2,293,699	-1,835,503
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	458,196	2,293,699	-1,835,503
5 Street Scene	Capital Sports Grounds	Cap Ex	0	10,000	-10,000
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	0	10,000	-10,000
5 Street Scene	Capital St Scene Cleansing	Cap Ex	0	124,002	-124,002
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	0	124,002	-124,002
5 Street Scene	Capital St Scene Grounds Maint	Cap Ex	0	431,863	-431,863
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	0	431,863	-431,863
6 Strategic Development	Gypsy And Traveller Sites	Cap Ex	0	500,000	-500,000
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	0	500,000	-500,000
6 Strategic Development	Self-Build Pilot	Cap Ex	0	750,000	-750,000
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	0	750,000	-750,000

Brief Summary:

The revised total net capital budget (after grants and contributions) for 2024/25 was £35.7m; the outturn position is lower at £6.3m having received future project funding in the year. This often reflects total scheme budgets and the majority to be re-profiled into future years as schemes come forward.

Net Capital	24/25 Outturn £'000's		
	Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def
1 Corporate Services	156,974	1,278,027	-1,121,053
2 Community - Housing	39,013	108,880	-69,867
3 Economy & Regeneration	845,621	4,299,469	-3,453,848
4 Environment	898,934	2,012,060	-1,113,126
5 Street Scene	3,046,948	15,359,809	-12,312,861
6 Strategic Development	0	1,250,000	-1,250,000
TOTAL CAP EX	4,987,491	24,308,245	-19,320,754

Capital Expenditure	24/25 Outturn £'000's		
	Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def
1 Corporate Services	156,974	1,278,027	-1,121,053
2 Community - Housing	654,748	1,310,547	-655,799
3 Economy & Regeneration	1,731,925	7,694,773	-5,962,848
4 Environment	898,934	2,144,713	-1,245,779
5 Street Scene	5,108,421	19,552,912	-14,444,491
6 Strategic Development	0	1,250,000	-1,250,000
TOTAL CAP EX	8,551,003	33,230,972	-24,679,969

Capital Income	24/25 Outturn £'000's		
	Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def
1 Corporate Services	0	0	0
2 Community - Housing	-615,735	-1,201,667	585,932
3 Economy & Regeneration	-886,304	-3,395,304	2,509,000
4 Environment	0	-132,653	132,653
5 Street Scene	-2,061,473	-4,193,103	2,131,630
6 Strategic Development	0	0	0
TOTAL CAP Income	-3,563,512	-8,922,727	5,359,215

Housing Revenue Account

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is the ring-fenced account for providing Council housing and associated services. This is shown separately on Income & Expenditure Statement.

HRA Outturn

The final HRA budget and outturn was impacted by various developments in the 2024/25 financial year which have been reported to members throughout the year, with recommendations made and agreed. The following is a brief summary of these;

- The Director of Social Housing at the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government announced increased Right to Buy flexibilities, the change to 100% receipt funding being the most impactful. This freed up circa £1m of approved borrowing which was used to address urgent electrical remedial work requirements.
- The initial “hold-over” budget was replaced and included within the report “Housing Revenue Account: Financial Review, Revised Budget & Sustainability Plan” which was presented and approved.
- A reduction of the HRA balance was agreed in the new budget, dropping from the upper limit of £3.1m, by £1.336m to £1.764m and adding in an ambitious capital programme, which unfortunately due to recruitment issues, was not achievable.
- The stock condition survey data was received, and a professional partner was engaged to develop the Business Plan, with a model produced and presented.
- A substantial review of the New Budget saw numerous Revenue to Capital virements to best allocate resources and funding.

The following table shows the in year outturn variations versus the revised set budgets and approved in year adjustments for both the Housing Revenue Account and the associated Capital programmes. This includes details of the additional in year revenue contribution to capital, this decision having been made to reduce the debt burden especially whilst interest rates remain high.

Housing Outturn 2024/25	Original Budget £'000s			Revised Budget £'000s		
	Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def	Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def
Housing Revenue Account	1,336,000	0	1,336,000	1,336,000	1,336,000	0
Borrowing Requirement - Budgeted Capital Ex. less Funding	5,302,656	3,300,900	2,001,756	5,302,656	9,190,855	-3,888,199
TOTAL	6,638,656	3,300,900	3,337,756	6,638,656	10,526,855	-3,888,199

The Variations against the set budget, incorporating in year approved budget variations, across the HRA and associated Housing capital programmes, are explained in the following pages and tables. Commentaries have been included at a summary level addressing material variations or issues which are relevant to, or have impact upon, the HRA and associated capital projects within 24/25.

2024/25 Housing Revenue Account & Capital Programmes Outturn Against Budget - Tables

Total Revenue Summary	24/25 Outturn		
	Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def
1 Rental & Other Income	-22,185,140	-21,936,240	-248,900
2 Revenue Expenditure	38,737,863	39,308,740	-570,877
3 Financing & Movement In Reserves	-15,216,722	-16,036,500	819,778
TOTAL	1,336,000	1,336,000	0

Brief Summary:

The 2024/25 Financial year has resulted in lower than anticipated spending against an ambitious budget adversely impacted by capacity issues as a result of recruitment challenges in key roles. Voids were a key area of focus, with high capital spending levels, that in turn achieved a better than expected income performance in addition to much improved Voids statistics and KPIs. Changes in Central Government Regulations in the year resulted in a reduced debt burden, even more so when combined with the capacity driven underspends, both capital and revenue, within the Property & Asset section.

Revenue Income Category	24/25 Outturn		
	Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def
1 Gross Property Rents	-21,298,647	-21,088,320	-210,327
2 Garage Rents	-202,503	-155,292	-47,211
3 Other Income	-683,991	-692,628	8,637
TOTAL	-22,185,140	-21,936,240	-248,900

Total Capital Summary	24/25 Outturn		
	Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def
1 Capital Expenditure in Year	13,108,594	15,133,382	-2,024,788
2 Capital Funding Sources	-7,805,938	-5,942,527	-1,863,411
2024/25 ADDITIONAL BORROWING REQUIREMENT	5,302,656	9,190,855	-3,888,199
Assumed Borrowing Rate	4.50%	4.50%	4.50%
Annual Additional Revenue Interest Cost	238,620	413,588	-174,969

Revenue Expenditure Category	24/25 Outturn		
	Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def
1 Repairs And Maintenance - General	6,204,509	6,060,500	144,009
2 Repairs And Maintenance - Special	541,425	1,023,004	-481,579
3 Supervision & Management	9,166,464	9,389,546	-223,082
4 Other Expenditure	1,107,317	1,090,344	16,973
5 Capital Charges & Bad Debt	21,718,147	21,745,346	-27,199
TOTAL	38,737,863	39,308,740	-570,877

Capital Expenditure Category	24/25 Outturn		
	Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def
1a Affordable Housing - Right to Buy Funded	1,737,255	1,950,316	-213,061
1b Affordable Housing - Local Authority Housing Fund	1,160,630	1,370,000	-209,370
2 Compliance Capital Expenditure	275,783	2,349,996	-2,074,213
3 Planned Capital Programme	2,632,796	2,705,924	-73,128
4 Major Repairs	7,302,130	6,757,146	544,984
TOTAL	13,108,594	15,133,382	-2,024,788

Financing & Movement In Reserves	24/25 Outturn		
	Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def
1 Net Interest Cost	2,388,817	2,787,276	-398,459
2 Capital Charges - MIRs	-21,752,171	-21,752,171	0
3 Movement in Earmarked Reserves	-820,801	0	-820,801
4 Contribution to Capital Net of Other Income	4,967,432	2,928,395	2,039,037
TOTAL	-15,216,722	-16,036,500	819,778

Capital Funding Sources	24/25 Outturn		
	Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def
1 Ring Fenced Right to Buy Receipts	-1,735,202	-975,155	-760,047
2 Unringfenced Right to Buy Receipts & Capital Grants	-1,026,368	-468,000	-558,368
3 Major Repairs Contribution (Depreciation)	-1,836,416	-2,028,300	191,884
4 Additional Capital Contribution from Revenue	-3,207,952	-2,471,072	-736,880
TOTAL	-7,805,938	-5,942,527	-1,863,411

1 Revenue Income

Dwelling income lost, due to void properties, has seen a significant improvement due to the focus that has been placed on their turnaround and work undertaken on the backlog that was present at the beginning of the year, resulting in a year on year reduction of £0.175m, contributing to a surplus of £50k. The residual variance equates to a 0.6% favourable outturn versus budget and is the result of continued excellent collection rates being achieved by the rentals team.

2 Revenue Expenditure - General Repairs & Maintenance

Revenue related exclusions to the Integrated Asset Management Contract are the driver of the deficit with the known element of the Price Per Property payment achieving material parity with the set budget. The majority of the deficit has been the result of works required to the fabric of and communal areas within the councils blocks, which fall outside the scope of the IAM Contract.

3 Revenue Expenditure - Special Repairs & Maintenance

The two significant areas of variation in year were compliance related and Social Service Adaptations. The compliance cost centres and works undertook a significant review in year with costs allocated to capital where applicable which previously were using revenue budget, the largest impact seen being within the Fire related building works area. The Social Service Adaptations revenue budget is provided for small works such as grab rails and the like, which saw reduced demand in 24/25.

4 Revenue Expenditure - Supervision & Management

The housing service has been significantly impacted by recruitment issues during 2024/25 which has driven a significant revenue saving in year as the costs saved through numerous posts remaining vacant more than offset the agency costs that had to be incurred to attempt to provide cover for these roles. The area most significantly impacted during 2024/25 was the Property and Assets team which also explains the teams associated underspends, particularly against their capital budgets.

5 Revenue Expenditure - Other

The revenue costs categorised as other collectively achieved a materially neutral variance. The sole outlier in year being the spend on accommodation for tenants that had to be decanted from their property due to significant works which meant they were unable to live at their address due to health and safety reasons. Costs for such accommodation within East Devon are high, specifically during holiday periods which resulted in a deficit contribution of £150k. This has been offset by savings made within the Estate Management areas, notably on clearance costs which have seen an improvement in the way they have been managed when they occur.

6 Revenue Expenditure - Capital Charges & Bad Debt

The regulations which dictate the accounting treatment of costs and charges to the Housing Revenue Account result in their inclusion within the cost of service and subsequent reversal within the movement in reserves, save for the major repairs minimum contribution to capital of the depreciation value. Therefore, the budgets for the capital charges impacting the Housing revenue Account have been adjusted to reflect the current years position, so as not to distort the other revenue costs which have a bearing on the final outturn of the account. The sole small variation being due to the reduction in bad debt provision in year.

7 Financing & MIRS - Net Interest Cost

The interest expense required to finance the borrowing within the HRA was materially in line with expectations, with only a minimal adverse variance due to rate fluctuations between budget setting and the time at which the charges were made. The significant surplus was due to the impact of Treasury Investment Income, which was predicted to be significantly lower due to rate decreases, included upon the advice of the councils treasury consultants, which did not materialise.

8 Financing & MIRS - Movement in Earmarked Reserves

At the 23/24 year end, £0.9m was kept in a revenue reserve, from the large amounts that were released, to cover the funding of the remainder of the LAHF properties for which a 10% deposit had been paid within that financial year. This reserve has been released less the residual funding that remains, also received from the Local Authority Housing Fund, which has been provided to address specific long term voids in need of significant investment.

Financial Monitoring 2025/26 Quarter 1

General Fund Position

Following a detailed review of the General Fund Revenue Account for Quarter 1 of the 2025/26 financial year, there are no material areas of concern to report to members at this stage. The financial position remains stable, with income and expenditure broadly in line with the approved budget. All significant variances have been reviewed and are being appropriately managed within service areas and will continue to be discussed in the monthly Budget Manager and Director meetings each month going forward. These will then be presented to ELT for further scrutiny before being included in future iterations of this report.

While the current position is reassuring, it is important to note that forecasting a reliable year-end outturn at this early stage of the financial year presents several challenges, including:

- **Timing of Expenditure and Income Recognition:** Many budgeted activities and income streams are not evenly distributed throughout the year. Seasonal variations, unpredictable income streams and project-specific timelines can significantly affect the profile of actuals versus budget in Q1.
- **External Economic Factors:** Inflationary pressures, interest rate fluctuations, and changes in government policy can all impact financial performance later in the year but are difficult to predict with accuracy at this stage.
- **Service Demand Volatility:** Demand-led services, particularly in areas such as housing, waste, and social support, can experience sudden changes due to demographic or socio-economic shifts.
- **Pending Decisions and Policy Changes:** Some budget outcomes depend on decisions yet to be made, which could materially affect both income and expenditure forecasts. Information from services will feed through to the outturn predictions in future reports.

Given these uncertainties, forecasts for Q1 have been stress tested, analysing the impact of various forecasting methodologies, from various time window averages to applying the actual income and expenditure seen in the same period of 24/25.

The finance team will continue to monitor the position closely in conjunction with all budget managers within the established monthly meeting schedules and provide updated forecasts, in subsequent reports.

The following tables show both the Year-to-Date position and the Forecast Year End Outturn using the most appropriate and accurate forecasting methods for accounting lines used in 2024/25.

East Devon	2025/26 General Fund Outturn Against Budget - Portfolio Table & Commentary	East Devon

2024/25 Outturn				Portfolio Budget - Net Expenditure	2025/26 Year To Date			2025/26 Outturn			
Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def	%age		Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def	Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def	%age
698,352	670,091	28,261	4%	Economy And Regenrtn Portfolio	-17,667	168,162	-185,830	1,211,138	1,105,384	105,754	10%
5,523,195	5,475,218	47,977	1%	Environment Portfolio	1,559,725	1,615,344	-55,620	6,438,495	6,622,479	-183,984	-3%
-547,123	-686,796	139,673	-20%	Finance	268,673	431,145	-162,472	-859,344	-862,188	2,844	0%
16,089,870	14,420,511	1,669,359	12%	Street Scene Portfolio	2,927,533	2,476,401	451,132	16,029,345	16,139,103	-109,758	-1%
2,737,280	2,603,109	134,171	5%	Corporate Services	1,042,760	603,833	438,927	1,225,092	666,155	353,937	53%
1,624,999	2,020,601	-395,602	-20%	Sustainable Homes & Communitie	-531,562	179,485	-711,047	2,420,724	2,643,603	-222,878	-8%
3,200,096	3,330,469	-130,373	-4%	Strategic Development & P'Ship	884,792	1,384,742	-499,950	4,848,736	4,994,615	-145,878	-3%
199,881	202,006	-2,125	-1%	Corporate Business	20,931	33,761	-12,830	87,860	140,281	-52,422	-37%
29,526,551	28,035,209	1,491,342	5%	Portfolio Totals	6,155,184	6,892,873	-737,690	31,402,046	31,449,432	-252,385	-1%
21,445,235	21,097,313	347,922	2%	Revenue Financing & Other Income	-250,009	-898,030	648,021	-4,935,703	-4,935,704	1	0%
-2,967,838	-1,430,380	-1,537,458	107%	Financing & Invest Income Exp	-645,324	-747,446	102,122	-1,728,936	-1,495,293	-233,643	16%
-48,004,147	-47,791,004	-213,144	0%	Tax & Nonspecific Grant Income	-2,344,311	-3,245,138	900,827	-24,694,402	-24,694,402	0	0%
-200	-88,862	88,662	-100%	TOTALS	2,915,540	2,002,259	913,281	43,005	324,033	-486,028	

A** The National Insurance Shortfall of £324k plus the Estimated Pay Award Impact of £205k (3.2%v 2%) and the Anticipated Establishment Savings of £450k currently reside within this line with the savings across the portfolio. An agreed approach for allocation of these elements will be included in the next iteration once presented to and agreed by ELT.

General Fund Capital

East Devon		2025/26 Capital Programmes (Excluding HRA) Against Budget - Tables		East Devon	

Portfolio & Service Name			24/25 Outturn £'000's		
			Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def
1 Corporate Services	Capital Comms Business Syste	Cap Ex	49,723	1,835,885	-1,786,162
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	49,723	1,835,885	-1,786,162
1 Corporate Services	Capital Ict Infra And Projects	Cap Ex	56,933	935,629	-878,696
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	56,933	935,629	-878,696
2 Community - Housing	Capital Improvements Grants	Cap Ex	32,350	433,600	-401,250
		Income	-3,396	-322,940	319,544
		Net Exp	28,954	110,660	-81,706
3 Economy & Regeneration	Capital Corp Build And Security	Cap Ex	9,734	369,368	-359,634
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	9,734	369,368	-359,634
3 Economy & Regeneration	Capital Industrial Sites	Cap Ex	6,365	93,541	-87,176
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	6,365	93,541	-87,176
3 Economy & Regeneration	Capital Public Halls Pavilion	Cap Ex	15,667	1,290,238	-1,274,571
		Income	-5,805	0	-5,805
		Net Exp	9,862	1,290,238	-1,280,376
3 Economy & Regeneration	Capital Regeneration Economy	Cap Ex	381,735	18,014,245	-17,632,510
		Income	-10,395,828	-13,065,114	2,669,287
		Net Exp	-10,014,093	4,949,131	-14,963,224
4 Environment	Capital Car Park	Cap Ex	0	491,161	-491,161
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	0	491,161	-491,161
4 Environment	Capital Countryside	Cap Ex	0	4,180,697	-4,180,697
		Income	-4,090,000	-4,090,000	0
		Net Exp	-4,090,000	90,697	-4,180,697
4 Environment	Capital Spts Centres And Pool	Cap Ex	21,459	684,615	-663,156
		Income	0	-94,756	94,756
		Net Exp	21,459	589,859	-568,400
5 Street Scene	Capital Beaches And Foreshore	Cap Ex	588,171	4,604,748	-4,016,577
		Income	-90,000	-675,000	585,000
		Net Exp	498,171	3,929,748	-3,431,577
5 Street Scene	Capital Cemeteries	Cap Ex	0	150,000	-150,000
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	0	150,000	-150,000
5 Street Scene	Capital Flood Alleviation Sch	Cap Ex	1,400,770	1,392,668	8,102
		Income	-691,000	-50,000	-641,000
		Net Exp	709,770	1,342,668	-632,898
5 Street Scene	Capital Parks And Pleasure Grr	Cap Ex	3,228	1,051,387	-1,048,160
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	3,228	1,051,387	-1,048,160
5 Street Scene	Capital Play Equipment	Cap Ex	150,000	1,695,965	-1,545,965
		Income	-202,631	0	-202,631
		Net Exp	-52,631	1,695,965	-1,748,596
5 Street Scene	Capital Public Conveniences	Cap Ex	188,134	5,113,880	-4,925,746
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	188,134	5,113,880	-4,925,746
5 Street Scene	Capital Refuse And Recycling	Cap Ex	87,951	1,423,426	-1,335,475
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	87,951	1,423,426	-1,335,475
5 Street Scene	Capital Sports Grounds	Cap Ex	0	109,200	-109,200
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	0	109,200	-109,200
5 Street Scene	Capital St Scene Cleansing	Cap Ex	0	124,002	-124,002
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	0	124,002	-124,002
5 Street Scene	Capital St Scene Grounds Main	Cap Ex	0	692,928	-692,928
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	0	692,928	-692,928
6 Strategic Development	Gypsy And Traveller Sites	Cap Ex	0	500,000	-500,000
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	0	500,000	-500,000
6 Strategic Development	Self-Build Pilot	Cap Ex	0	750,000	-750,000
		Income	0	0	0
		Net Exp	0	750,000	-750,000

Brief Summary:

The tables below show the Capital Expenditure to Date at the end of Q1 2025/26 versus the total agreed budgets for the underlying capital bids, including slippage from the prior year, producing a residual budget amount per service.

Net Capital	25/26 Q1 £'000's		
	Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def
1 Corporate Services	106,656	2,771,514	-2,664,858
2 Community - Housing	28,954	110,660	-81,706
3 Economy & Regeneration	-9,988,132	6,702,278	-16,690,410
4 Environment	-4,068,541	1,171,717	-5,240,258
5 Street Scene	1,434,623	15,633,204	-14,198,581
6 Strategic Development	0	1,250,000	-1,250,000
TOTAL CAP EX	-12,486,440	27,639,373	-40,125,813

Capital Expenditure	25/26 Q1 £'000's		
	Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def
1 Corporate Services	106,656	2,771,514	-2,664,858
2 Community - Housing	32,350	433,600	-401,250
3 Economy & Regeneration	413,500	19,767,392	-19,353,892
4 Environment	21,459	5,356,473	-5,335,014
5 Street Scene	2,418,254	16,358,204	-13,939,950
6 Strategic Development	0	1,250,000	-1,250,000
TOTAL CAP EX	2,992,219	45,937,183	-42,944,964

Capital Income	25/26 Q1 £'000's		
	Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def
1 Corporate Services	0	0	0
2 Community - Housing	-3,396	-322,940	319,544
3 Economy & Regeneration	-10,401,633	-13,065,114	2,663,482
4 Environment	-4,090,000	-4,184,756	94,756
5 Street Scene	-983,631	-725,000	-258,631
6 Strategic Development	0	0	0
TOTAL CAP Income	-15,478,660	-18,297,810	2,819,151

Housing Revenue Account

The impact of the above 2024/25 outturn on the HRA's Reserve and Debt levels can be seen below, with the projected figures included, assuming the 2025/26 outturn position is per the set budget.

2024/ 25 Closing			2025/ 26 Projected			
HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - RESERVES						
PRIOR YEAR				4Cast Outturn		
Opening	Movement	Closing	RESERVE CATEGORY	Opening	Movement	Closing
			USABLE REVENUE RESERVES			
-3,100,000	1,336,000	-1,764,000	HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT GENERAL RESERVE	-1,764,000	-250,000	-2,014,000
-982,995	820,801	-162,194	HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - EARMARKED RESERVES	-162,194	162,194	0
-4,082,995	2,156,801	-1,926,194		-1,926,194	-87,806	-2,014,000
			UN-USABLE CAPITAL RESERVES			
-6,096,493	-393,023	-5,703,470	RIGHT TO BUY CAPITAL RECEIPTS RESERVE	-5,703,470	-1,500,000	-7,203,470
-10,179,488	1,763,778	-7,629,664		-7,629,664	-1,587,806	-9,217,470

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - BORROWING						
2024/ 25			DEBT CATEGORY	2025/ 26 Projected		
Opening	Movement	Closing		Opening	Movement	Closing
-78,485,772	0	-78,485,772		-92,515,479	0	-92,515,479
-8,727,050	-5,302,656	-14,029,706		0	-18,378,000	-18,378,000
-87,212,823	-5,302,656	-92,515,479		-92,515,479	-18,378,000	-110,893,479

The year-to-date Housing Revenue Account figures, shown in the table below, up to Q1, are materially in line with the profiled budget, therefore there are no concerns or issues to raise to members at this stage.

24/25 Outturn			Total Revenue Summary	25/26 YTD @ Q1		
Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def		Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def
-22,185,140	-21,936,240	-248,900	1 Rental & Other Income	-6,205,365	-6,316,183	110,818
38,737,863	39,308,740	-570,877	2 Revenue Expenditure	3,956,312	4,009,660	-53,348
-15,216,722	-16,036,500	819,778	3 Financing & Movement In Reserves	0	0	0
1,336,000	1,336,000	0	TOTAL	-6,205,365	-6,316,183	57,470

24/25 Outturn			Revenue Income Category	25/26 YTD @ Q1		
Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def		Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def
-21,298,647	-21,088,320	-210,327	1 Gross Property Rents	-5,414,263	-5,503,076	88,813
-202,503	-155,292	-47,211	2 Garage Rents	-47,872	-69,877	22,005
-683,991	-692,628	8,637	3 Other Income	-743,230	-743,230	0
-22,185,140	-21,936,240	-248,900	TOTAL	-6,205,365	-6,316,183	110,818

24/25 Outturn			Revenue Expenditure Category	25/26 YTD @ Q1		
Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def		Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def
6,204,509	6,060,500	144,009	1 Repairs And Maintenance - General	1,187,054	856,666	330,388
541,425	1,023,004	-481,579	2 Repairs And Maintenance - Special	72,316	443,418	-371,102
9,166,464	9,389,546	-223,082	3 Supervision & Management	2,422,642	2,429,174	-6,533
1,107,317	1,090,344	16,973	4 Other Expenditure	274,300	280,401	-6,101
21,718,147	21,745,346	-27,199	5 Capital Charges & Bad Debt	0	0	0
38,737,863	39,308,740	-570,877	TOTAL	3,956,312	4,009,660	-53,348

24/25 Outturn			Financing & Movement In Reserves	25/26 YTD @ Q1		
Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def		Actuals	Budget	Surp/Def
2,388,817	2,787,276	-398,459	1 Net Interest Cost	0	0	0
-21,752,171	-21,752,171	0	2 Capital Charges - MIRs	0	0	0
-820,801	0	-820,801	3 Movement in Earmarked Reserves	0	0	0
4,967,432	2,928,395	2,039,037	4 Contribution to Capital Net of Other Income	0	0	0
-15,216,722	-16,036,500	819,778	TOTAL	0	0	0

Treasury Management

The treasury management interest received position is summarised below:

	Annual Budget £000	Forecast Outturn £000s	Forecast Variance £000s
Internal Investments	271 (F)	478 (F)	207 (F)
External Investments	1,224 (F)	1,250 (F)	26 (F)
	1,495 (F)	1,728 (F)	233 (F)

Detail of the quarter 1 treasury management portfolio is available at appendix 2.

Financial implications:

Contained in the report.

Legal implications:

Any legal implications are identified in the report and no further comment is required.

Appendix 1

	31 March 2024 £'000	Transfers In £'000	Transfers out £'000	31 March 2025 £'000
Heat Distribution Project Reserve	(170)	-	170	-
Transformation Fund	(3,752)	-	435	(3,317)
Medium Term Financial Plan Risk Reserve	(2,936)	(776)	-	(3,712)
Enterprise Zone Reserve	(3,340)	(1,288)	-	(4,628)
NNDR 100% Pilot Reserve	(858)	-	188	(670)
Climate Change Reserve	(953)	-	-	(953)
Community Led Housing Reserve	(653)	-	96	(557)
Business Rates Volatility Reserve	(1,172)	-	470	(702)
<u>Asset Maintenance</u> Reserve	(566)	-	-	(566)
Consortium Payment Reserve	(350)	-	-	(350)
Housing Task Force Reserve	(77)	-	77	-
C19 Revs & Bens Burdens Reserve	(33)	-	33	-
Homes for Ukraine Reserve	(1,146)	-	203	(943)
Planning Reserve	(646)	-	272	(374)
NGP Planning Reserve	(382)	-	104	(278)
Treasury Management Reserve	(275)	-	-	(275)
Strata	(365)	-	10	(355)
Other General Fund Reserves	(4,452)	(1,554)	-	(6,006)
General Fund Earmarked Reserves	(22,126)	(3,618)	3,058	(23,686)
Hra Planned Maintenance Reserve	-	-	-	-
Hra New Housing Dev Fund	(983)	-	983	-
Hra Business Plan Volatility	-	-	(163)	(163)
Hra FRA & Replacement Lifts Reserve	-	-	-	-
Other Housing Reserves	-	-	-	-
HRA Earmarked Reserves	(983)	-	820	(163)
Total Earmarked Reserves	(23,109)	(4,618)	3,878	(23,849)

Appendix 2: Treasury Management

Treasury Portfolio				
	31.5.25	30.6.25	7.7.25	7.7.25
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
	£000	£000	£000	%
Treasury investments				
Banks	0	0	0	0%
Building Societies	0	0	0	0%
Local Authorities				0%
East Cheshire	0	0	0	0%
North East Lincolnshire Council	0	0	0	0%
Surrey County Council	0	0	0	0%
DMADF (HM Treasury)	5,900	21,000	17,200	31%
Money Market Funds				0%
CCLA - Public Sector Deposit Fund	3,000	3,000	3,000	5%
Goldman Sachs - Sterling				
Liquid Reserves Fund	3,000	0	1,500	3%
Morgan Stanley Sterling Liquidity Fund	3,000	1,830	3,000	5%
Total managed in house	14,900	25,830	24,700	44%
Money Market Funds				
Payden Sterling Reserve Fund	15,533	15,453	15,453	28%
Royal London Asset Management Short Term Fixed Income Fund (value at 30.4.25)	15,541	15,611	15,611	28%
Total managed externally	31,074	31,064	31,064	56%
Total treasury investments	45,974	56,894	55,764	100%
Treasury temporary external borrowing	0	0	0	0%
Total external temporary borrowing	0	0	0	0%
Net treasury investments/ (temporary borrowing excluding PWLB and Heat Network Loan)	45,974	56,894	55,764	

Report to: Council



Date of Meeting 15 October 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Recommendation from Cabinet on 1 October 2025 – Delivery Vehicle for Marlcombe

Report summary:

This report sets out the Cabinet recommendation to Council arising from their consideration of a report on 1 October 2025 on the Delivery Vehicle for Marlcombe.

Note: The references in this report to Paper A relate to the relevant report considered by the Cabinet with recommendations for Full Council to consider and are appended to this report for reference.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☐ No ☒

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

1. That Council approves 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.

Reason for recommendation:

To support the future establishment of a delivery vehicle that is capable to ensuring that the vision for Marlcombe is translated into practical delivery on the ground.

Officer: Andrew Melhuish, Democratic Services Manager (andrew.melhuish@eastdevon.gov.uk)

Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting 1 October 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Delivery Vehicle for Marcombe

Report summary:

This report presents the Strategic Outline Business Case for the establishment of a delivery vehicle for the Marcombe new community. The delivery of a new town is a complex, long-term endeavour that necessarily involves multiple different stakeholders. A key learning point from Cranbrook is the need to establish a dedicated delivery vehicle from the outset to provide the necessary focus and resources to realise the ambitious vision for a place including integrating both physical and social development.

The report seeks support for the Strategic Outline Business Case such that work can then progress, with benefit of additional funding, to develop a Full Business Case. This will consider the precise form that the delivery vehicle should take and would be foreshadowed by the creation of an Interim Vehicle, the terms of reference for which will be the subject of a further report to Cabinet.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☐ No ☒

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Cabinet;

- Supports the Executive Summary of the Strategic Outline Business Case for the establishment of a delivery vehicle for the Marcombe new community
- Receives a further report setting out the full Strategic Outline Business Case
- Receives subsequent reports regarding:
 - the terms of reference for an interim vehicle, and
 - the full business case for a delivery vehicle for the integrated proposal including the Cranbrook expansion and Enterprise Zone areas
- Recommends to Council that a budget of £350k 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

Reason for recommendation:

To support the future establishment of a delivery vehicle that is capable to ensuring that the vision for Marcombe is translated into practical delivery on the ground.

Officer: Andy Wood, Director of Place, email andy.wood@eastdevon.gov.uk

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Assets and Economy
- ☐ Communications and Democracy
- ☐ Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- ☐ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- ☐ Environment - Nature and Climate
- ☐ Environment - Operational
- ☐ Finance
- ☒ Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Medium Impact. The sustainability credentials of the new community will need to be carefully considered as part of the ongoing technical work.

Risk: Medium Risk; The establishment of a statutory delivery vehicle such as a development corporation very much aligns with both government policy and the learning from the delivery of Cranbrook but will require substantial technical work and stakeholder engagement to ensure that all procedural requirements are met and that a persuasive case is presented to the Secretary of State.

Links to background information [Building new towns for the future](#)

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☒ A supported and engaged community
- ☒ Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
- ☒ Resilient economy that supports local business
- ☒ Financially secure and improving quality of services

Background and Context

1. The Council has been actively considering the establishment of a delivery vehicle to facilitate and manage major development projects in the West End of the district. This position is part of its broader strategy to address infrastructure needs, housing supply, and economic growth. This report sets the findings of an initial stage of the development of a business case to support the establishment of such a vehicle and follows on from the consideration of the masterplan for the Marlcombe new community by Strategic Planning committee.
2. The Council has identified that large-scale development, such as the Marlcombe new community proposal in the Local Plan review, requires a more detailed and coordinated approach than traditional planning processes alone. This includes both physical and social development objectives. The scale of these projects necessitates the application of focused and enduring attention to address delivery issues and ensure the timely delivery of critical infrastructure improvements. This is a point of learning from the delivery of the Cranbrook new community and is a prerequisite for ensuring that an ambitious vision can be realised.
3. The Council has commissioned a multi-disciplinary team to develop a business case for a delivery vehicle alongside the development of the masterplan for Marlcombe. The scope of this work includes exploring various options, up to and including the formation of a

Development Corporation. A Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) is the initial stage in the business case development process.

4. This report sets out the findings from this initial stage of work. It follows shortly on from the consideration of the masterplan for the Marlcombe new community by Strategic Planning Committee. It should also be noted that the Council put forward Marlcombe to become part of the national new towns programme through the New Towns Taskforce Call for evidence. Whilst the outcome of this process is currently unknown, the interim report from New Towns Task Force (see background links) clearly acknowledges the success of New Towns Development Corporations (NTDCs) used for the post-war new towns. These bodies were effective because they had the power to combine vision, strategy, consent, and delivery. They were public-sector led, undertook land assembly, created masterplans, and controlled the delivery of the towns in partnership with the private sector.
5. More widely this report is a further demonstration of the Council's willingness to play an active role in ensuring that the ambitious vision for Marlcombe is realised. Cranbrook has taught us valuable lessons about the importance of public sector leadership and intervention to prevent market failure and ensure the delivery of genuine communities - not just housing estates. In collaboration with our partners, our aim to create an exemplar development that provides much needed homes, drives the early delivery of critical social infrastructure, supports job creation, and drives economic growth. This neatly aligns with the level of ambition contained within the Build and Buy Housing Investment and Delivery Plan recently considered by Cabinet and provides a platform for innovation and achieving better outcomes for future residents.

Five case model

6. The Five Case Model is a comprehensive framework for developing business cases for projects and programmes that is endorsed by the UK Treasury and is a standard requirement for public sector projects. It provides a structured approach to ensure that a proposal is robust, well-justified, and likely to deliver its intended benefits.
7. The five cases are:
 1. **Strategic Case:** This case establishes the compelling need for the intervention. It demonstrates how the proposed project aligns with the organisation's strategic objectives and wider government policies. It answers the question: "Why do we need to do this?"
 2. **Economic Case:** This case assesses the value for money of the proposal. It involves a detailed options appraisal to identify the most economically advantageous solution. This is done by comparing the costs and benefits of different options, including a 'do-nothing' option. It answers the question: "Is this the best way to achieve value for money?"
 3. **Commercial Case:** This case evaluates the commercial viability of the project. It ensures that the project is attractive to the market and can be delivered within a robust commercial framework. It answers the question: "Is the proposed deal commercially sound?"
 4. **Financial Case:** This case confirms that the project is affordable and that the funding has a good prospect of being secured. It provides a detailed breakdown of the capital and running costs and identifies the sources of funding. It also includes a robust financial risk analysis. It answers the question: "Can we afford to do this?"
 5. **Management Case:** This case outlines how the project will be delivered, managed, and controlled. It covers the governance arrangements, project management methodologies, risk management plans, and resource requirements. It ensures that the project can be delivered successfully. It answers the question: "How can we deliver this successfully?"
8. The Five Case Model provides a holistic view of a project, moving beyond just the financial aspects to consider its strategic fit, economic viability, commercial deliverability, and management feasibility.

Strategic Outline Business Case

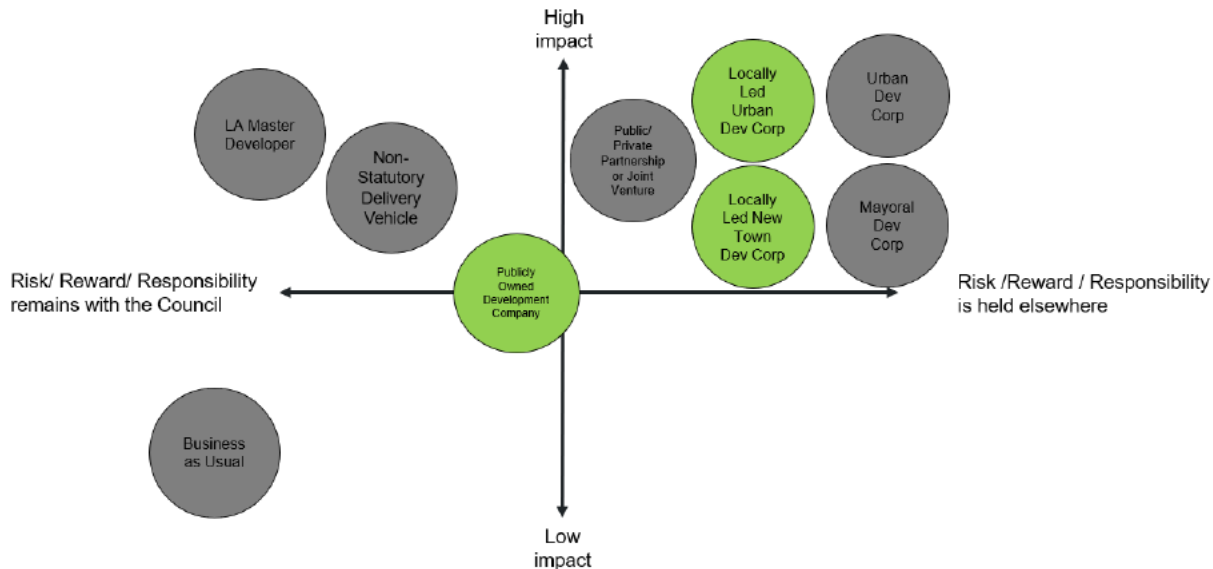
9. The primary purpose of the SOBC is to establish the case for change and determine whether an intervention or project is strategically necessary and potentially viable. The document contained at Appendix A at the end of this report is the Executive Summary for the SOBC. Part 1 of this work has focused on Marlcombe itself to accompany the masterplanning exercise. In undertaking this work it became clear that there was a strong rationale for an expanded project that would consider the relationship with the ongoing development of Cranbrook, the Exeter and East Devon Enterprise Zone, and the Airport. Part 2 of the work will further consider the expansion of Marlcombe from 8,000 to 10,000 homes alongside the potential for this wider, integrated proposal.
10. The aim is to coordinate large-scale housing and commercial development, learning from the experience of Cranbrook, and to meet government criteria for new towns. The methodology draws on delivery experience from similar projects and sets out a robust framework including delivery and land control strategies, partnerships (notably with Homes England and the County Council/CCA), infrastructure cost planning, risk assessment, and market testing alongside the development of a stewardship strategy.
11. Key outputs and findings from the work to date include;
 - **Viability Analysis:** The project is commercially viable, with key success factors identified and central government funding requirements outlined.
 - **Funding Strategy:** A blend of capacity funding and project infrastructure funding is proposed, with the latter being up to £100m to help forward fund critical infrastructure improvements.
 - **Economic Appraisal:** Scenarios modelled for 20%, 35%, and 40% affordable housing show economic costs (discounted and after optimism bias) from £57m to £70m, and benefits from £182m to £239m. Benefit Cost Ratios (BCRs) range from 3.17 to 3.40, indicating high value for money.
 - **Land Control:** Strategies include acquisition (compulsory purchase, private treaty, or a hybrid approach) and permission (joint ventures or licence agreements), aiming to align interests and deliver placemaking objectives.
 - **Delivery Strategy:** Proposes an Interim Growth Company leading to a Development Corporation, with a master developer responsible for implementation. Governance will involve Devon County Council, Homes England, MHCLG, local enterprise, education, landowners, and key stakeholders.
 - **Stewardship:** Emphasises the need for a stewardship strategy to ensure community involvement, governance, and sustainable management of assets, with models ranging from charitable trusts to the creation of a new town council. This will be vital in ensuring that strong social foundations are established alongside the physical development of the new town and will provide a platform for aiding community cohesion.

Economic, Commercial, and Financial Cases

- **Economic Case:** Assesses delivery options and value for money, with scenario testing for affordable housing provision.
- **Commercial Case:** Justifies the costs of assembling a delivery vehicle and land control and sets out options for structuring the development function.
- **Financial Case:** Details the public sector funding required for both vehicle assembly and project delivery, with comprehensive cash flow and cost assessments.

Management Case and Next Steps

12. The management case has tested deliverability, focusing on resources, governance, risk management, and stakeholder engagement. A range of potential options have been considered, from informal vehicles to statutory development corporations, in terms of their ability to deliver against critical success factors whilst balancing risk. This is shown below;



13. The shortlist has identified three key options (shown in green above) as to how a delivery vehicle could be structured. This includes either a Locally Led Urban Development Corporation (LLUDC), or a Locally Led New Town Development Corporation (LLNTDC) which would be statutory vehicles. A third option, a public owned development company, is also a possibility. The precise form of the delivery vehicle will need to be determined through the development of the full business case. Given the scale, complexity and timescales associated with the development programme there are clear advantages associated with establishing a statutory vehicle.
14. Establishing a LLUDC or a LLNTDC is a multi-step process that is initiated by a local authority and requires approval from central government. The key procedural requirements are outlined in the New Towns Act 1981 (as amended by the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017) and the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, along with subsequent regulations and guidance.
15. The process begins when a local authority decides to pursue the creation of a development corporation. To do this they must;
- **Develop a detailed proposal:** This includes a map defining the area, a name for the proposed new town, and a clear vision for its development. The Council must demonstrate how the corporation will deliver a high-quality, sustainable community.
 - **Build a strong evidence base:** The Council must prove that the proposed site is suitable for development at the scale planned. This includes a financial model showing projected returns, a debt profile, and sources of financing for the entire lifecycle of the project.
 - **Demonstrate local support:** The proposal must show that it has the express support of all local authorities (including the County Council) that cover the proposed area. It is also expected that they have consulted with the community and can show a high level of public participation.
16. Once the Council has prepared its case, they must formally apply to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. The application must include all the evidence gathered in the initial phase. The Secretary of State will then scrutinise the proposal to be satisfied that:

- **It is in the national interest:** For a new town, the Secretary of State must be convinced that its creation is "expedient in the national interest."
 - **The proposal is robust and deliverable:** The government will test the evidence base to ensure the project rests on sound foundations and that the proposed corporation is the best route to secure expedited delivery.
 - **Statutory aims are met:** The proposal must align with the statutory aims for a locally led corporation, which include planning for a high-quality, sustainable community with long-term stewardship and community participation.
17. If the Secretary of State is satisfied with the proposal, the final step is a parliamentary process to formally establish the corporation. This is done through a Statutory Instrument (an Order) laid in Parliament.
18. The amount of time and resource required to complete this process should not be underestimated. This includes the need for very close partnership working with the County Council and to build collaborative relationships with key stakeholders more widely.
19. It is a specific recommendation of this report that the SOBC is supported. This will enable further phases of work and the Full Business Case (FBC) to be developed. The FBC is a comprehensive document that confirms the final plan and associated financial details. In order to help provide more defined governance and partnership structures in the short term it is proposed that an Interim Vehicle is established. This will foreshadow the establishment of the Development Corporation and will provide a means of building collaborative advantage.
20. Provisionally it is anticipated that the Interim Vehicle can be established in early 2026 and the Development Corporation by March 2027. The Interim Vehicle will help to provide a governance structure to bring key partners together and to define objectives and priorities. As such it can help to build collaborative advantage and develop and deliver the ambitious vision for the area. It is a recommendation of this report that the proposed terms of reference for the Interim Vehicle are considered by Cabinet.

Funding position

21. Cabinet has to date provided fulsome support to ensure that the learning from Cranbrook can be applied and that Marlcombe can come forward as an exemplar development. This has included a multi-year financial settlement included as part of the Mid Term Financial Plan. This enabled the multi-disciplinary team who produced both the masterplan and the SOBC to be commissioned.
22. Members will remember that, at the 30th July Cabinet meeting, the potential to enter a Memorandum of Understanding with Homes England was considered. This has now been completed and provides the basis for forging a strong, long-term partnership.
23. Homes England have recently indicated that £305k of funding may be provided this financial year to help progress masterplanning and technical work and to bolster capacity in key areas. In order to match this funding it is recommended Cabinet to recommend to Council that £350k of additional funding is made available from the new communities reserve to ensure that the work can progress into the next critical phase including further developing the business case.

Conclusion

24. The delivery of a new town is a complex, long-term endeavour that necessarily involves multiple different stakeholders. A key learning point from Cranbrook is the need to establish a dedicated delivery vehicle from the outset to provide the necessary focus and resources to realise the ambitious vision for a place.

25. The SOBC establishes Marlcombe as a viable and deliverable scheme, subject to balancing competing priorities and further detailed scenario testing. It provides clear pathways for expansion, land control, project initiation, implementation, and ongoing stewardship. Much work remains, but the foundations for a successful new settlement and wider unified project are robustly laid out.
 26. There is now a clear pathway towards the establishment of a Development Corporation that will bring together the necessary powers, resource and expertise over the long term. The establishment of such a vehicle will be a significant step for the Council and our partners. It will enable an assertive approach to delivery from the outset and ensure high-quality place-making outcomes including ensuring that critical infrastructure improvements are delivered in step with development.
-

Financial implications:

There is a request for an additional budget of £350k which is proposed is met from a reserve set aside for a new community and has this sum available.

Legal implications:

The legal issues are dealt with in the body of the report. Due to the specialist nature of this project, external legal advice will be required.

Report to: Council

Date of Meeting 15 October 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



Recommendation from Cabinet on 1 October 2025 – Financial Strategy 2026 onwards (2026 – 2035)

Report summary:

This report sets out the Cabinet recommendation to Council arising from their consideration of a report on 1 October 2025 on the Financial Strategy 2026.

Note: The references in this report to Paper A relate to the relevant report considered by the Cabinet with recommendations for Full Council to consider and are appended to this report for reference.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

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

Reason for recommendation:

It is essential the Council considers its financial resources in advance to allow time to make necessary amendments in its service provision to ensure balance budgets are maintained.

Officer: Andrew Melhuish, Democratic Services Manager (andrew.melhuish@eastdevon.gov.uk)

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting 1st October 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



Financial Strategy 2026 Onwards (2026 – 2036)

Report summary:

Attached is the draft Financial Strategy for 2026 onwards (2026 - 2036) for recommendation to Council.

This Strategy is updated and presented annually. It includes a ten year Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which looks ahead over that period to give a projection of our financial position with actions needed to ensure financial sustainability and the ability to set annually balanced budgets.

This time the landscape is remarkably different, the Fairer Funding Review (FFR) brings significant funding reductions from 2026/27 and there is Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). On the current timelines this gives us only two more years of setting budgets before a successor authority is in place.

Although modelling has been undertaken under the normal premise of ten years, this Strategy's focus is dealing with the next two years of still being a Council with the effects of significant funding reductions from the FFR. Consideration is given to the implications of possible delays in reorganisation and the need to ensure we continue to be financial responsible in our decision making in the interests of the public, no matter which local authority is in place.

This Strategy records and considers the funding of the key legacy projects this Council wants to deliver in its remaining time.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

To consider the draft Financial Strategy 2026 Onwards (2026 – 2036) and to recommend to Council its adoption and direction outlined in balancing future budgets.

Reason for recommendation:

It is essential the Council considers its financial resources in advance to allow time to make necessary amendments in its service provision to ensure balance budgets are maintained.

Officer: Simon Davey – Director Finance (CFO/S151) sdavey@eastdevon.gov.uk

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☒ Assets and Economy
- ☒ Communications and Democracy
- ☒ Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- ☒ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- ☒ Environment - Nature and Climate
- ☒ Environment - Operational
- ☒ Finance
- ☒ Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- ☒ Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

No decisions on service delivery are being made at this stage

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: High Risk; These are identified within the Strategy

Links to background information

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

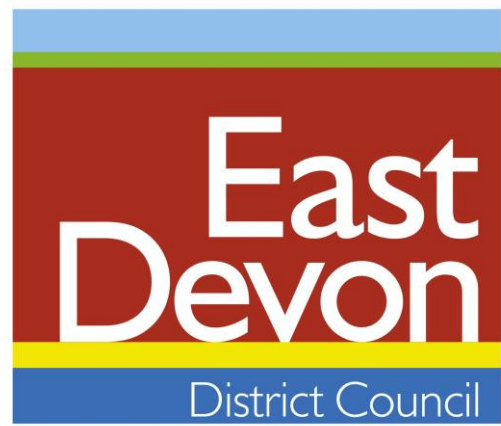
- ☐ A supported and engaged community
- ☐ Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
- ☐ Resilient economy that supports local business
- ☒ Financially secure and improving quality of services

Financial implications:

These details are covered within the Strategy

Legal implications:

There are no substantive legal issues directly arising from the presentation of this strategy.



Financial Strategy (2026 - 2036)

Focus on 2026/27 to 2028/29

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Strategy is updated and presented annually. It includes a ten year Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which looks ahead over that period to give a projection of our financial position with actions needed to ensure financial sustainability and the ability to set annually balanced budgets.
- 1.2 This time the landscape is remarkably different, the Fairer Funding Review (FFR) brings significant funding reductions from 2026/27 and there is the backdrop of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). On the current timelines this gives us only two more years of setting budgets before a successor authority is in place.
- 1.3 Although modelling has been undertaken under the normal premise of ten years, this Strategy's focus is dealing with the next two years of still being a Council with the effects of significant funding reductions from the FFR. We need to consider implications of possible delays in reorganisation and to ensure we continue to be financially responsible in our decision making in the interests of the public, no matter what successor arrangements are in place.
- 1.4 This Strategy considers the legacy this Council wants to deliver in its remaining time.

2. About this Strategy

- 2.1 Our Financial Strategy considers the General Fund ¹ position and the Capital Programme ², the third area of the Council's finances the Housing Revenue Account ³ is reviewed and monitored separately within its own business plan which is currently under review.
- 2.2 The purpose of this Strategy is to define how the Council will structure and manage its finances to deliver services to residents and support the objectives detailed within the Council Plan.
- 2.3 The Strategy also links with other key plans and documents of the Council including Directorate Plans, Strata Business Plan, Procurement Strategy and the Treasury Management Strategy.
- 2.4 The Strategy comprises two parts.

➤ **Part A - The Medium Term Financial Plan Model (MTFP)** (page 3)

This is an essential part of the budget setting process. The MTFP provides a financial model and forecast of the cost of providing services over a rolling ten year period, together with an estimate of the financial resources that are likely to be available to the Council. The process is designed to provide an early warning of any potential deficit in the required level of resources.

Definition Note:

1. The General Fund records day to day spending and income on the delivery of Council services.
2. Capital programme spending relates to purchases or enhancements of assets, expenditure that has benefit greater than a year and is over £20k.
3. Housing Revenue Account records day to day spending and income on Council owned housing and its land and landlord functions

As well as considering the General Fund, the MTFP also reviews the affordability of the Council's capital investment programme, matching forecast funding against planned capital spending over a five-year horizon. The capital programme is easier to control as individual schemes can be approved or not by Council to match resources available. Clearly this has its own implications in meeting the Council Plan objectives but does not have the same degree of organisational complexity as the General Fund involving significant staff numbers, team interaction and service delivery.

➤ **Part B – Financial Sustainability Actions** *(page 12)*

This part of the Financial Plan considers how the Council will balance its finances over the coming years to continue to provide service for its residents and customers. It ensures we are challenging ourselves to achieve Value for Money and seeks efficiencies, savings and income maximisation. Key actions and enablers are identified to aid us in this process.

➤ **Part A - The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)**

3. Introduction

- 3.1 The development of a ten year financial model is based upon a number of assumptions and perceived risks which clearly become more difficult to predict as the period covered lengthens. In recent years we have been subject to one year only financial settlements from Government, there have been fundamental funding reviews proposed, delayed, and then cancelled on several occasions making even short-term planning difficult.
- 3.2 The Council's Financial Strategy for many years has highlighted the impending risk, signalled by consecutive Governments, of a fundamental review of how funding is allocated to councils. The particular risk to us being the rebasing of retained business rate income currently worth an additional £5.3m in the current budget.
- 3.3 The current Government has now instigated that review with proposals to be implemented in 2026/27; the Fairer Funding Review 2.0 was published with consultation closed on 15th August 2025.
- 3.4 The details contained in that consultation has significant negative financial implications for us, to this needs to be added Local Government Reorganisation with a successor authority being formed from April 2028, giving this Council, in theory, only two more years of budget setting – 2026/27 and 2027/28.
- 3.5 This Council has been highlighted by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government along with 40 other district councils and 9 London boroughs as to be worst affected by the proposed changes. The main driver for this is the rebasing of business rate income and loss of retained business rate growth.
- 3.6 Although the modelling has been completed for the ten year period, as would be the norm and details are contained in the Appendices, the Strategy places focus on the next two years.

4. The Fair Funding Review 2.0

- 4.1 Fair Funding Review 2.0 (FFR) attempts to refresh the methodology for distributing a fixed pot of funding between local authorities covered by the local government finance settlement (London boroughs, English unitaries, metropolitan districts, shire counties, shire districts, fire authorities, the Greater London Authority and certain Combined Authorities which receive settlement funding for their fire functions).
- 4.2 The last time the underlying distribution methodology was refreshed through changes to formulae and data was in 2013, at the time of the setting up of the business rates retention system. All authorities' settlement funding assessment was largely distributed on the basis of the predecessor formula grant which was made up of a needs assessment, resource adjustment, a central allocation and caps on year-on-year change ('damping'). The 'damping' was never 'unwound', so the allocations which have been in use since 2013/14 did not even apply the assessed need intended by that methodology in full.
- 4.3 This major share of the settlement funding assessment was split 60/40 between Revenue Support Grant and the 50% value of locally raised business rates (Baseline Funding Level). Subsequently, the RSG was reduced to deliver reductions to council funding while BFL grew in line with the change in the business rates multiplier.
- 4.4 Key factors of the current funding model are the 50% business rate retention scheme and the New Homes Bonus Grant. Both these income streams are incentives designed to reward and encourage authorities to plan and support business and housing growth in their areas. As members will be aware East Devon has been significantly advantaged by these schemes, the FFR 2.0 is proposing to retain the incentive of business growth, but it is rebasing all growth income to date and reallocating based on its needs assessment and then business rate retention to start again. The New Homes Bonus Scheme is proposed to cease completely.
- 4.5 The last full assessment of relative needs and resources is 12 years old and because of the tweaks over the years the relationship between it and actual allocations through the Settlement Funding Assessment has been weakened since then.
- 4.6 In addition, the Government is considering rolling in further grants, such as nearly £10 billion of social care funding, and importantly for us homelessness grants into the Settlement Funding Assessment, thus subjecting them to the FFR process.
- 4.7 All in all, this means that the FFR will have a fundamental impact on local authority funding that is difficult to predict until the Government makes its final decisions and publishes the details.
- 4.8 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is planning a Finance Policy Statement in late October/early November where we can start making conclusions on the final implications, with individual authority settlement numbers being published initially indicated the end of November but this has now been delayed with the Treasury confirming that the Autumn Budget will take place on 26 November. As there are interactions between the Budget and

the Local Government Finance Settlement, particularly for the business rates system with the Budget usually confirming measures such as tax rates and reliefs. This means the provisional Settlement is likely to be published the 1st or 2nd week of December.

- 4.9 The Council needs to plan before these dates, the general direction of the FFR have been considered in our MTFP supported by work of LGFutures. This is a changing picture and LGFutures with other local authority finance specialists are involved in direct conversations with the Department to help build a likely position.

5. Fundamental principles

- 5.1 As a broad principle the model has been developed on the basis of 'reasonable and prudent' forecasts and assumptions in accordance with sound accounting practice. Underpinning this plan, the following fundamental principles have been adopted:

- To secure the financial stability of the Council.
- Annually, a balanced revenue budget will be set with expenditure to be limited by the amount of available resources.
- The General Fund balance will be maintained at the agreed adopted level.
- If required to balance the budget resources will be redirected from low to high priority services to meet objectives set out in the Council Plan and maintain statutory functions.
- Council Tax increases will be kept within annually announced government guidelines to ensure a local referendum is not triggered.

- 5.2 In considering the capital budget, the Council will continue to follow the methodology of scheme scoring and prioritisation. The Council will also seek to maximise the use of its assets.

6. Financial background

- 6.1 Since 2010 this Council along with other authorities have seen significant cuts in general Government funding to support core service delivery. Funding for local authorities is historically low with an increasing number of Councils issuing or threatening to issue s114 notices – emergency measures where they are close to bankrupt and prevents all but essential spending to protect core services. For councils with adult social care and children services the financial pressures are particularly acute.

- 6.2 The Government sees Local Government Reorganisation as a key part of achieving financial sustainability for local authorities through savings that can be achieved.

- 6.3 In our own recent MTFP we have seen financial pressures with high inflation, driven by high energy and food costs, and the implications of a low growth economy.

Consequently, recent high national pay awards and other direct cost implications mainly associated with contractor and partner costs, although we are seeing a slow return to the Treasurys target 2% inflation rate it is currently stubbornly staying around 3%. There has been an upturn in investment income through interest rate rises in recent years although these are expected to drop as we go forward and there is an ever increasing call on our services with the associated costs.

- 6.4 These factors have shaped the finances of the Council over recent years and placed it in a continuous difficult position of setting balanced budgets. The Council has an excellent track record of delivering balanced budgets, meeting its spending plans and Council Plan outcomes through careful financial management and planning, the Council set a balanced budget for 2025/26, and current monitoring shows we are on track to deliver this.
- 6.5 The Council has facilitated and encouraged business and housing growth in the district to deliver its ambitions and benefited significantly in additional government funding through New Homes Bonus and significantly from extra Business Rate income which to date has put the Council in a stronger financial position when compared with other councils. This has enabled continued significant investment in non-statutory services to benefit the district. This advantageous funding position comes to an end in 2026/27 with the implications of the FFR. There is also an impact on specific service areas like culture and tourism with the ending of other funding streams like UKSPF.

7. Medium Term Financial Plan

- 7.1 The base for the MTFP is the 2025/26 approved budget and the current cost of ongoing services, adjusted to take account of a range of unavoidable costs such as pay increases, inflationary pressures, the implementation of any approved changes to the budget and any costs arising from new legislation and associated regulations or changes in resident demand. The MTFP takes account of any forecast variations in the level of both investment and fee income.
- 7.2 The Plan also considers and makes reasonable assumptions about the likely incomes from council tax and central government funding, which as outlined is extremely difficult to estimate with the implications of FFR and the new funding regime to be implemented in 2026/27.
- 7.3 The MTFP is designed to model scenarios and to aggregate the sum of all potential financial inputs, to determine whether the Council will have sufficient resources to achieve its objectives, or indeed whether action is required to bridge a funding gap. In formulating these calculations, several assumptions have been made and a range of external influences considered. The various risks and pressures are detailed at the end of the Strategy with commentary on their potential impact.
- 7.4 Appendix A to the Financial Strategy contains the summary page of the MTFP including an analysis of costs and inflation rates applied.
- 7.5 A similar exercise has been undertaken in respect of future capital expenditure, detailing the anticipated level of resources required, together with potential funding sources available to the Council to support its planned programme of works and where there are revenue implications these have been acknowledged within the Plan.

8. MTFP – Revenue Position

8.1 The position on General Fund services is extracted in the table below and shows the current year 2025/26 for comparison and forms the basis from which future assessments have been made. The 2025/26 position is the set budget, the implications effecting this budget are considered going forward.

Key areas to note in this calculation:

Service Budgets - This position is calculated based on current service provision adjusted where there are known changes, contract agreements or legislative requirements. This position does not include any growth in service or staffing to the Council's current service level, areas to highlight:

- **Recycling and Waste Contract** – The current contract ends in June 2026 with the decision made to operate a LATCo from this point. In the current year we have funded associated mobilisation costs of £641k from the Transformation Fund and the MTFP includes a further £314k in 2026/27. The Business Case stated annual savings of £700k in comparison to the current contract; this has been reflected in the MTFP.
- **Carbon reduction actions** - The MTFP assumes a commitment ongoing of £323k per annum which although significant and beyond most Councils financial commitment it is still far short of the full requirement. Without government or other external support, the Council or a successor authority is unlikely to have the financial ability to meet a full programme. There is a significant balance of unspent funding from previous years totalling £953k at the end of 2024/25.
- **Pay and general inflation** - The 2025/26 budget for staff salaries was based on an assumed 2% increase. The actual agreed pay award was at 3.2%. The difference has now been updated in the MTFP. A 2% increase has been assumed going forward but inflation remains above this Treasury Target, an additional contingency sum has been included in the MTFP of £200k.

A £314k additional cost for recent national insurance increases has been factored into the MTFP, this being the sum not covered initially by Government funding.

- **LED** – A reduction in Service Level Agreement has been included in the MTFP at £200k based on the current year figures and discussions. The scale of this reduction has

potential to increase but included as this sum to be prudent at this stage.

- **Planning Fees/Income** - We have seen fee income returning in this area and will be reassessed during the detail budget stage. Inflation rise has been assumed in fee charged based on legislation in place, recent government consultation includes details of further increases to recover local authority costs the position will be monitored but at this stage this has not been reflected in the MTFP. This does have a significant impact on the position and could be in the region of an additional £1m, but can not be relied on at this stage.
- **Staff and other resources; Service Area pressures** – Service pressures have been highlighted mainly as an implication of a growing district, in particular for Streetscene. This has not been included as an additional cost as the MTFP is already showing a significant deficit without additional new posts being added to the equation. These areas will have to be worked through in the detail budget preparation.
- **Council Tax Payments** – The Government is proposing to implement instalment payments for Council Tax to be set over 12 months as the default rather than the existing 10 months. This will have cash flow implications on the Council equating to an estimated cost of £255k. It seems likely this will be implemented so has been factored into the MTFP

8.2 There are key projects which the Council has promoted with urgency as time is ticking on the continued existence of the Council, this Strategy is defining them as **legacy projects**. These are listed below for endorsement in this Strategy as key projects to be delivered and the funding is considered in the context of the MTFP.

➤ **Delivery of Cranbrook Leisure Centre**

An initial funding allocation has been approved from the Enterprise Zone funds to meet preparatory costs. Further work is required to refine the total capital budget requirements and to determine external funding available.

The current timeline is:

- An outline Business Case and request for Capital Budget is anticipated in November 2025.

- Agreement to award a Construction Contract decision anticipated early 2027.

The capital costs have not been factored in the MTFP at this stage, the business case will have consider external funding and the ongoing contribution such a facility can make to debt charges.

➤ **Securing the future of Leisure provision and ensuring value for money**

Members will be aware of the work and decisions made to date which have been considered under Part B committee reports. Budgets have been approved for work to date and no further sums have been assumed in the MTFP.

➤ **Delivery of a New Town Development Corporation**

Reports have been presented and members ambition made clear over the approach to be adopted with the development of the new town. It is hoped significant government funding will be obtained but there is still likely to be an ask on the Council's funds, this could be in region of £2m over the next 2 years. This is beyond the existing financial envelope of the Council and there will be a need to explore the possibility of Enterprise Zone funding combined with capitalisation, if approved by Government, part maybe be achievable through the revenue budget if sufficient savings/increased income can be found elsewhere.

➤ **Community Asset Transfer**

This is in progress and decisions underway, internal resources required to make progress can be funded from existing budgets/reserves. There are no implications identified currently on the MTFP and in the remaining time of the Council this is likely to have little or no financial benefit.

➤ **Implementation of LATCo for recycling and waste management**

Another area that is progressing to begin operation in July 2026. The mobilisation budget has been approved, and no further costs are expected to be required in terms of implementation. Ongoing contract payments have been factored into the MTFP.

8.3 The Council's [Budget Book 2025/26](#) is a useful reference as it details significant information about the service provision currently provided; costs and income received, staffing resources involved in each area, the assets utilised and number of service users.

8.4 **Government Funding** – As covered in section 4 of this report the FFR to be implemented in 2026/27 has a significant effect in reducing this Council's funding mainly from the business rate rebasing where currently we receive £5.3m. As stated we have used LGFuture modelling to help inform our assumptions in the MTFP. Main areas are considered below and this is based on the consultation document, the final position is unlikely to be known until early December.

- **Business Rate income**

LGFuture's assumption have been used in the MTFP – Current growth is rebased with a new Baseline Funding Level implemented. There is still a level of retained growth income reflected of £1m, this being the additional growth still retained from the date of rebasing to the point of the 2026/27 budget year as the existing 50% rate retention scheme continues.

It is assumed the Devon pooling arrangements will cease which did attract extra income for us (£453k in 25/26).

- **New Homes Bonus**

This is to end with no successor scheme (£685k in 25/26).

- **Transitional Funding**

This protects councils where year on year funding under the formula gives reductions. The move to the final lower assessment is managed over 3 years; 1/3rd reduction in year 1, 2/3rd reduction in year 2 and then the full reduction in year 3. There is also a protection based on a no cash worse off (ignoring inflation) but this has not applied in our position, as we were specially informed by the Department in our case along with 50 or so other councils we would be looking at possibly -5% as our floor calculation. This is a reduction from the 2025/26 base year and fails to address the actual position of inflation and demand pressure costs on the Council. Transitional Funding assumed is still significant with £5.9m in 26/27, £4.6m in 27/28 and £3.4m in 28/29.

- **Rolled up Grants in main funding formula under FFR**

Both the Homelessness Grant (£330k) and the NIC Grant (£283k) are proposed to be included in our overall funding assessment rather than direct grants. These have been deleted from the Service line within the MTFP and now form part of the overall government funding assessment.

- 8.5 **Council Tax** - The Government has for a number of years determined rural district councils can increase their council tax by £5 a year or up to 2.99% whichever is the greatest before triggering a local referendum. This is the level of income the Government assess is available to the Council and the MTFP applies this increase annually. The same principle is within the FFR. The percentage increase is now the greater sum for us rising the Council Tax from £171.78 in 2025/26 to £176.92 in 2026/27.

9. MTFP numbers

- 9.1 An extract from the MTFP is given below, the main body of the report only includes the next 3 years, the full 10 year position is contained in the appendices:

This column gives the current year budget (2025/26) which is balanced, this is the base year to which
adjusts are then made going forward.



EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL - MTFP summary Page										
GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET FORECAST										
Note	BASE									
	2025/26 Total	Addition	2026/27 Reduction	Total	Addition	2027/28 Reduction	Total	Addition	2028/29 Reduction	Total
BUDGET SET	25,878,510			25,878,510			27,401,584			27,617,012
AMENDMENTS TO BUDGET INCLUDING BUDGET VARIATIONS										
1 One off Items of expenditure from Earmarked Reserves			373,455	(373,455)						
2 EDDC Elections (budget 2023 + inflation)					182,500				182,500	(182,500)
3 Staff & Resourcing for new town preparation, £200k in base, budget approval ends 25/26			200,000	(200,000)			0			0
4 National Insurance increase not covered in base budget, identified in 25/26 budget report		324,000		324,000						
5 Implications of 2025/26 pay award 2% allowed, agreed at 3.2%		204,704		204,704						
6 Council approved LATCo Recycling & Waste additional sum 26/27 for implementation		314,000		314,000		314,000	(314,000)			
7 Supplementary Estimate approved in 25/26 for Out of Hours payments		75,000		75,000			0			
8 Cash Flow implications of changes to Council Tax payments being over 12 months		255,000		255,000			0			
9 Latest indication inflation staying around 3% assume contingency on Pay Award etc		200,000		200,000			0			
10 Establishment saving through vacancies not achieving traditional £450k, reduce to £300k		150,000		150,000			0			
11 Homelessness Grant & NIC grant now rolled into FFR		613,000		613,000						
12 Savings related to LED Contract			200,000	(200,000)			0			
13 Savings assumed through Recycling & Waste LATCo			525,000	(525,000)		175,000	(175,000)			
14 Ongoing replacement of IT kit		100,000		100,000						
15 Actuary reducing rate on superannuation as over 100% funded - assume £192k reduction			192,000	(192,000)			0			
	0	2,235,704	1,490,455	745,249	182,500	489,000	(489,000)	0	182,500	(182,500)
INFLATION										
12 Employee Pay Award		352,091		352,091	355,039		355,039	362,139		362,139
Employees Other Costs		14,946		14,946	15,245		15,245	15,550		15,550
Superannuation		72,795		72,795	78,091		78,091	79,653		79,653
National Insurance		41,992		41,992	36,352		36,352	37,079		37,079
13 Inflation Summary - expenditure		742,599		742,599	668,832		668,832	686,616		686,616
14 Inflation Summary - fees, charges & contributions		(446,599)		(446,599)	(449,131)		(449,131)	(458,113)		(458,113)
TOTAL INESCAPABLE BUDGET CHANGES	0	777,825	0	777,825	704,428	0	704,428	722,924	0	722,924
SERVICE PLAN COMMITMENTS NOT INCLUDED IN BASE BUDGET										
15 None identified				0	0		0	0		0
TOTAL "UNAVOIDABLE" CHANGES TO BUDGET	0	3,013,529	1,490,455	1,523,074	886,928	489,000	215,428	722,924	182,500	540,424
PREDICTED BUDGET REQUIREMENT	25,878,510			27,401,584			27,617,012			28,157,437
FINANCED BY:										
Business Rates - New Baseline Funding Level (LGFutures Assessment)	3,789,000			3,478,000			3,544,000			3,608,000
Business Rates - Uplift (LGFutures Assessment)	4,835,000			1,077,000			1,097,000			1,117,000
Business Rates Pooling Gain (assume no Devon pool going forward)	453,000			0			0			0
Revenue Support Grant (LGFutures Assessment)	282,190			330,000			337,000			343,740
Minimum Funding Floor	2,096,870			0			65,000			604,000
Transitional Funding	0			5,859,000			4,620,000			3,383,000
EPR Grant	899,000			916,980			935,320			954,026
Council Tax 2025/26 = £171.78 - Growth in base 500 each year, Assume + £5 per annum increase or 2.99% which is ever greater	11,190,182			11,613,227			12,051,565			12,505,734
Interest Income (assume similar interest rates to 25/26 predictions, but effect of less cash)	2,071,410			1,571,410			1,571,410			1,571,410
Interest & Loan Repayment - assume Loan Debt increase of £4m allowance (MRP + 4% interest)	(1,260,757)			(1,553,757)			(1,846,757)			(2,139,757)
Council Tax Collection Fund Surplus	464,120			0			0			0
Earmarked Reserve - one off items of expenditure (including Transformation Fund)	373,455			0			0			0
New Homes Bonus	685,040			0			0			0
General Fund Balance - District Elections	0			0			182,500			0
GENERAL FUND BALANCE	0			0			0			0
TOTAL	25,878,510			23,291,860			22,557,038			21,947,153
<i>(Abbreviations used - NHB = New Homes Bonus, N.I = National Insurance, NNDR = National Non Domestic Rates)</i>										
ANNUAL (SURPLUS)/DEFICIT	(0)			4,109,724			5,059,974			6,210,284
IN YEAR ADDITION TO ANNUAL (SURPLUS)/DEFICIT				4,109,724			950,250			1,150,309
Taking two year position 2026/27 and 2027/28		9,169,699								

This line shows the annual projected deficit in our budget if no action is taken. The annual deficit in 2026/27 is £4.110m and the deficit in 2027/28 is £5.060m. These deficits are the result of a growing cost base against a significant decrease in funding with the effect of the FFR to be implemented from 2026/27.

10. MTFP Revenue - The Way Forward

10.1 If we consider the next two years 2026/27 and 2027/28 which at this stage under the Government timetable of LGR are the remaining two years of this Council.

10.2 From the details of the MTFP the two year gap equates to **£9.170m**

- The £9.170m is the total budget deficit for the two years together, it assumes no savings are made in 2026/27 so the deficit for that year of £4.110m remains in the base budget for 2027/28 with a further deficit added of £0.950m created in 2027/28.
- The deficit over the two years derives in the main from service change costs in the order of £2m, whilst at the time £7m of overall funding has been lost, a large part due to the implications of the FFR.

10.3 The options available to meet the **£9.170m** deficit if we only focus on the next two years are outlined below.

- **Reserves available** – The Council has reserves it has set aside to assist in a likely cliff edge from funding reductions, other reserves are also available that are considered appropriate to use at this time in setting budgets over the next two years prior to LGR. The obvious reserves are listed below for consideration but there are others available that the Council may consider appropriate to use as they have been set aside to deliver specific outcomes which with a limited timeframe now available it would seem sensible to review. This review of reserves is currently taking place with managers to assess where projects and schemes are, and further details can be brought forward in the detailed budget process.

The use of reserves to fund budget deficits would not normally be recommended as this does not solve the underlying budget gap. The circumstance of LGR is different, with the limited timescales available to reshape our budgets. It would seem inappropriate and impracticable to drive the necessary reductions, resulting in significant service cuts in just a two year period at a time when proposals for a successor authority are being drawn up. It was intended that the reserves would give time for the Council to make the necessary changes.

The business cases nationally being prepared for reorganisation are on the premise that savings should be derived, this is an overarching reason for the change, the need to make local authorities financially sustainable which is currently not the case. MTFP deficits across Devon need to be considered in designing an authority that achieves the required level of savings. A significant element of the reserves have been set aside by this Council as a mitigation of a spending review outcome to give the Council time to reshape against a cliff edge funding reduction.

Further in discussion with MHCLG with those councils worst hit by the FFR they are expecting the utilisation of reserves to help meet funding losses as an immediate response. Their analysis shows those authorities worst hit in the main have higher levels of reserves as they have benefited from the current funding regime. This was countered by authorities, but the statement was made.

Reserves Available		
MTFP Risk Reserve	(3,712,000)	
Transformation Reserves- uncommitted TBC	(1,481,000)	
GF headroom above min (Leaving £3.5m)	(1,300,000)	
Review of other reserves	TBC	(6,493,000)

- **Capital Dispensation** – Councils can apply to Government to treat certain revenue expenditure as capital if they are one off costs to aid better service delivery or generate savings. These costs can then be funded through capital resources including borrowing, although the use of capital receipts would be preferable so not increase revenue costs long term. DHCLG have indicated that they will look favourable under the current circumstances on such requests.

The costs associated with the LATCo mobilisation could be scored against this concession; currently £0.641m being funded from the Transformation Reserve and £0.314m from the 2026/27 budget. These costs having been factored into the MTFP and use of reserves, instead this cost could be capitalised.

Capital Dispesation (need to apply to Gov't)		
LATCo Mobilisation - apply for capital dispensation 25/26 as coming from Trans Fund & 26/27 revenue budget	(955,000)	
Other capitalisation	TBC	(955,000)

This could also be used in other areas were appropriate and this maybe useful in setting up the New Town Development Corporation.

We need to seek Government approval for dispensations but the message from MHCLG particular for those councils most effected by FFR is this is a mechanism that should be considered. Further conversations with the Department will also focus on possible other measures that might be available, although it is unlikely this will be in the form of additional direct funding.

- **Balance to find** – Taking the £9.170m budget deficit and utilising the sums identified above totalling **-£7.448m**, this leaves a budget gap of £1.7m. Or £0.9m if savings are found for 2026/27 and are recurring savings in our base budget.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are currently working on proposals to meet this level of saving/increased income. Initially £1m for 2026/27 budget but with a stretched target of £1.5m for each of the two years giving £3m in total. This then gives options and is an eye to the 2028/29 budget should the LGR timetable slip and this Council needs to prepare a further year's budget. This can be assessed as we move through the LGR process.

Under our previously adopted Financial Strategy we had the Financial Sustainability Model (FSM) which had key enablers to help drive savings/increase income. These principles are still useful to the current work in hand and can be found here starting on page 16 of the [Financial Strategy 2025 onwards](#).

- 10.4 Using reserves, using capitalisation and finding savings for only the deficit balance remaining (£0.9m) is a strategy which focusses on this Council only needing to set a budget for the next two years. There is a risk by significantly utilising reserves, which can only be used once, the Council is delaying the cliff edge in its budget gap that it may have to face itself should LGR be delayed. To emphasis again the creation of a new unitary authority would have assumed savings and a different FFR position.
- 10.5 If we focussed on just finding the minimum savings and utilising all readily available reserves this would leave us with a deficit of £5.3m to find in 2028/29, equivalent to 10.6% reduction in the gross budget. Whereas finding £1.5m each year for the next two years reduces the deficit to £3.2m (6.4% reduction in gross budget) and readily available reserves remaining at £1.3m.
- 10.6 The steer given by Budget Setting and Capital Allocations Panel (BSCAP) and an informal session with Cabinet was to endorse the above measures, but to plan also for a delayed reorganisation, essentially a 'N+1' scenari. Hence the stretched target being set as well. As stated, we can keep this under review as we move through the process. If additional saving/increase income are from areas that are palatable to Council this also gives more scope to invest in defined legacy projects.

11. Capital

- 11.1 The Council maintains a programme of capital expenditure designed to improve a wide range of community facilities and local infrastructure. The forward funding projections below only include rolling items and projects identified early by managers; **there will be proposals missing from this list** that will need to be considered for funding. There will be slippage in the programme that is not reflected below, the MTFP considers the approved programme and actual spend history against programme to give a more accurate picture on General Fund Revenue implications.
- 11.2 There will be a disparity between the Council's capital spending aspirations being greater than the amount of finance available. In producing these figures agreed principles have/will be applied:
- Capital works associated with the Housing Revenue Account are self-funded; these costs have been factored into in the HRA budgets. Any capital receipts generated from the HRA are used to finance HRA expenditure.
 - A capital bid process is in place and reviewed annually. This prioritisation is overseen by the BSCAP.
- 11.3 Like many councils we see significant slippage annually in our capital programme, a review is currently underway to ensure we present a realistic programme bearing in mind again the LGR timetable. Several projects in the current programme have been included for some time and not started for various reasons, we need to

consider realistic delivery over the next two years. The same approach needs to be taken with any new schemes to be recommended. This review is likely to reduce the programme and have a beneficial effect on our debt funding position in the General Fund.

MTFP Model – Capital Expenditure and Funding Position

	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000
GF - Net Capital Expenditure (after Grants, CIL, 106, EZ)	25,543*	1,289**	7,588	6,308	239
GF - General Capital Receipts	(1,000)	(200)	(200)	(200)	(200)
Net Internal/ External Borrowing	(24,543)	(1,089)	(7,388)	(6,108)	(39)

*Includes slippage from previous years

**SANG contribution expected offsetting expenditure profiled in other years

11.4 The Programme expenditure includes only those schemes already approved by Council and rolling items such as the provision of statutory disabled facility grants, capital maintenance, equipment replacement for street scene services etc. **Bids will come through the annual budget process giving a different picture to that given above and there will be choices to make to keep expenditure within resources available.** The above has been produced using the latest budget monitoring position.

11.5 The position on internal/external borrowing over the period requires net funding of £39.167m. This position has been factored into the revenue model taking a realistic view of past borrowing patterns and the current level debt assumed. From 2026/27 the costs of borrowing/lost external interest with additional borrowing of £4m a year for new scheme approval is assumed. A modest sum has been included for the capital receipts line; active asset management should be able to generate greater sums than has been assumed.

11.6 Key issues to consider for this Plan in terms of capital are:

- Only rolling items, or early request for items, have been included in the MTFP. No amount is included for future coast protection or flood prevention schemes. If any schemes do come forward, it is assumed they will attract Government funding if of high enough priority.
- Any scheme inclusion in the Programme over and above this core annual expenditure needs to be considered carefully for inclusion in future programmes on a case by case basis to determine if they meet corporate objectives and, if they can be self funded, evidenced in a business case or delivered in conjunction with other agencies/partners. Some schemes will come with no funding but may still be required to be funded due to their nature.

11.7 The Way Forward – Capital programme

- There is a clear necessity for the continuation of the member Panel to consider the allocating of capital resources against competing capital scheme bids.
- The programme needs to be populated with realistic expenditure estimates into the future.
- More active assessment of assets held in terms of capital receipts or transfers.

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES AND KEY ASSUMPTIONS WITHIN THE REVENUE MTFP MODEL

• Inflation

Inflation rates used are identified in Appendix A of the MTFP attached. Although the financial model is based upon what are believed to be a series of prudent assumptions, there is inevitably a risk that some or all factors applied could be inaccurate. The table below summarises the impact of any such inaccuracies that would have a detrimental effect upon the financial plan.

Financial impact of changes in inflation assumptions 2025/26.

Factor	MTFP Predicted Inflation Costs £000	Worse by 1% £'000	Worse by 2% £'000
Pay, N.I & Pension & other employee costs + other costs	778	498	996

• Investment Returns

The approach adopted, of budgeting for investment income remains prudent. Investment return is based on a marginal reduction in base rate for 2026/27 and a reduction in cash to invest has been factored in.

• Council Tax Income

The MTFP follows recent Government practice of allowing a £5 a year increase or 2.99% whichever is the greatest.

Financial impact of changes in council tax levels (2025/26).

Level of council Tax increase	Predicted council tax income £000	Loss of income in MTFP 2025/26 £'000
Council tax yield at £5 (2.99%) increase	(11,613)	Nil
Yield at 2.0%	(11,501)	112
Yield at 1.0%	(11,389)	224
Yield at 0.0%	(11,276)	337

This calculation shows a one year effect, this reduction would be lost each year going forward plus the opportunity to increase the level in future on a higher base.

• Government Funding

This is significant factor and the most difficult to predict. Although there are many factors to consider the overarching safeguard has promised is transitional arrangement over 3 years and LGFutures taking the year on year cash position being no worse than -5%. Although a risk this should the worst position.

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL - MTFF summary Page
 GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET FORECAST

DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL - MTFP summary Page																										APPENDIX A (i)									
GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET FORECAST																																			
Note	2025/26			2026/27			2027/28			2028/29			2029/30			2030/31			2031/32			2032/33			2033/34			2034/35			2035/36				
	Total	Addition	Reduction	Total	Addition	Reduction	Total	Addition	Reduction	Total	Addition	Reduction	Total	Addition	Reduction	Total	Addition	Reduction	Total	Addition	Reduction	Total	Addition	Reduction	Total	Addition	Reduction	Total	Addition	Reduction	Total				
BUDGET SET	25,878,510			25,878,510			27,401,584			27,617,012			28,157,437			28,801,833			29,468,893			30,332,374			30,824,447			31,529,699			32,251,094				
AMENDMENTS TO BUDGET INCLUDING BUDGET VARIATIONS																																			
1 One off items of expenditure from Earmarked Reserves			373,455	(373,455)			182,500						182,500			(182,500)			0		0		0		0		0		0		0				
2 EDDC Elections (budget 2023 + inflation)			200,000	(200,000)												0		0	197,400		197,400		0		197,400		(197,400)		0		0				
3 Staff & Resourcing for new towns preparation, £200k in base, budget approval ends 25/26			324,000	(324,000)												0		0	0		0		0		0		0		0		0				
4 National Insurance increase not covered in base budget, identified in 25/26 budget report			204,704													0		0	0		0		0		0		0		0		0				
5 Implications of 2025/26 pay award 2% allowed, agreed at 3.2%			314,000													0		0	0		0		0		0		0		0		0				
6 Council approved LATCo Recycling & Waste additional sum 26/27 for implementation			75,000				314,000			314,000						0		0	0		0		0		0		0		0		0				
7 Supplementary Estimate approved in 25/26 for Out of Hours payments			255,000				75,000			75,000						0		0	0		0		0		0		0		0		0				
8 Cash Flow implications of changes to Council Tax payments being over 12 months			200,000				255,000			255,000						0		0	0		0		0		0		0		0		0				
9 Latest indication inflation staying around 3% assume contingency on Pay Award etc			150,000				200,000			200,000						0		0	0		0		0		0		0		0		0				
10 Establishment saving through vacancies not achieving traditional £450k, reduce to £300k			613,000				150,000			150,000						0		0	0		0		0		0		0		0		0				
11 Homelessness Grant & NHC grant now rolled into FFR				(613,000)												0		0	0		0		0		0		0		0		0				
12 Savings related to LED Contract			200,000	(200,000)												0		0	0		0		0		0		0		0		0				
13 Services assumed through Recycling & Waste LATCo			525,000	(525,000)			175,000			(175,000)						0		0	0		0		0		0		0		0		0				
14 Outgoing replacement of IT kit			100,000				(100,000)			(100,000)						0		0	0		0		0		0		0		0		0				
15 Actuary reducing rate on superannuation as over 100% funded - assume £192k reduction				(192,000)												0		0	0		0		0		0		0		0		0				
	0	2,235,704	1,490,455	745,249	182,500	489,000	(489,000)	0	0	182,500	(182,500)	0	0	0	0	0	197,400	0	197,400	0	197,400	(197,400)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
INFLATION																																			
12 Employee Pay Award		352,091		352,091	355,039		355,039	362,139		362,139	369,382		369,382	376,770		376,770	384,305		384,305	391,991		391,991	399,831		399,831	407,828		407,828	415,984		415,984				
Employees Other Costs		14,946		14,946	15,245		15,245	15,550		15,550	15,861		15,861	16,178		16,178	16,502		16,832	17,169		17,169	17,512		17,512	17,862		17,862	18,219		18,219				
Superannuation		72,792		72,792	78,891		78,891	79,653		79,653	81,246		81,246	82,870		82,870	84,528		86,218	87,943		89,702	91,496		93,328	95,199		97,102	99,034		101,000				
National Insurance		41,992		41,992	36,352		36,352	37,079		37,079	37,821		37,821	38,577		38,577	39,349		40,136	40,938		41,757	42,592		43,442	44,313		45,205	46,118		47,052				
13 Inflation Summary - expenditure		742,599		742,599	668,832		668,832	686,616		686,616	697,362		697,362	621,284		621,284	635,551		650,171	665,156		680,515	696,238		712,304	728,628		745,562	763,000		780,538				
14 Inflation Summary - fees, charges & contributions		(446,599)		(446,599)	(449,131)		(449,131)	(458,113)		(458,113)	(467,275)		(467,275)	(476,621)		(476,621)	(486,153)		(495,876)	(505,794)		(515,910)	(526,228)		(536,749)	(547,474)		(558,404)	(569,338)		(580,580)				
TOTAL INESCAPABLE BUDGET CHANGES	0	777,825	0	777,825	704,428	0	704,428	722,924	0	722,924	644,397	0	644,397	659,059	0	659,059	674,081	0	674,081	689,473	0	689,473	705,243	0	705,243	721,404	0	721,404	737,965	0	737,965				
SERVICE PLAN COMMITMENTS NOT INCLUDED IN BASE BUDGET																																			
15 None identified				0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0		0				
TOTAL "UNAVOIDABLE" CHANGES TO BUDGET	0	3,013,529	1,490,455	1,523,074	886,928	489,000	215,428	722,924	182,500	540,424	644,397	0	644,397	659,059	0	659,059	871,481	0	871,481	689,473	197,400	492,873	705,243	0	705,243	721,404	0	721,404	737,965	0	737,965				
PREDICTED BUDGET REQUIREMENT	25,878,510			27,401,584			27,617,012			28,157,437			28,801,833			29,468,893			30,332,374			30,824,447			31,529,699			32,251,094			32,989,059				
FINANCED BY:																																			
Business Rates - New Baseline Funding Level (LGFinures Assessment)		3,789,000		3,478,000			3,444,000			3,400,000			3,480,160			3,753,763			3,836,838			3,905,415			3,983,524			4,063,194			4,144,458				
Business Rates - Lipholt (LGFinures Assessment)		4,833,000		1,077,000			1,097,000			1,117,000			1,139,346			1,162,127			1,185,369			1,209,077			1,233,328			1,257,623			1,283,082				
Business Rates Pooling Gain (assume no Devon pool going forward)		453,000		0			0			0			0			0			0			0			0			0			0				
Revenue Support Grant (LGFinures Assessment)		282,190		330,000			337,000			343,740			350,615			357,627			364,780			372,075			379,517			387,107			394,849				
Minimum Funding Floor		2,096,870		0			65,000			644,000			2,987,000			2,987,000			2,987,000			2,987,000			2,987,000			2,987,000			2,987,000				
Transitional Funding		0		5,859,000			4,620,000			3,383,000			973,107			0			0			1,012,420			1,053,322			1,074,388			1,095,876				
EPR Grant		899,000		916,980			935,320			954,026			973,107			992,569			1,012,420			1,032,668			1,053,322			1,074,388			1,095,876				
Council Tax 2025/26 = £171.78 + Growth in base 500 each year, Assume + £5 per annum increase or 2.99% which is ever greater		11,190,182		11,613,227			12,051,565			12,505,734			12,976,288			13,463,801			13,968,866			14,492,097			15,034,129			15,595,618			16,177,244				
Interest Income (assume similar interest rates to 25/26 predictions, but effect of loss cash)		2,071,410		1,571,410			1,571,410			1,571,410			1,571,410			1,571,410			1,571,410			1,571,410			1,571,410			1,571,410			1,571,410				
Interest & Loan Repayment - assume Loan Debt increase of £6m allowance (MRP + 4% interest)		(1,260,757)		(1,553,757)			(1,846,757)			(2,139,757)			(2,432,757)			(2,725,757)			(3,018,757)			(3,311,757)			(3,604,757)			(3,897,757)			(4,190,757)				
Council Tax Collection Fund Surplus		464,120		0			0			0			0			0			0			0			0			0			0				
Earmarked Reserve - one off items of expenditure (including Transformation Fund)		373,455		0			0			0			0			0			0			0			0			0			0				
New Homes Bonus		685,060		0			0			0			0			0			0			0			0			0			0				
Gift Aid and Balance - District Elections		0		0			182,500			0			0			197,400			0			0			0			0			0				
GRAND TOTAL FUND BALANCE		0		0			0			0			0			0			0			0			0			0			0				
TOTAL	25,878,510			23,291,860			22,557,038			21,947,153			21,245,162			21,562,539			22,097,326			22,357,985			22,637,402			23,148,884			23,463,163				
(Abbreviations used - NHB = New Homes Bonus, NI = National Insurance, NNDR = National Non Domestic Rates)																																			

INESCAPABLE BUDGET CHANGES											Appendix A (ii)	
Note	2025/26 £ BASE	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	2028/29 £	2029/30 £	2030/31 £	2031/32 £	2032/33 £	2033/34 £	2034/35 £	2035/36 £	
Employee Costs												
Inflation - Employees Pay												
Base Pay Budget (Salary/Wages/Overtime)	17,399,840	17,399,840	17,751,931	18,106,969	18,469,109	18,838,491	19,215,261	19,599,566	19,991,557	20,391,389	20,799,216	
25/26 budget assumed 2% overall, still awaiting outcome but offer made of 3.2%		204,704										
Assumed Pay Award (in line with inflation)		2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
Total Pay		352,091	355,039	362,139	369,382	376,770	384,305	391,991	399,831	407,828	415,984	
Inflation - Employees Other - In line with General Inflation												
Base Pay Budget	747,320	747,320	762,266	777,512	793,062	808,923	825,102	841,604	858,436	875,604	893,117	
Assumed Inflation Level		2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
Total Pay Inflation		14,946	15,245	15,550	15,861	16,178	16,502	16,832	17,169	17,512	17,862	
Pension- Triannual review 26/27 - 28/29 (currently 20% Primary rate all years, 2nd Rate minor sum), Scheme review showing over funded assume £192k reduction 19% base Reduction	3,831,740	3,831,740	3,904,535	3,982,625	4,062,278	4,143,524	4,226,394	4,310,922	4,397,140	4,485,083	4,574,785	
Inflation		-192,000										
		2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
		72,795	78,091	79,653	81,246	82,870	84,528	86,218	87,943	89,702	91,496	
National Insurance	1,775,617	1,775,617	1,817,609	1,853,962	1,891,041	1,928,862	1,967,439	2,006,788	2,046,923	2,087,862	2,129,619	
Additional contribution net of grant		324,000										
Inflation		2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
		41,992	36,352	37,079	37,821	38,577	39,349	40,136	40,938	41,757	42,592	
OTHER												
Inflation - Premises General	1,572,095	1,572,095	1,603,537	1,635,608	1,668,320	1,701,686	1,735,720	1,770,434	1,805,843	1,841,960	1,878,799	
Inflation Rate		2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
Increased Sum		31,442	32,071	32,712	33,366	34,034	34,714	35,409	36,117	36,839	37,576	
Inflation - Premises Energy	373,290	373,290	391,955	411,552	432,130	453,736	476,423	500,244	525,257	551,519	579,095	
Inflation Rate		5,00%	5,00%	5,00%	5,00%	5,00%	5,00%	5,00%	5,00%	5,00%	5,00%	
Increased Sum		18,665	19,598	20,578	21,606	22,687	23,821	25,012	26,263	27,576	28,955	
Inflation - Premises Rates	941,435	941,435	960,264	979,469	999,058	1,019,040	1,039,420	1,060,209	1,081,413	1,103,041	1,125,102	
Inflation Rate		2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
Increased Sum		18,629	19,205	19,589	19,981	20,381	20,788	21,204	21,628	22,061	22,502	
Inflation - Transport General	838,865	838,865	855,642	872,755	890,210	908,014	926,175	944,698	963,592	982,864	1,002,521	
Inflation Rate		2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
Increased Sum		16,777	17,113	17,455	17,804	18,160	18,523	18,894	19,272	19,657	20,050	
Inflation - Transport Fuel related	178,120	178,120	187,026	190,767	194,582	198,473	202,443	206,492	210,622	214,834	219,131	
Inflation Rate		5,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
Increased Sum		8,906	3,741	3,815	3,892	3,969	4,049	4,130	4,212	4,297	4,383	
Inflation - Supplies & Services	7,707,415	7,707,415	7,861,563	8,018,795	8,179,170	8,342,754	8,509,609	8,679,801	8,853,397	9,030,465	9,211,074	
Inflation Rate		2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
Increased Sum		154,148	157,231	160,376	163,583	166,855	170,192	173,596	177,068	180,609	184,221	
Inflation - Members General	37,540	37,540	38,291	39,057	39,838	40,635	41,447	42,276	43,122	43,984	44,864	
Inflation Rate		2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
Increased Sum		751	766	781	797	813	829	846	862	880	897	
Inflation - Members Allowances	469,840	469,840	479,237	488,822	498,598	508,570	518,741	529,116	539,698	550,492	561,502	
Inflation Rate		2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
Increased Sum		9,397	9,585	9,776	9,972	10,171	10,375	10,582	10,794	11,010	11,230	
Inflation - Refuse & Recycling	8,840,270	8,840,270	9,193,881	9,469,697	9,753,788	9,948,864	10,147,841	10,350,798	10,557,814	10,768,970	10,984,350	
Assume on track with new contract arrangement, but sum based on fuel & staff costs so higher overall inflation increase		4,00%	3,00%	3,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
		353,611	275,816	284,091	195,076	198,977	202,957	207,016	211,156	215,379	219,687	
Inflation - LED SLA	1,349,700	1,349,700	1,376,694	1,404,228	1,432,312	1,460,959	1,490,178	1,519,981	1,550,381	1,581,389	1,613,016	
		2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
		26,994	27,534	28,085	28,646	29,219	29,804	30,400	31,008	31,628	32,260	
Inflation - Strata	3,436,005	3,436,005	3,539,085	3,645,258	3,754,615	3,867,254	3,983,272	4,102,770	4,225,853	4,352,628	4,483,207	
Contract (payment based on inflation - salary + software %)		3,00%	3,00%	3,00%	3,00%	3,00%	3,00%	3,00%	3,00%	3,00%	3,00%	
Increased Sum		103,800	106,173	109,358	112,638	116,018	119,498	123,083	126,776	130,579	134,496	
Summary of inflation		742,599	668,832	686,616	607,362	621,284	635,551	650,171	665,156	680,515	696,258	
Inflation - HB payments (includes £400,000 overpayment income)	15,812,680	15,812,680	15,812,680	15,812,680	15,812,680	15,812,680	15,812,680	15,812,680	15,812,680	15,812,680	15,812,680	
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Elections (Parliamentary & Police)												
Sub Total	65,311,772											
Inflation - HB Admin	-397,590.00	-397,590	-405,542	-413,653	-421,926	-430,364	-438,971	-447,751	-456,706	-465,840	-475,157	
No assumption of change in 2026/27		2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
		-7,952	-8,111	-8,273	-8,439	-8,607	-8,779	-8,955	-9,134	-9,317	-9,503	
Inflation - NNDR Admin	-273,260	-273,260	-278,725	-284,300	-289,986	-295,785	-301,701	-307,735	-313,890	-320,168	-326,571	
Inflation Rate		2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
Increased Sum		-5,465	-5,575	-5,686	-5,800	-5,916	-6,034	-6,155	-6,278	-6,403	-6,531	
Inflation - Homelessness	-492,000	-492,000	-501,840	-511,877	-522,114	-532,557	-543,208	-554,072	-565,153	-576,456	-587,986	
Inflation Rate		2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
Increased Sum		-9,840	-10,037	-10,238	-10,442	-10,651	-10,864	-11,081	-11,303	-11,529	-11,760	
Inflation -Recycling	-3,629,400	-3,629,400	-3,701,988	-3,776,028	-3,851,548	-3,928,579	-4,007,161	-4,087,294	-4,169,000	-4,252,421	-4,337,489	
Inflation Rate - assume 1% increase		2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
Increased Sum		-72,588	-74,040	-75,521	-77,031	-78,572	-80,143	-81,746	-83,381	-85,048	-86,749	
Inflation - Government & OLA Grant Balance	-703,386	-703,386	-717,454	-731,803	-746,439	-761,368	-776,595	-792,127	-807,969	-824,129	-840,611	
Inflation Rate		2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
Increased Sum		-14,068	-14,349	-14,636	-14,929	-15,227	-15,532	-15,843	-16,159	-16,483	-16,812	
Inflation - Other Grants & Con't	-679,370	-679,370	-692,957	-706,817	-720,953	-735,372	-750,079	-765,081	-780,383	-795,990	-811,910	
Inflation Rate		2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
Increased Sum		-13,587	-13,859	-14,136	-14,419	-14,707	-15,002	-15,302	-15,608	-15,920	-16,238	
Inflation - HB Subsidy + Benefits received from Homelessness	-15,999,610.00	-15,999,610	-15,999,610	-15,999,610	-15,999,610	-15,999,610	-15,999,610	-15,999,610	-15,999,610	-15,999,610	-15,999,610	
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Inflation - Other Customer Receipts	-7,410,765	-7,410,765	-7,558,980	-7,710,160	-7,864,363	-8,021,650	-8,182,083	-8,345,725	-8,512,640	-8,682,892	-8,856,550	
Inflation Rate		2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
Increased Sum		-148,215	-151,180	-154,203	-157,287	-160,433	-163,642	-166,915	-170,253	-173,658	-177,131	
Inflation - Homesafeguard	-343,820	-343,820	-350,696	-357,710	-364,865	-372,162	-379,605	-387,197	-394,941	-402,840	-410,897	
Inflation Rate		2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
Increased Sum		-6,876	-7,014	-7,154	-7,297	-7,443	-7,592	-7,744	-7,899	-8,057	-8,218	
Inflation - Net Recharges to HRA	-3,173,606	-3,173,606	-3,237,078	-3,301,820	-3,367,856	-3,435,213	-3,503,917	-3,573,996	-3,645,476	-3,718,385	-3,792,753	
Inflation Rate		2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
Increased Sum		-63,472	-64,742	-66,036	-67,357	-68,704	-70,078	-71,480	-72,910	-74,368	-75,855	
Inflation - Car Park Charges	-3,108,800	-3,108,800	-3,170,878	-3,234,396	-3,299,083	-3,365,065	-3,432,366	-3,501,014	-3,571,034	-3,642,455	-3,715,304	
Inflation Rate		2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
Increased Sum		-62,176	-63,420	-64,688	-65,982	-67,301	-68,647	-70,020	-71,421	-72,849	-74,306	
Inflation - Planning Fees	-1,426,940	-1,426,940	-1,135,479	-1,158,188	-1,181,352	-1,204,979	-1,229,079	-1,253,660	-1,278,734	-1,304,308	-1,330,394	
Inflation Rate - Stated CPI to apply annually from increase in 2024/25 - £320k added to base		2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
Increased Sum		-26,539	-22,710	-23,164	-23,627	-24,100	-24,582	-25,073	-25,575	-26,086	-26,606	
Inflation - Other Income	-690,992	-690,992	-704,812	-718,908	-733,286	-747,952	-762,911	-778,169	-793,733	-809,607	-825,799	
Inflation Rate		2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	2,00%	
Increased Sum		-13,820	-14,096	-14,378	-14,666	-14,9						



Report to: Council

Date of Meeting 15 October 2025

Heading/Title: Changes to the Constitution - Councillors' Gifts and Hospitality Protocol

Cabinet Member(s): Communications and Democracy (Councillor Sarah Jackson)

Director/Assistant Director: Governance (Melanie Wellman)

Author and Directorate: Andrew Melhuish (Democratic Services Manager – Governance Directorate)

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Key decision No

If a Key Decision has it appeared on Forward Plan N/A

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Report Summary and Recommendations/Decision

The report includes an update on amendments to the Council's Constitution following a review of the Constitution by the Constitution Working Group.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution Full Council is responsible for the changes to the Constitution.

The only guidance available to Councillors on the declaring of Gifts and Hospitality is included in the Councillors' Code of Conduct. This guidance is limited in its application and therefore the opportunity has been taken to write a separate Protocol, to form part of the Constitution, which gives more detailed guidance to councillors (including co-opted members) on the appropriateness of accepting gifts and hospitality and the factors they should take into account when making a decision.

The protocol has been considered by the Standards Committee and was recommended to the Constitution Working Group. The Constitution Working Group recommend that Council adopts the protocol.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the 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 publication on the Council's website.

1. Background

Updating of the Constitution

- 1.1 The Constitution Working Group has been carrying out a phased review of key elements of the Constitution over a series of working group meetings.
- 1.2 The Constitution Working Group was set up in 2024 at Annual Council to review the Constitution. The Constitution Working Group is a cross-party membership consisting of:

Councillor Sarah Jackson (Chair & PFH for Communications & Democracy), Councillors Paul Arnott, John Loudoun, Tim Dumper, Mike Goodman, Jenny Brown, Mike Howe, Peter Faithfull and Kim Bloxham and officer support is provided by the Monitoring Officer and Democratic Services Team.
- 1.3 At present the main guidance on the acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality by Councillors is included in the adopted Councillor Code of Conduct.
- 1.4 As well as having the Code of Conduct, many authorities have separate guidance for councillors and co-opted members which goes into more detail on the matters that they should consider when offered gifts and/or hospitality.
- 1.5 In the circumstances, the opportunity has been taken to prepare a draft Protocol which will provide more detailed guidance to councillors and co-opted members in these circumstances.
- 1.6 The guidance covers the following areas:-
 - a. The scope of the Protocol i.e. its application to all councillors of East Devon District Council including co-opted members.
 - b. The fact that it does not apply to gifts from friends and family, including a definition of gifts and hospitality.
 - c. The types of gifts and hospitality that need to be declared.
 - d. Sets out what constitutes acceptable and prohibited gifts and hospitality.
 - e. The general considerations that Members should have regard to when deciding whether or not to accept gifts or hospitality.
 - f. The wording that can be used to respectfully decline gifts or hospitality.
 - g. The procedure for declaring gifts and hospitality.

h. Guidance as to whether gifts and hospitality below the £50 threshold should be declared in any event.

i. Reminds members that this Committee will oversee the Gifts and Hospitality register every six months.

j. That the Protocol will be reviewed every five years.

- 1.7 The protocol has been reviewed by the Standards Committee and their comments have been included in this new protocol.

2. Reasons for Recommendations/Decision

- 2.1 It is important that the Council's Constitution is regularly reviewed to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and meets the Council's requirements.

- 2.2 This report recommends the approval of a Councillors' Gifts and Hospitality Protocol which gives more detailed guidance to councillors (including co-opted members) on the appropriateness of accepting gifts and hospitality and the factors they should take into account when making a decision.

3. Options

- 3.1 As this is a requirement of legislation and the Council's Constitution no other options were considered.

4. Relevance to Council Plan/priorities

Set out how report links to the Council Plan/priorities:

- ☒ A supported and engaged community that has the right homes in the right places, with appropriate infrastructure.
- ☒ A sustainable environment that is moving towards carbon neutrality and which promotes ecological recovery.
- ☒ A vibrant and resilient economy that supports local business, provides local jobs and leads to a reduction in poverty and inequality.
- ☒ A well-managed, financially secure and continuously improving council that delivers quality services.

Having an up-to-date Constitution ensures the Council is able to support its Council Plan and priorities through the governance arrangements set out in the Constitution.

5. Financial Comments/Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report as the budget for special responsibility allowances and basic allowances is from within existing budgets.

6. Legal Comments/Implications

- 6.1 Under Section 9P of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council is required to prepare and keep up to date a Constitution containing the standing orders of the Council and such other information as is required or desirable.

7. Risk Implications

- 7.1 It is important that the Council keeps its Constitution up to date to reflect best practice and any changes in legislation.

8. Equality Implications (Public Sector Equality Duty)

- 8.1 No specific negative equalities implications have been identified with the proposals set out in the new Constitution. Decisions taken by the Council, in accordance with its Constitution, will consider equalities implications and have due regards to its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010. The arrangements for committee meetings will take full consideration of equalities and public accessibility requirements. An Equalities Impact Assessment is not considered necessary for this decision as there are no direct impacts.

9. HR and Workforce Implications

- 9.1 There are no HR and Workforce implications arising from the recommendations in the report.

10.2 Community Safety Implications (Crime and Disorder)

- 10.1 There are no Community Safety Implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

11. Climate Change Implications

- 11.1 There are no Climate Change implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

12. Health & Safety and Health & Wellbeing Implications

- 12.1 There are no public health, health and safety or health and wellbeing implications arising from the recommendations in this report.
- 12.2 There are no safeguarding issues that may arise from the recommendations in the report.

13. Procurement and Social Value implications

- 13.1 There are no procurement and social value implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

14. Land and Buildings (non-housing)/Asset Management Implications

14.1 There are no land and buildings/asset management implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

15. Overview and Scrutiny Committees Comments/Recommendations

15.1 N/A.

16. Digital and Data

16.1 N/A

17. Consultation and Engagement

17.1 Consultation on the proposals from the Constitution Working Group has been undertaken with the Group Leaders and the Standards Committee.

18. Communications

18.1 Subject to approval by full Council the Council's website will be updated.

19. Next Steps

19.1 To update the Council's website to reflect the recommendations arising from this report.

20. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Councillors' Gifts & Hospitality Protocol.

21. Background Papers

21.1 None.

APPENDIX A
East Devon District Council
Councillors' Gifts and Hospitality Protocol

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This protocol outlines the principles and procedures for the acceptance and registration of gifts and hospitality by councillors of East Devon District Council. It aims to ensure transparency, maintain public trust, and prevent any conflicts of interest.
- 1.2 The public are entitled to demand of councillors, conduct of a high standard. Public confidence in their integrity would be shaken were there the least suspicion that they could in any way be influenced by improper motives. It is a serious criminal offence for councillors to receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for doing or not doing anything or showing favour or disfavour to any person in an official capacity. If an allegation is made in such circumstances, it will be for the councillor to show that they have not in any way been influenced by improper motives. For this reason, it is important for the council to set clear guidance for all councillors.
- 1.3 This protocol is intended to assist councillors in making a decision as to whether a gift or hospitality can be accepted. Councillors are reminded that a breach of this guidance may result in a complaint against them to the Monitoring Officer.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This protocol applies to all councillors of East Devon District Council including co-opted members. It should be read in conjunction with the Members' Code of Conduct.
- 2.2 It only applies to your role as a councillor. You do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family. However, you should apply common sense when you consider how receipt of a gift might be interpreted. For example, if you are the chair of the planning committee and a birthday present arrives from a family friend who is also an applicant just before a planning application is due to be considered, then you need to think about how this would be interpreted by a reasonable member of the public.
- 2.3 Hospitality does not need to be registered where it is provided or reimbursed by the authority or where it is clearly ancillary to the business being conducted, such as an overnight stay for an external training event. Therefore, hospitality at a civic reception arranged by the council would not need to be registered. However, the hospitality should be registered if it is provided by a person or body other than the authority and is over and above what could reasonably be viewed as ancillary to the business conducted. You might meet dignitaries or business contacts in Council offices. **However, if such meetings take place in other venues, such as at cultural or sporting events, this should be registered as hospitality.**
- 2.4 Gifts that are clearly made to the Council, for example, a commemorative goblet which is kept on display in the Council's offices, do not need to be registered in the register of gifts and hospitality. However, such gifts should be recorded by the Council for audit purposes.

3. General Principles

- **Integrity and Honesty:** Councillors must act with integrity and honesty, avoiding any actions that could be perceived as improper.
- **Transparency:** All offers of gifts and hospitality, whether accepted or refused, with an estimated value of at least £50 or a number of gifts or hospitality from the same donor which individually are below the estimated threshold but which cumulatively result in an estimated value of at least £50 in any financial year, must be declared appropriately and recorded to maintain transparency.
- **Accountability:** Councillors are accountable for their actions and decisions regarding the acceptance of gifts and hospitality.

4. Definitions

- **Gift:** Any item or service received without payment or at a discount not available to the general public.
- **Hospitality:** Any form of entertainment, meals, or accommodation provided free of charge or at a reduced rate.

5. Acceptable Gifts and Hospitality

- 5.1 Gifts and hospitality up to an estimated value of £50 may be accepted without declaration. However, you should always consider whether it is appropriate to accept it and the presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality.
- 5.2 All other offers of gifts or hospitality of an estimated value of £50 or over must be declared and recorded.

6. Prohibited Gifts and Hospitality

- 6.1 Gifts or hospitality that could be perceived as an attempt to influence decision-making or secure preferential treatment must not be accepted.
- 6.2 Frequent or lavish gifts and hospitality from the same source must be avoided.
- 6.3 Gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on your part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the Council or from persons who may apply to the Council for any permission (e.g. planning permission), licence or other significant advantage.

7. General Considerations: Gifts

- 7.1 In general, gifts should be refused.
- 7.2 A gift must not be accepted if it is offered by a person or organisation which has, or is seeking business with, the Council or one who has an interest in a Council decision. Simply accepting gifts or hospitality and then registering it does not mean that it becomes reasonable in such circumstances.
- 7.3 In normal circumstances, only minor gifts of token value, should be accepted e.g. diaries, pens etc

8. General Considerations: Hospitality

- 8.1 The same principles which apply to gifts apply to the offer and acceptance of hospitality. Generally, offers of hospitality should be declined.
- 8.2 It must not be accepted when the offer of hospitality is made by any person or organisation seeking business or requiring a decision from the Council, or where purchasing decisions may be potentially compromised.
- 8.3 Exceptions to this general rule are few, but it may be in order to accept offers of hospitality if there is a genuine need to impart information or to represent the Council's wider interest in the community.
- 8.4 For example, if you have been invited as a ward councillor to a local festival along with other members of the community then it may be entirely appropriate to accept the hospitality. However, you should always exercise particular caution if the organisers are involved in ongoing negotiations with the Council on a particular matter.
- 8.5 It may also be necessary to participate in a working lunch in order to foster a good working relationship with other organisations. These are examples, therefore, where the acceptance of modest forms of hospitality is acceptable.
- 8.6 As with gifts, accepting an expensive meal from somebody who is negotiating for a contract with the Council, for example, is not 'made right' by being recorded on a public register.
- 8.7 The following should be considered when deciding whether or not to accept offers of hospitality:
- a) whether the nature of the hospitality is appropriate.
 - b) whether the scale of the hospitality is appropriate to the circumstance.
 - c) whether the hospitality is modest and can be considered as part of a normal councillor role to foster good relations.
 - d) whether the hospitality is offered by a person or organisation who is tendering or about to tender for Council business or submitting an application to the Council e.g. an application for planning permission or a licence.
 - e) whether it is more appropriate to bear the expense oneself.

9. Declining Gifts and Hospitality

9.1 If offers of hospitality are declined, those persons or organisations making the offer may be courteously informed of the procedures and standards operating within the Council with, if appropriate, the following or similar statement:

"Thank you for your kind offer of [insert details of gifts or hospitality]. Unfortunately, the Council has a clearly defined policy on receiving gifts and hospitality and I am therefore unable to accept."

10. Declaration and Registration

- 10.1 All offers of gifts and hospitality over the financial threshold in paragraph 5 must be declared within 28 calendar days of receipt.
- 10.2 Councillors must register offers (whether accepted or refused) with the Monitoring Officer (via Democratic Services) using the online form provided.
- 10.3 Councillors must also disclose the existence of any gift or hospitality at a Council meeting where the gift or hospitality received is relevant to the matter of business being discussed, irrespective of whether it has been registered with the Monitoring Officer.

11. Procedure for Declaring Offers of Gifts and Hospitality

- 11.1 **Complete the Declaration Form:** Councillors must complete the relevant online declaration form, providing details of the gift or hospitality offered, its estimated value,

identifying the person or organisation offering it, the circumstances of the offer and whether it was accepted. If you do not know the value, please estimate how much you think it is worth.

11.2 Submit the Form: Submit the completed form to the Monitoring Officer via Democratic Services using the online form.

11.3 Record Keeping: The Monitoring Officer will maintain a register of all declared gifts and hospitality indicating whether they were accepted or refused.

12. What about gifts or hospitality that fall below the threshold in the code?

12.1 Councillors should consider whether a gift or hospitality **offered** below the estimated value of £50 threshold should also be declared, for example:-

- You should always notify the Monitoring Officer of any gift or hospitality offered to you if it could be perceived as something offered to you because of your position, especially where the gift or hospitality is from somebody who has put in an application to the Council (or is about to) even where that gift or hospitality falls below the limit set. While that would not be a matter for the public register, it allows the Council to be aware of any patterns.
- Also, an accumulation of small gifts **or hospitality offered or that** you receive from the same source over a financial year that add up to a sum over the threshold should be registered in the interests of transparency and to ensure compliance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

13. Review and Monitoring

13.1 The register of gifts and hospitality will be reviewed every six months by the Standards Committee to ensure compliance with this protocol. The name of the councillor receiving the gift and details of the donor shall be disclosed.

13.2 Any breaches of this protocol may result in a complaint to the Monitoring Officer.

14. Training and Awareness

14.1 Regular training sessions will be provided to councillors to ensure understanding and compliance with this protocol.

14.2 This protocol will be included in the induction program for councillors.

15. Open Register

15.1 The Register of Gifts and Hospitality is a public register and details of offers declared will be published on the Council's website to ensure openness and transparency.

16. Review of Protocol

16.1 This protocol will be reviewed every five years to ensure it remains fit for purpose and compliant with any changes in legislation or best practice. **Date for review to be added.**



Report to: Council

Date of Meeting 15 October 2025

Heading/Title: Changes to the Constitution – Independent Remuneration Panel Terms of Reference

Cabinet Member(s): Communications and Democracy (Councillor Sarah Jackson)

Director/Assistant Director: Governance (Melanie Wellman)

Author and Directorate: Andrew Melhuish (Democratic Services Manager – Governance Directorate)

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Key decision No

If a Key Decision has it appeared on Forward Plan N/A

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Report Summary and Recommendations/Decision

The report includes an update on amendments to the Council's Constitution following a review of the Constitution by the Constitution Working Group.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution Full Council is responsible for the changes to the Constitution.

This is a new document proposed to be included in the Constitution to set out how the Independent Remuneration Panel operates, including its core functions and roles and responsibilities.

The Terms of Reference has been considered by the Constitution Working Group and it is recommended that Council approves them.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the 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 to the Terms of Reference prior to publication on the Council's website.

1. Background

Updating of the Constitution

- 1.1 The Constitution Working Group has been carrying out a phased review of key elements of the Constitution over a series of working group meetings.
- 1.2 The Constitution Working Group was set up in 2024 at Annual Council to review the Constitution. The Constitution Working Group is a cross-party membership consisting of:

Councillor Sarah Jackson (Chair & PFH for Communications & Democracy), Councillors Paul Arnott, John Loudoun, Tim Dumper, Mike Goodman, Jenny Brown, Mike Howe, Peter Faithfull and Kim Bloxham and officer support is provided by the Monitoring Officer and Democratic Services Team.
- 1.3 At present there is no guidance provided in the Constitution for the operation of the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 1.4 In the circumstances, the opportunity has been taken to prepare Terms of Reference for the Panel which will provide more detailed guidance to their operation.
- 1.5 The Terms of Reference covers the following areas:-
 - a. Functions of the Panel.
 - b. Role and Responsibilities of the Panel.
 - c. Panel Membership and Appointment.
 - d. Panel allowances.
 - e. Lead officer and support arrangements for the Panel.

2. Reasons for Recommendations/Decision

- 2.1 It is important that the Council's Constitution is regularly reviewed to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and meets the Council's requirements.
- 2.2 This report recommends the approval of the Terms of Reference for the Independent Remuneration Panel which gives guidance to panel members in the review of councillor allowances.

3. Options

- 3.1 As this is a requirement of legislation and the Council's Constitution no other options were considered.

4. Relevance to Council Plan/priorities

Set out how report links to the Council Plan/priorities:

- ☒ A supported and engaged community that has the right homes in the right places, with appropriate infrastructure.
- ☒ A sustainable environment that is moving towards carbon neutrality and which promotes ecological recovery.
- ☒ A vibrant and resilient economy that supports local business, provides local jobs and leads to a reduction in poverty and inequality.
- ☒ A well-managed, financially secure and continuously improving council that delivers quality services.

Having an up-to-date Constitution ensures the Council is able to support its Council Plan and priorities through the governance arrangements set out in the Constitution.

5. Financial Comments/Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report as the budget for allowances payable to Panel members is from within existing budgets.

6. Legal Comments/Implications

- 6.1 Under Section 9P of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council is required to prepare and keep up to date a Constitution containing the standing orders of the Council and such other information as is required or desirable.

7. Risk Implications

- 7.1 It is important that the Council keeps its Constitution up to date to reflect best practice and any changes in legislation.

8. Equality Implications (Public Sector Equality Duty)

- 8.1 No specific negative equalities implications have been identified with the proposals set out in the new Constitution. Decisions taken by the Council, in accordance with its Constitution, will consider equalities implications and have due regards to its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010. The arrangements for committee meetings will take full consideration of equalities and public accessibility requirements. An Equalities Impact Assessment is not considered necessary for this decision as there are no direct impacts.

9. HR and Workforce Implications

- 9.1 There are no HR and Workforce implications arising from the recommendations in the report.

10.2 Community Safety Implications (Crime and Disorder)

- 10.1 There are no Community Safety Implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

11. Climate Change Implications

- 11.1 There are no Climate Change implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

12. Health & Safety and Health & Wellbeing Implications

- 12.1 There are no public health, health and safety or health and wellbeing implications arising from the recommendations in this report.
- 12.2 There are no safeguarding issues that may arise from the recommendations in the report.

13. Procurement and Social Value implications

- 13.1 There are no procurement and social value implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

14. Land and Buildings (non-housing)/Asset Management Implications

- 14.1 There are no land and buildings/asset management implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

15. Overview and Scrutiny Committees Comments/Recommendations

- 15.1 N/A.

16. Digital and Data

- 16.1 N/A

17. Consultation and Engagement

- 17.1 Consultation on the proposals from the Constitution Working Group has been undertaken with the Group Leaders and the Standards Committee.

18. Communications

- 18.1 Subject to approval by full Council the Council's website will be updated.

19. Next Steps

- 19.1 To update the Council's website to reflect the recommendations arising from this report.

20. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference – Independent Remuneration Panel.

21. Background Papers

21.1 None.

Terms of Reference for East Devon District Council Independent Remuneration Panel

1. Function

- 1.1 Under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, Local Authorities must establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel. The purpose of the Panel is to make recommendations to the Local Authority about the allowances to be paid to Councillors.

2. Role and Responsibilities

- 2.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel ("IRP") shall advise and make its recommendations to East Devon District Council.
- 2.2 The Independent Remuneration Panel ("IRP") shall through the form of a report to East Devon District Council:
- (i) recommend to Council a Councillors' Allowances Scheme which sets out recommendations for: -
 - the amount of basic allowance that should be payable to elected councillors;
 - the roles, responsibilities and duties for which special responsibility allowances should be paid and the amounts for such allowances;
 - whether travelling and subsistence allowances should be paid and if so, the duties to which they should apply and the amount;
 - whether childcare and dependent carers' allowances should be paid and if so, the duties to which they should apply and the amount of these allowances and the means by which they are determined;
 - whether a basic allowance should be paid to co-opted members and if so, the amount;
 - whether, in the event that the scheme is amended at any time so as to affect an allowance payable for the year in which the amendment is made, payment of allowances may be backdated as permitted in law;
 - whether any annual adjustments of allowance levels may be made by reference to an index, and, if so, for how long such a measure should apply.
 - (ii) on a four yearly basis, or if otherwise requested, propose recommendations as to any required amendments to the Councillors' Allowances Scheme in relation to the following matters:
 - the amount of basic allowance that should be payable to elected councillors;
 - the roles, responsibilities and duties for which special responsibility allowances should be paid and the amounts for such allowances;
 - whether travelling and subsistence allowances should be paid and if so, the duties to which they should apply and the amount;
 - whether childcare and dependent carers' allowances should be paid and if so, the duties to which they should apply and the amount of these allowances and the means by which they are determined;

- whether a basic allowance should be paid to co-opted members and if so, the amount;
- whether, in the event that the scheme is amended at any time so as to affect an allowance payable for the year in which the amendment is made, payment of allowances may be backdated as permitted in law;
- whether any annual adjustments of allowance levels may be made by reference to an index, and, if so, for how long such a measure should apply.

2.2 In making its recommendations at paragraphs 2.1 (i) and (ii) above, the IRP shall undertake a full review of the Councillors' Allowance Scheme as well as obtaining the views of officers and councillors of the Council to which it relates and having regard to the following general principles:

- that councillors undertake their council work for the sake of public service and not private gain;
- the varying demands placed upon councillors, dependent upon their roles and responsibilities;
- the need to fairly and equitably compensate councillors, so far as the panel thinks appropriate, for the time and effort they can reasonably be expected to devote to their work as a councillor;
- the need for the scheme to be economic, efficient to administer and effective;
- the requirement for their report and recommended changes to the scheme of allowances to be easy to understand and adequately justifiable to the electorate;
- That recommendations should confirm with existing legislation and anticipate likely future legislation so far as possible.
- The Panel will also have regards to comparative data on the allowances paid by other similar local authorities.

2.3 The IRP shall be required in reporting its recommendations to include guidance on what is to be encompassed by each relevant allowance so as to ensure that the Councillors' Allowance Scheme is consistently applied.

3. Panel Membership and Appointment

3.1 The ("IRP") shall be comprised of up to 5 members of the public ("IRP Members").

3.2 IRP Members will be sought via advert in accordance with the Council's standard recruitment arrangements. Recruitment should be by public advertisement and direct approach to appropriate business and community/voluntary sector organisations who command local respect and public confidence and would be able to nominate persons who should have the necessary skills, integrity, independence and who are recognisable members of the local business and voluntary/community sectors within their respective areas.

3.3 As part of this a person specification shall be drawn up to ensure that candidates who are appointed:

- are able to demonstrate a high degree of personal integrity;
- are not members of any local authority and are not disqualified from being or becoming a member of a local authority;

- have, if possible, the appropriate level of skill, knowledge and understanding of setting remunerations;
 - have the necessary time and commitment for the role;
 - Are not affiliated to any political party – candidates must disclose the extent of their connections to a political party and whether these are such as to risk the effective discharge of the IRP's functions were the candidate to be appointed;
 - A knowledge of local government is preferable however a lack of familiarity will not be a bar to appointment.
- 3.4 IRP Members will be shortlisted, interviewed and appointed by the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with political group leaders.
- 3.5 The term of office of IRP Members will be four years in the first instance and a Panel Member may be reappointed for a further consecutive 4-year term. A Panel member shall not serve more than two terms – 8 years in total. The Council or its Standards Committee may remove an IRP Member in circumstances where:
- the IRP Member is disqualified from being a member of an authority or is found guilty of any conduct which brings the office into disrepute e.g. being found guilty of a criminal offence, an act of dishonesty or other serious misconduct; or
 - the IRP Member is considered to have demonstrated a serious lack of diligence or incompetence; or
 - the IRP Member becomes an elected or co-opted member (or an employee) of the authority.
- 3.6 The IRP shall:
- appoint its own Chair at the first meeting of each municipal year;
 - require a quorum of 3 at all meetings;
 - meet a minimum of once per municipal year with additional meetings convened as necessary;
 - Otherwise devise its own rules for the conduct of meetings in consultation with the Council's Monitoring Officer providing that they are consistent with legislative requirements and general good governance requirements.

4. Panel allowances

- 4.1 To reflect the valuable contributions and expertise a member of the Panel brings to this work an allowance of £400 is payable to each Panel member. Travel and subsistence allowances will be paid to IRP Members, at the rate approved by the Council annually within the limits determined by the Secretary of State.

5. Lead officer and support arrangements for the Panel

The Council's Monitoring Officer will be the lead officer and principal contact officer for the IRP. Democratic Services will provide support to the Panel.



Report to: Council

Date of Meeting 15 October 2025

Heading/Title: Changes to the Constitution – Codes & Protocols – Councillor Champions

Cabinet Member(s): Communications and Democracy (Councillor Sarah Jackson)

Director/Assistant Director: Governance (Melanie Wellman)

Author and Directorate: Andrew Melhuish (Democratic Services Manager – Governance Directorate)

Contact Details andrew.melhuish@eastdevon.gov.uk

Key decision No

If a Key Decision has it appeared on Forward Plan N/A

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Report Summary and Recommendations/Decision

The report includes an update on amendments to the Council's Constitution following a review of the Constitution by the Constitution Working Group.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution Full Council is responsible for the changes to the Constitution.

This part of the Constitution has been updated to include a list of current Councillor Champions following the addition of a Councillor Champion for Equality, Inclusion and Diversity. Minor changes have been made to include Councillor replacing Members.

The Councillor Champion Protocol has been considered by the Constitution Working Group and it is recommended that Council approves them.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Council:

1. Approves 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 publication on the Council's website.

1. Background

Updating of the Constitution

- 1.1 The Constitution Working Group has been carrying out a phased review of key elements of the Constitution over a series of working group meetings.
- 1.2 The Constitution Working Group was set up in 2024 at Annual Council to review the Constitution. The Constitution Working Group is a cross-party membership consisting of:

Councillor Sarah Jackson (Chair & PFH for Communications & Democracy), Councillors Paul Arnott, John Loudoun, Tim Dumper, Mike Goodman, Jenny Brown, Mike Howe, Peter Faithfull and Kim Bloxham and officer support is provided by the Monitoring Officer and Democratic Services Team.
- 1.3 This part of the Constitution has been updated to include a list of current Councillor Champions following the addition of a Councillor Champion for Equality, Inclusion and Diversity. Minor changes have been made to include Councillor replacing Members.
- 1.4 The revised Protocol is set out at Appendix A, with tracked changes.

2. Reasons for Recommendations/Decision

- 2.1 It is important that the Council's Constitution is regularly reviewed to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and meets the Council's requirements.
- 2.2 This report recommends the approval of the Councillor Champion Protocol which sets out the responsibilities, expectations and reporting requirements for Councillor Champions.

3. Options

- 3.1 As this is a requirement of legislation and the Council's Constitution no other options were considered.

4. Relevance to Council Plan/priorities

Set out how report links to the Council Plan/priorities:

- ☒ A supported and engaged community that has the right homes in the right places, with appropriate infrastructure.
- ☒ A sustainable environment that is moving towards carbon neutrality and which promotes ecological recovery.

- ☒ A vibrant and resilient economy that supports local business, provides local jobs and leads to a reduction in poverty and inequality.
- ☒ A well-managed, financially secure and continuously improving council that delivers quality services.

Having an up-to-date Constitution ensures the Council is able to support its Council Plan and priorities through the governance arrangements set out in the Constitution.

5. Financial Comments/Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report as the budget for allowances payable to Councillor Champions is from within existing budgets.

6. Legal Comments/Implications

- 6.1 Under Section 9P of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council is required to prepare and keep up to date a Constitution containing the standing orders of the Council and such other information as is required or desirable.

7. Risk Implications

- 7.1 It is important that the Council keeps its Constitution up to date to reflect best practice and any changes in legislation.

8. Equality Implications (Public Sector Equality Duty)

- 8.1 No specific negative equalities implications have been identified with the proposals set out in the new Constitution. Decisions taken by the Council, in accordance with its Constitution, will consider equalities implications and have due regards to its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010. The arrangements for committee meetings will take full consideration of equalities and public accessibility requirements. An Equalities Impact Assessment is not considered necessary for this decision as there are no direct impacts.

9. HR and Workforce Implications

- 9.1 There are no HR and Workforce implications arising from the recommendations in the report.

10.2 Community Safety Implications (Crime and Disorder)

- 10.1 There are no Community Safety Implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

11. Climate Change Implications

- 11.1 There are no Climate Change implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

12. Health & Safety and Health & Wellbeing Implications

- 12.1 There are no public health, health and safety or health and wellbeing implications arising from the recommendations in this report.
- 12.2 There are no safeguarding issues that may arise from the recommendations in the report.

13. Procurement and Social Value implications

- 13.1 There are no procurement and social value implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

14. Land and Buildings (non-housing)/Asset Management Implications

- 14.1 There are no land and buildings/asset management implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

15. Overview and Scrutiny Committees Comments/Recommendations

- 15.1 N/A.

16. Digital and Data

- 16.1 N/A

17. Consultation and Engagement

- 17.1 Consultation on the proposals from the Constitution Working Group has been undertaken with the Group Leaders and the Standards Committee.

18. Communications

- 18.1 Subject to approval by full Council the Council's website will be updated.

19. Next Steps

- 19.1 To update the Council's website to reflect the recommendations arising from this report.

20. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Codes & Protocols: Councillor Champions

21. Background Papers

- 21.1 None.

APPENDIX 1

Part 5 Codes and Protocols

5.6 ~~Member Councillor~~ Champion Protocol

1 Introduction

- 1.1 ~~Member Councillor~~ Champions exist to provide a voice for traditionally underrepresented groups, or issues which need to be kept at the forefront of council business although they may not be the responsibility of any individual or committee and / or which may cross a number of different areas.
- 1.2 ~~Member Councillor~~ Champions are elected councillors (but not a Cabinet Member / Assistant Portfolio Holder) who will seek to make sure that their area of interest is taken into account when Council policy is being developed and decisions taken.
- 1.3 Council, on the advice of Cabinet, will decide on what areas of interest to have ~~Member Councillor~~ Champions for and who the appointees shall be. Appointments will be made at Annual Council and while changes can be made each year the expectation is that appointees will be appointed for a minimum of 2 years to ensure continuity in the role.

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1 Within the context of the powers of the Council and having regard to the Council's overall corporate priorities, the ~~Member Councillor~~ Champion will:
 - 2.1.1 Make sure that their area of interest is taken into account when the Council is developing policy or making decisions and exert influence in that regard.
 - 2.1.2 Act as a catalyst for change and improvement including working with national and local initiatives relevant to their area.
 - 2.1.3 Ask questions about performance and resourcing for their area.
 - 2.1.4 Raise the profile of their area within, and outside, the Council.
 - 2.1.5 Promote good practice within the Council and make the authority aware of good practice from elsewhere.
 - 2.1.6 Engage with, and exert influence on, external partners and bodies who work in the area including sharing good practice where appropriate.
 - 2.1.7 Engage with other councillors, officers and community groups who have an interest / stake in the area.
 - 2.1.8 Keep up-to-date with all relevant matters connected with the area and pursue relevant personal development and training opportunities.

3. Mutual Expectations

- 3.1 The Council is empowering a ~~Member Councillor~~ Champion and therefore will put in place such arrangements as it considers appropriate to support the ~~Member Councillor~~ Champion – this includes access to information held by the Council relating to their area and access to a reasonable amount of Officer resources (provided work priority of Officers

is not prejudiced).

3.2 The Council expects ~~Member Councillor~~ Champions to act reasonably when carrying out their role and recognise, and work effectively within, the political management and corporate working arrangements of the Council.

3.3 A ~~Member Councillor~~ Champion cannot take decisions. Otherwise the ~~Member Councillor~~ Champion may take all reasonable actions judged by the councillor as being necessary to perform their role including engaging with the media to confirm a Council position as stated in published policy or expressing a personal view in their capacity as the ~~Member Councillor~~ Champion.

4. Reporting

4.1 ~~Member Councillor~~ Champions shall provide a written report to Annual Council on work achieved during the year and identifying priorities for the future.

5. Current ~~Member Councillor~~ Champions

- Armed Forces Covenant
- Arts & Culture
- Mental Health
- Safeguarding
- Sports & Leisure
- Equality, Inclusion & Diversity



Report to: Council

Date of Meeting 15 October 2025

Heading/Title: Changes to the Constitution – Codes & Protocols –
Councillor/Officer Protocol

Cabinet Member(s): Communications and Democracy (Councillor Sarah Jackson)

Director/Assistant Director: Governance (Melanie Wellman)

Author and Directorate: Andrew Melhuish (Democratic Services Manager – Governance Directorate)

Contact Details andrew.melhuish@eastdevon.gov.uk

Key decision No

If a Key Decision has it appeared on Forward Plan N/A

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Report Summary and Recommendations/Decision

The report includes an update on amendments to the Council's Constitution following a review of the Constitution by the Constitution Working Group.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution Full Council is responsible for the changes to the Constitution.

Following recommendations of our External Auditors and feedback from the Peer Challenge team and the Centre for Public Scrutiny, the opportunity has been taken to redraft the Council's Councillor/Officer Relations Protocol to ensure that it complies with best practice and is up-to-date. The Protocol explains the roles of Councillors and Officers and sets out how they should work together and if any issues arise, to whom those issues should be reported.

The Protocol for Councillor/Officer Relations has been considered by the Constitution Working Group and it is recommended that Council approves them.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Council:

1. Approves the Codes & 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 Councillor Champion protocol prior to publication on the Council's website.

1. Background

Updating of the Constitution

- 1.1 The Constitution Working Group has been carrying out a phased review of key elements of the Constitution over a series of working group meetings.
- 1.2 The Constitution Working Group was set up in 2024 at Annual Council to review the Constitution. The Constitution Working Group is a cross-party membership consisting of:

Councillor Sarah Jackson (Chair & PFH for Communications & Democracy), Councillors Paul Arnott, John Loudoun, Tim Dumper, Mike Goodman, Jenny Brown, Mike Howe, Peter Faithfull and Kim Bloxham and officer support is provided by the Monitoring Officer and Democratic Services Team.
- 1.3 The Protocol is a key document in the Constitution which explains how Councillors and Officers are indispensable to one another and how together they bring the critical skills, experience and knowledge required to manage an effective local authority. It explains how at the heart of this relationship is mutual respect and that councillor-officer relationships should be conducted in a positive and constructive way.
- 1.4 The Protocol clarifies what Councillors can expect of officers and what officers can expect of Councillors. It talks about the relationship in general and the need for relationships to be conducted in a positive and constructive way. It also requires Councillors and officers to be open and transparent about any family relationships that they have by disclosing them to the Chief Executive.
- 1.5 Officer advice to Party Groups is covered in the Protocol and the manner in which such advice should be given, touching on issues such as advice in relation to budget proposals. It also clarifies the support provided to Councillors and party groups.
- 1.6 A key element of the Protocol is access to information and the ability of a Councillor to inspect Council documents. It specifically refers to the "need to know" principle which is about the right for Councillors to inspect Council documents, so far as their access to documents is reasonably necessary to enable them to properly perform their duties as a Councillor.
- 1.7 The Protocol also covers some key relationships such as the relationship between an officer and Cabinet member and Chairs of Committees, between the Leader and senior officers, Cabinet Councillors and officers, Leader of the

opposition and officers, Scrutiny Councillors and officers. Conduct at meetings of the Council and how officers and Councillors should address each other is also covered.

- 1.8 The Protocol also details the process for the issuing of Press releases, the appropriateness of Councillors and officers forming friendships on social media and correspondence between officers and Councillors. It reinforces the need to involve ward Councillors in external events and whenever the Council is consulting on an issue in their ward.
- 1.9 Finally, the Protocol sets out the procedure for reporting breaches of the Protocol which is to the Monitoring Officer in relation to Councillor complaints and to the line manager in relation to officer complaints.
- 1.10 The Protocol is set out at Appendix A.

2. Reasons for Recommendations/Decision

- 2.1 It is important that the Council's Constitution is regularly reviewed to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and meets the Council's requirements.
- 2.2 This report recommends the approval of the Protocol for Councillor/Officer Relations.

3. Options

- 3.1 As this is a requirement of legislation and the Council's Constitution no other options were considered.

4. Relevance to Council Plan/priorities

Set out how report links to the Council Plan/priorities:

- ☒ A supported and engaged community that has the right homes in the right places, with appropriate infrastructure.
- ☒ A sustainable environment that is moving towards carbon neutrality and which promotes ecological recovery.
- ☒ A vibrant and resilient economy that supports local business, provides local jobs and leads to a reduction in poverty and inequality.
- ☒ A well-managed, financially secure and continuously improving council that delivers quality services.

Having an up-to-date Constitution ensures the Council is able to support its Council Plan and priorities through the governance arrangements set out in the Constitution.

5. Financial Comments/Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report as the budget for allowances payable to Councillor Champions is from within existing budgets.

6. Legal Comments/Implications

- 6.1 Under Section 9P of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council is required to prepare and keep up to date a Constitution containing the standing orders of the Council and such other information as is required or desirable.

7. Risk Implications

- 7.1 It is important that the Council keeps its Constitution up to date to reflect best practice and any changes in legislation.

8. Equality Implications (Public Sector Equality Duty)

- 8.1 No specific negative equalities implications have been identified with the proposals set out in the new Constitution. Decisions taken by the Council, in accordance with its Constitution, will consider equalities implications and have due regards to its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010. The arrangements for committee meetings will take full consideration of equalities and public accessibility requirements. An Equalities Impact Assessment is not considered necessary for this decision as there are no direct impacts.

9. HR and Workforce Implications

- 9.1 There are no HR and Workforce implications arising from the recommendations in the report.

10.2 Community Safety Implications (Crime and Disorder)

- 10.1 There are no Community Safety Implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

11. Climate Change Implications

- 11.1 There are no Climate Change implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

12. Health & Safety and Health & Wellbeing Implications

- 12.1 There are no public health, health and safety or health and wellbeing implications arising from the recommendations in this report.
- 12.2 There are no safeguarding issues that may arise from the recommendations in the report.

13. Procurement and Social Value implications

- 13.1 There are no procurement and social value implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

14. Land and Buildings (non-housing)/Asset Management Implications

14.1 There are no land and buildings/asset management implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

15. Overview and Scrutiny Committees Comments/Recommendations

15.1 N/A.

16. Digital and Data

16.1 N/A

17. Consultation and Engagement

17.1 Consultation on the proposals from the Constitution Working Group has been undertaken with the Group Leaders and the Standards Committee.

18. Communications

18.1 Subject to approval by full Council the Council's website will be updated.

19. Next Steps

19.1 To update the Council's website to reflect the recommendations arising from this report.

20. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Codes & Protocols: Councillor/Officer Relations

21. Background Papers

21.1 None.

APPENDIX 1

PROTOCOL FOR COUNCILLOR / OFFICER RELATIONS

Content:

1. Introduction
2. Councillors
3. Officers
4. The Relationship: General
5. Family Relationships
6. Officer advice to Party Groups
7. Provision of Support Services to Councillors and Party Groups
8. Councillors' Access to Information and to Council Documents
9. Officer – Executive/Chair Relationships
10. Specific Councillor Roles / Officer Relationships
11. Conduct at meetings
12. Press and Media
13. Correspondence
14. Involvement of local County Councillors
15. Elections
16. Breaches of this Protocol
17. Monitoring, Review and Further Advice

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this Protocol is to guide Councillors and Officers of the Council in their relations with one another. The Protocol's intention is to build and maintain good working relationships between Councillors and Officers as they work together.
- 1.2 A strong, constructive, and trusting relationship between Councillors and Officers is essential to the effective and efficient working of the Council.
- 1.3 This Protocol also seeks to reflect the principles underlying the respective Codes of Conduct which apply to Councillors and Officers. The shared object of these Codes is to enhance and maintain the integrity of Local Government and they therefore demand very high standards of personal conduct.
- 1.4 The following extract from the Local Government Association ("LGA") guidance on the 2020 Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct states that:

"Both Councillors and officers are servants of the public and are indispensable to one another. Together, they bring the critical skills, experience and knowledge required to manage an effective local authority.

At the heart of this relationship, is the importance of mutual respect. Councillor-officer relationships should be conducted in a positive and constructive way. Therefore, it is important that any dealings between Councillors and officers should observe reasonable standards of courtesy, should show mutual appreciation of the importance of their respective roles and that neither party should seek to take unfair advantage of their position or seek to exert undue influence on the other party.

Councillors provide a democratic mandate to the local authority and are responsible to the electorate whom they represent. They set their local authority's policy framework, ensure that services and policies are delivered and scrutinise local authority services.

Councillors of the Cabinet, chairs and vice chairs of committees have additional responsibilities. These responsibilities will result in increased expectations and relationships with officers that are more complex. Such Councillors must still respect the impartiality of officers and must not ask them to undertake work of a party-political nature or compromise their position with other Councillors or other officers.

Officers provide the professional advice and managerial expertise and information needed for decision making by Councillors and to deliver the policy framework agreed by Councillors. They are responsible for

implementing decisions of Councillors and the day-to-day administration of the local authority.

The roles are very different but need to work in a complementary way.

It is important for both sides to respect these differences and ensure that they work in harmony. Getting that relationship right is an important skill. That is why the code requires Councillors to respect an officer's impartiality and professional expertise. In turn officers should respect a Councillor's democratic mandate as the people accountable to the public for the work of the local authority.

- 1.5 The provisions of this Protocol are designed to complement the LGA Guidance and LGA Model Code of Conduct and will be interpreted having regard to the requirements of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, the Officers' Code of Conduct, the Council's Whistleblowing Policy and the Council's policies, procedures and processes.
- 1.6 This Protocol sets out how the relationship works and what both Councillors and Officers can expect in terms of mutual respect and good working relationships. It also covers who they should go to if they have concerns and who is responsible for making decisions.
- 1.7 Definitions in this document:
 - a) Councillors: refers to elected or co-opted Councillors
 - b) Chief Executive: refers to the Council's Chief Executive
 - c) Director: refers to officer(s) reporting directly to the Chief Executive
 - d) Senior Officer: refers to members of the Council's Senior Leadership team consisting of the Chief Executive, Directors, Assistant Directors and Service Leads
 - e) Officers: refers to officers employed by the Council
 - f) Administration: refers to the ruling political group on the Council.
 - g) Opposition Group: refers to the largest political group in opposition on the Council.
 - h) Party Group: refers to a political group or grouping of Councillors
- 1.8 This Protocol is intended to assist Councillors and Officers, in approaching some of the sensitive circumstances which arise in a challenging working environment. The reputation and integrity of the council is significantly influenced by the effectiveness of Councillors and Officers working together to support each other's roles and to deliver a one Council approach. The aim is effective and professional working relationships characterised by mutual trust, respect and courtesy.
- 1.9 Mutual respect between Councillors and Officers is essential to good Local Government. Overly close personal familiarity between individual Councillors and Officers can damage this relationship and can be perceived as inappropriate or favouritism by the public or other Councillors and Officers. It is

important none the less for Councillors and Officers to establish good working relationships.

- 1.10 It is also important that any dealings between Councillors and Officers should observe reasonable standards of courtesy and that neither party should seek to take unfair advantage of their position.

2. Councillors

- 2.1 In line with the Councillors' Code of Conduct, a Councillor must treat everyone with respect, must not bully or harass people and must not do anything which compromises, or is likely to compromise, the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the Council.

2.2 Officers can expect Councillors:

- a) to give leadership and direction and to seek to further their agreed policies and objectives;
- b) to take an appropriate decision based on advice;
- c) to act within the policies, practices, processes and procedures established by the Council;
- d) to work constructively in partnership with Officers acknowledging their separate and distinct roles and responsibilities;
- e) to understand and support the respective roles and responsibilities of Officers and their associated workloads, pressures and reporting lines;
- f) to treat them fairly and with respect, dignity and courtesy;
- g) to act with integrity, to give support and to respect appropriate confidentiality;
- h) to recognise that Officers work to the instructions of their Senior Officers and not to individual Councillors or Political Groups;
- i) not to subject them to intimidation, harassment, or put them under undue pressure. Councillors will have regard to the seniority of Officers in determining what are reasonable requests, having regard to the relationship between the Councillor and Officer, and the potential vulnerability of Officers, particularly at junior levels;
- j) not to request Officers to exercise their discretion in a way that involves acting outside the Council's policies and procedures;
- k) not to authorise, initiate, or certify any financial transactions or to enter into any contract, agreement or undertaking on behalf of the Council or in their role as a Councillor without proper and lawful authority and in compliance with the Scheme of Delegation;
- l) not to use their position or relationship with Officers to advance their personal interest or those of others or to influence decisions improperly;
- m) to comply at all times with the Councillors' Code of Conduct, the law, the Constitution and such other policies, procedures, protocols and procedures agreed by the Council.

2.3 It is important that Councillors:

- i. respect the impartiality of Officers and do not undermine their role in carrying out their duties;
- ii. do not ask Officers to undertake work, or act in a way, which seeks to support or benefit a particular political party or gives rise to an Officer being criticised for operating in a party-political manner;
- iii. do not ask Officers to exceed their authority where that authority is given to them in law, by the Council or by their Senior Officers.

2.4 The Head of Paid Service, the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Finance (section 151) Officer have specific responsibilities placed on them by law. These responsibilities go beyond their obligations as employees of the Council. Where an Officer is discharging their responsibilities under any statutory office Councillors shall not:

- a) improperly interfere with or obstruct the Officer in exercising those responsibilities
- b) victimise any Officer who is discharging or has discharged their responsibilities of Statutory Office
- c) compromise or attempt to compromise their impartiality and must allow them to carry out their duties in a neutral, non-biased and non-partisan way.

3. Officers

3.1 In line with the Officers' Code of Conduct, an Officer must treat everyone with respect and must not bully or harass anyone.

3.2 The primary role of Officers is to advise, inform and support all Councillors and to implement the lawfully agreed policies of the Council.

3.3 Officers are responsible for day-to-day managerial and operational decisions within the Council. Councillors should avoid inappropriate involvement in such matters.

3.4 In performing their role Officers will act professionally, impartially and with political neutrality. Whilst Officers will respect a Councillor's view on an issue, the Officer should not be influenced or pressured to make comments, or recommendations which are contrary to their professional judgement or views.

3.5 Officers must:

1. implement decisions of the Council and its Committees which are lawful, which have been properly approved in accordance with the requirements of the law and the Council's Constitution and are duly recorded.
2. work in partnership with Councillors in an impartial, constructive and

professional manner

3. treat Councillors fairly and with respect, dignity and courtesy.
4. assist and advise all parts of the Council. Officers must always act to the best of their abilities in the best interests of the authority as expressed in the Council's formal decisions.
5. respond to enquiries and complaints in accordance with the Council's procedures.
6. be alert to issues which are, or are likely to be, contentious or politically sensitive, and be aware of the implications for Councillors, the media or other sections of the public.
7. if a safeguarding issue arises, ensure it is dealt with in accordance with the Councils' Safeguarding Policy
8. act with honesty, respect, dignity and courtesy at all times.
9. provide support and learning and development opportunities for Councillors to help them in performing their various roles.
10. not seek to use their relationship with Councillors to advance their personal interests or to influence decisions improperly.
11. comply, at all times, with the Officer Code of Conduct, and such other Policies or procedures approved by the Authority.
12. Officers have the right not to support Councillors in any role other than that of Councillor, and not to engage in actions incompatible with this Protocol. In particular, there is a statutory limitation on Officers' involvement in political activities.

4. The Relationship: General

- 4.1 Councillors and Officers are indispensable to one another. However, their responsibilities are distinct. Councillors are accountable to the public, whereas Officers are accountable to the Council as a whole.
- 4.2 At the heart of the Codes, and this Protocol, is the importance of mutual confidence and trust and also of civility. Councillor/Officer relationships are to be conducted in a positive and constructive way. Therefore, it is important that any dealings between Councillors and Officers should observe standards of courtesy and that neither party should seek to take unfair advantage of their position nor seek to exert undue influence on the other party. It is also important that such dealings take place only when Councillors and Officers are acting in their official capacity. It is important that both parties respect the other's free time.
- 4.3 Councillors should not raise matters relating to the conduct or capability of an Officer, or of Officers collectively, in a manner that is incompatible with this Protocol at meetings held in public, on social media or in the press.

Officers do not necessarily have the same right of reply to such comments as Councillors do and Councillors should take care not to abuse or exploit this imbalance.

4.4 A Councillor who is unhappy about the actions taken by, or conduct of, an officer should:

1. avoid personal attacks on, or abuse of, the officer at all times
2. ensure that any criticism is well founded and constructive
3. ensure that any criticism is made in private
4. take up the concern with the appropriate Senior Officer
5. If the matter is of a particularly serious nature inform the Chief Executive.

4.5 Neither should an Officer raise with a Councillor matters relating to the conduct or capability of another Officer or to the internal management of the service in a manner that is incompatible with the objectives of this Protocol.

4.6 Potential breaches of this Protocol are considered at paragraph 15 below.

5. Family and other Personal relationships

5.1 Any family relationships between Councillors and Officers (e.g., parent/child, spouse/partner) must be disclosed as soon as reasonably practicable to the Monitoring Officer who will then decide how far this needs to be disclosed to others.

5.2 A Councillor should not take up a decision-making role where it would give them decision-making responsibility for any Officer to whom they are related so as to avoid any perceptions or accusations of preferential treatment or a lack of objectivity.

5.3 Personal familiarity can also affect the relationship between Councillors and Officers, as might a business connection. They should therefore inform the Monitoring Officer of any other relationship which might be seen as unduly influencing their work or their respective roles.

5.4 If a Councillor or Officer is in any doubt about what is appropriate or not in relation to 5.1, 5.2 or 5.3 above, then they should seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer.

6. Officer Advice to Party Groups

- 6.1 There is statutory recognition for party groups and it is common practice for such Party Groups to give preliminary consideration to matters of Council business in advance of such matters being considered by the relevant Council decision making body. Officers may properly be called upon to support and contribute to such considerations.
- 6.2 The support provided by Officers can take many forms, ranging from a briefing meeting with a member of the Cabinet or Chair prior to a Committee meeting, to a presentation to a full Party Group meeting. Whilst in practice such Officer support is likely to be in most demand from the Administration, such support is available to all Party Groups.
- 6.3 If an individual Councillor is not in a Party Group, advice is still available.
- 6.4 Any requests for advice or attendance are to be directed through the Group Leaders, Cabinet Members or Chairs for the relevant Committee. The request shall be made to the relevant Senior Officer or, in their absence, to their deputy or the next appropriate lower tier Officer. An Officer accepting an invitation to one Political Group or individual will not decline an invitation to advise another Political Group or individual on the same subject. However, the Officer is not obliged to offer to advise another Political Group on the same subject.
- 6.5 Certain points must however be clearly understood by all those participating in this type of process, Councillors and Officers alike. In particular:
- (i) Officer support in these circumstances must not extend beyond providing information and advice in relation to matters of Council business. Officers must not be involved in advising on matters of party business should not be present at meetings, or parts of meetings, when matters of party business are to be discussed;
 - (ii) Party Group Meetings, whilst they form part of the preliminaries to Council decision making, are not empowered to make decisions on behalf of the Council. Conclusions reached at such meetings do not therefore rank as Council decisions and it is essential that they are not interpreted or acted upon as such, particularly having regard to the risk of challenge on the grounds of pre-determination;
 - (iii) The presence of an Officer confers no formal status on such meetings in terms of Council business and must not be interpreted as doing so;
 - (iv) Similarly, where Officers provide information and advice to a Party Group meeting in relation to a matter of Council business, this cannot act as a

substitute for providing all necessary information and advice to the relevant Council meeting, Committee or Sub-Committee when the matter in question is considered.

6.6 In relation to budget proposals;

(a) The Administration shall be entitled to confidential discussions with Officers regarding options and proposals. These will remain confidential until determined by the Administration or until published in advance of the Executive /Council meetings, whichever is the earlier;

(b) The opposition groups shall be entitled to confidential discussions with officers to enable them to formulate alternative budget proposals. These will remain confidential until determined by the respective opposition groups or until published in advance of Cabinet/Council meetings, whichever is the earlier.

6.7 Where Officers attend a Party Group meeting, only Councillors of the Council should be present.

6.8 Officers must respect the confidentiality of any party group discussions at which they are present in the sense that they should not relay the content of any such discussion to another party group, unless agreed otherwise.

6.9 Any particular cases of difficulty or uncertainty in this area of Officer advice to party groups should be raised with the Chief Executive who will discuss them with the relevant group leader(s).

7 Provision of Support Services to Councillors and Party Groups

7.1 Officers provide support services and resources to Councillors as agreed by the Council to enable them to undertake their various roles. This includes the provision of direct Personal Assistant support to the Leader and Chair of Council which is provided on a part-time basis.

7.2 The only basis on which the Council can lawfully provide support services (e.g., stationery, typing, printing, photocopying, transport, etc.) to Councillors is to assist them in discharging their role as Councillors of the Council. Such support services and associated resources must therefore only be used on Council business. They should never be used in connection with party political or campaigning activity or for private (including business) purposes.

8 Councillors' Access to Information and to Council Documents

- 8.1 Councillors are free to approach any service area of the Council to provide them with such information, explanation and advice (about the service area's functions) as they may reasonably need in order to assist them in discharging their role as Councillors. This can range from a request for general information about some aspect of a service areas activities to a request for specific information on behalf of a constituent. Such approaches should normally be directed to the Senior Officer for the service area concerned.
- 8.2 As regards the legal rights of Councillors to inspect Council documents, these are covered partly by statute and partly by the common law.
- 8.3 Councillors have a statutory right to inspect any Council document which contains material relating to any business which is to be transacted at a Council, Committee or Sub-Committee meeting. This right applies irrespective of whether the Councillor sits on the Committee or Sub-Committee concerned and extends not only to reports which are to be submitted to the meeting, but also to any relevant background papers. This right does not, however, apply to documents relating to certain items which may appear in Part II (exempt) of the Agenda for meetings. Further details are contained in the Access to Information Procedure Rules in the Council's Constitution. Examples are documents that contain exempt information relating to employees, occupiers of Council property, applicants for grants and other services, contract and industrial relations negotiations, advice from Counsel and criminal investigations.
- 8.4 The common law right of Councillors is much broader and is based on the principle that any Councillor has a prima facie right to inspect Council documents so far as their access to the documents is reasonably necessary to enable the Councillor properly to perform their duties as a Councillor of the Council. This principle is commonly referred to as the "need to know" principle.
- 8.5 The exercise of this common law right depends therefore upon the Councillor's ability to demonstrate that they have the necessary "need to know". In this respect a Councillor has no right to "a roving commission" to go and examine documents of the Council. Mere curiosity is not sufficient. The crucial question is the determination of the "need to know". This question must be determined by the particular Director who holds the document in question (with advice from the Monitoring Officer).
- 8.6 In some circumstances (e.g. a Committee Member wishing to inspect documents relating to the functions of that Committee) a Councillor's "need to know" will normally be presumed. In other circumstances (e.g. a Councillor wishing to inspect documents which contain personal information about third parties) a Councillor will normally be expected to justify the

request in specific terms.

- 8.7 Whilst the term “Council document” is very broad and includes, for example, any document produced with Council resources, it is accepted by convention that a Councillor of one party group will not have a “need to know”, and therefore a right to inspect, a document which forms part of the internal workings of another party group.
- 8.8 Councillors are expected to give reasonable notice of requests for information and to have regard to the cost of producing detailed information.
- 8.9 Further and more detailed advice regarding Councillors’ rights to inspect Council documents may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer.
- 8.10 Finally, any Council information provided to a Councillor must only be used by the Councillor for the purpose for which it was provided i.e. in connection with the proper performance of the Councillor’s duties as a Councillor of the Council, and appropriate confidentiality maintained.
- 8.11 For completeness, Councillors do, of course, have the same right as any other Councillor of the public to make requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

9. Officer – Cabinet Member/Chair Relationships

- 9.1 It is clearly important that there should be a close working relationship between the relevant Cabinet Member or Chair of a Committee and the Senior Officers who support that Portfolio or Committee. However, such relationships should never be allowed to become so close, or appear to be so close, as to bring into question the Officers’ ability to deal impartially with other Councillors and other party groups.
- 9.2 Under the Constitution, individual Members of the Cabinet may, in some situations, take decisions. The Council has put in place mechanisms to ensure that the individual Cabinet Member seeks advice from relevant Councillors and Officers before making a decision within their delegated authority. This includes taking legal advice, financial advice and professional officer advice.
- 9.3 The Council’s delegation scheme and resolutions passed at Cabinet or Committee meetings may authorise a named Officer to take action, sometimes in consultation with one or more Councillors such as the Cabinet Member or Chair and Vice-Chair of a Committee. In these circumstances it is the Officer, rather than the Councillor, who takes the decision or action and it is the Officer who is accountable for it.

- 9.4 Finally, it must be remembered that Officers within a service are accountable to their Senior Officer and that, whilst Officers should always seek to assist a Cabinet Member or Chair (or indeed any Councillor) they must not, in so doing, go beyond the bounds of whatever authority they have been given by their Senior Officer.

10. Specific Councillor Roles / Officer Relationships

10.1 Leader & Chief Executive / Senior Officers

10.1.1 The Leader represents the Council and provides direction and leadership. The role encompasses:

- i. Setting standards of conduct and expectations for their Party Group and resolving any instances of misconduct by a Councillor of that group.
- ii. Appointing their Cabinet and Assistant Portfolio Holders and allocating responsibilities to Cabinet Members and Officers under the Cabinet Scheme of Delegation.
- iii. Encouraging all Councillors to play a full part in the running of the Council and being effective representatives.
- iv. giving political direction and leadership to their group of Councillors, setting standards of conduct and expectations and resolving any instances of misconduct by a Councillor of that group referred to him/her by the Standards Committee / Hearing Sub-Committee;
- v. liaising with the leaders of other Political Groups on the Council.
- vi. Working closely with the Chief Executive to ensure proper coordination of the Council's leadership and management. The Leader and Chief Executive have ultimate responsibility for the corporate working of the Council. They also have responsibility for ensuring that overall partnership working is effective.

10.1.2. The Chief Executive is responsible for the day to day running and management of the organisation working through the Leader, Deputy Leader and Chair of Council.

10.1.3. The Council will provide sufficient support and resources to enable the Leader to perform their role effectively.

10.2 Cabinet Members and Officers

10.2.1 Cabinet Members will develop the expertise, knowledge of and responsibility for the service(s) allocated to them by the Leader. This includes taking decisions delegated to them by the Leader within the Cabinet Scheme of Delegation. The nature of this role means that Cabinet Members will work

closely with their relevant Senior Officer(s) particularly on policy development, decision-making, service delivery and performance issues.

10.2.2 For their area of responsibility, the Cabinet Member provides political focus and leadership for their Political Group and is the lead spokesperson and 'first' political contact for opposition group spokespersons, other Councillors of Council, the public, press and Officers.

10.2.3 The Council will provide sufficient support and resources to enable the Cabinet Member to perform their role effectively.

10.3 Leader of the Opposition and Officers

10.3.1 The Leader of the Party Group in main opposition on the Council has several key roles including:

- i. Setting standards of conduct and expectations for their Party Group and resolving any instances of misconduct by a Councillor of that group
- ii. supporting the democratic process by ensuring that the activities of the Administration are appropriately examined, contributed to and, where considered necessary, challenged through mechanisms provided for in law and within the Constitution;
- iii. bringing forward alternatives to policies or operational decisions proposed by the Administration, as appropriate;
- iv. giving political direction and leadership to their group of Councillors, setting standards of conduct and expectations and resolving any instances of misconduct by a Councillor of that group referred to him/her by the Standards Committee / Hearing Sub-Committee;
- v. liaising with the leaders of other Political Groups on the Council.

10.3.2 The office-holder should establish effective working relationships with particularly the Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team and other Officers, as appropriate.

10.3.3 The Chair of Council will provide appropriate support, resources and advice to enable the office-holder to perform their role effectively.

10.3.4 In addition, other minority Group Leaders will play a similar role as set out above in respect of the Councillors of their own groups.

10.4 Scrutiny Members and Officers

10.4.1 Councillors of the three Scrutiny Committees, Overview, Scrutiny and Housing Review Board, shall:

- i. obtain the advice of the Monitoring Officer where they consider there is doubt about the vires for a decision or they consider a decision of the Leader, Cabinet, Cabinet Member or an Officer might be outside the

policy and / or budget framework.

- ii. when considering calling Officers to give evidence, consult the relevant Senior Officer to identify as to the most appropriate Officer to attend.
- iii. when asking Officers to give evidence, confine questions, so far as possible, to questions of fact and explanation relating to policies and decisions. Officers may be asked to give a professional opinion, but Officers must not be asked questions relating to political views.
- iv. where they consider it appropriate, ask Officers to explain and justify advice given to Councillors prior to decisions being taken and justify decisions they themselves have taken under the Council's Constitution.
- v. not question Officers in such a way as to be in breach of the ~~Members~~ Councillors' Code of Conduct nor deal with matters which are of a personal or disciplinary nature.

10.4.2 It is not the role of scrutiny to act as a disciplinary tribunal in relation to the actions of Councillors or Officers. Neither is it the role of Officers to become involved in what would amount to disciplinary investigations on a Scrutiny Committee's behalf. This means:

- a) Questioning about the conduct of individuals should be in the sense of establishing the facts about what occurred in the making of decisions or implementing of Council policies, not to imply criticism or blame.
- b) In these circumstances, it is for the Chief Executive to institute a formal enquiry, and Scrutiny Committees may ask (but not require) them to do so.

10.4.3 Scrutiny should not act as a "Court of Appeal" against decisions or to pursue complaints by individuals, as other procedures exist for this. These are internal, for example, the Council's corporate complaints procedure, and external/statutory, for example the Ombudsman or appeal to the Courts. However:

- a) Scrutiny Committees may investigate the manner in which decisions are made but should not pass judgement on the merits or otherwise of a decision in individual cases.
- b) They can comment on the merits of a particular policy affecting individuals.

10.4.4 Scrutiny Committees should provide written questions or details of indicative topics to someone invited to appear before the Committee to ensure they have adequate time to prepare for the meeting. In addition, invitees ought to be told the general line that further questioning is likely to take. Questioning should not stray outside the subject area that the Committee has previously indicated.

10.4.5 Officers shall:

- i. maintain political impartiality at all times when commenting on the Cabinet's / Council's policies and actions.
- ii. be prepared to explain and justify advice given to Members of the Cabinet and the Council prior to decisions being taken and justify decisions they themselves have taken under the Council's Constitution.
- iii. ensure that appropriate Officers appear before the relevant Council body.

10 Conduct at meetings of the Council

- 10.4 Officers and Councillors will address each other respectfully at meetings of the Council.
- 10.5 Officers should respect Councillors in the way they respond to Councillors' questions. Councillors should not question Officers in a way which could be interpreted as intimidating or disrespectful.
- 10.6 Proceedings must not be used to question the capability or competence of Officers, or to criticise them in public. Chairs and Councillors need to make a distinction between reviewing the policies and performance of the Council and its services and appraising the personal performance of Officers (particularly at scrutiny meetings.) The latter is not an appropriate role for Councillors.
- 10.7 Senior Officers have the right to present reports and give advice to Committees and sub-committees of the Council. All reports to Council meetings include the name of a contact officer and Councillors are encouraged to approach that Officer for any query or issue they wish to raise prior to the meeting.
- 10.8 Councillors on a Committee or sub-committee shall take decisions within the remit of that body and will not instruct Officers to act otherwise.
- 10.9 At meetings of the Council, a resolution may be passed which authorises a named Officer to take action between meetings in consultation with the Chair, other Councillor(s) of that body or other Officers. In these circumstances it is the Officer, not the Chair, who takes the action and is responsible for it. Neither the Chair nor any other Councillor, or group of Councillors, (other than Cabinet Councillors) has any legal power to take decisions on behalf of the Council; neither should they apply inappropriate pressure on the officer.

11 Press and Social Media

- 11.4 Local Authorities are accountable to their electorate. Accountability requires local understanding. This will be promoted by the Council, explaining its objectives and policies to the electors and customers. Local Authorities use publicity to keep the public informed and to encourage public participation. The Council needs to tell the public about the services it provides. Good effective publicity should aim to improve public awareness of the Council's activities. Publicity is a sensitive matter in any political environment because of the impact it can have. Expenditure on publicity can be significant.

- 12.2.** The Council must comply with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1986 ("the Act") regarding publicity. All media relations work will comply with the national Code of Practice for Local Government Publicity. The Code is statutory guidance and the Council must have regard to it and follow its provisions when making any decision on publicity.
- 12.3 The Leader, Deputy-Leader, Executive Members and Chairs act as spokespersons for the Council in responding to the press and media and making public statements on behalf of the Council. The Leader, Deputy-Leader, Executive Members and Chairs should liaise with the Communications Team on all forms of contact with the press and media.
- 12.4 All Council press releases should be in accordance with the Council's agreed guidelines and must be issued through the Council's Communications Team.
- 12.5 Any press release that may be necessary to clarify the Council's position in relation to disputes, major planning developments, court issues or individuals' complaints should be approved by the appropriate Director and/or the Monitoring Officer.
- 12.6 Councillors or Political Groups have the right to issue political press releases but these shall not be prepared or issued using the Council's resources of any kind. If a Councillor is contacted by, or contacts, the media on an issue, they should:
- a) indicate in what capacity they are speaking (e.g., as a local District Councillor, in a personal capacity, as a Cabinet Member, on behalf of the Council, or on behalf of a party group);
 - b) if necessary, and always when they would like a press release to be issued on a non-party political nature seek assistance from the Council's Communications Team;
 - c) consider the likely consequences for the Council of their statement (e.g. commitment to a particular course of action, image, allegations of predetermination);
 - d) never give a commitment in relation to matters which may be subject to claims from third parties and/or are likely to be an insurance matter;
 - e) consider whether to consult other relevant Councillors; and
 - f) take particular care in what they say in the run-up to local or national elections to avoid giving the impression of electioneering, unless they have been contacted as an election candidate or political party activist.
- 12.7 It is important for Councillors to comply with their general obligations in the Code of Conduct when dealing with the press and media and recognise that as a representative of the Council their actions impact on how the Council as a whole is viewed by the public.
- 12.8 Lead Councillors with special responsibilities will receive training in handling the media and shall receive additional support as required and as appropriate for their roles from the Communications Team.

- 12.9 Any press release that may be necessary to clarify the Council's position in relation to disputes, major planning developments, court issues or individuals' complaints should be approved by the appropriate Senior Officer and/or the Monitoring Officer.
- 12.10 Councillors should have regard to their obligations under 4.3 above when making any statements to the press or media.
- 12.11 Councillors and Officers should carefully consider the appropriateness of forming friendships on social media or generally and whether this will infer a friendship between the Officer and Councillor that could create a perception of lack of objectivity.

13 Correspondence

- a. The paper containing the Council's corporate identity image must be used for all correspondence written on behalf of the Council. When Councillors are writing in their capacity as a Councillor they must make it clear whether they are writing on behalf of the Council or as the ward Councillor. Councillors must never use paper or electronic communications containing the Council's corporate identity image for personal, party political or business matters.
- b. Correspondence from an individual Councillor to an Officer will not normally be copied by the Officer to any other Councillor unless it is the intention of the Councillor that it should be so (e.g. representations made in relation to a planning application). Where, exceptionally, and having sought the advice of a Senior Officer, it is considered appropriate to copy the correspondence to another Councillor, then the original Councillor should be given prior notification and be told to whom it is proposed to be copied and the reasons for this proposed course of action. The decision of whether another Councillor should be sent the correspondence is ultimately for the Chief Executive to take.
- c. Particular care needs to be taken with email correspondence where the Council's use of email policy should be followed. For example, when dealing with constituency email correspondence be careful when copying emails when using 'cc' or 'bcc' or 'reply to all'. Only copy your email to those people that really need to see it, don't inadvertently forward confidential information and don't forward a constituent's email to others even within the Council without having first obtained their consent.

- d. The Leader, Deputy-Leader, Executive Members and Chairs act as spokespersons for the Council in responding to the press and media and making public statements on behalf of the Council. The Leader, Deputy-Leader, Executive Members and Chairs should liaise with the Communications Team on all forms of contact with the press and media.
- e. Correspondence to individual Councillors from Officers concerning regulatory matters such as planning, enforcement, licensing and environmental health matters should not be sent or copied to complainants or other third parties if they are marked “*private*”, “*personal*” or “*confidential*”. In doing so, the relevant Officer should seek to make clear what is to be treated as being shared with the Councillor in confidence only and why that is so.

14. Involvement of Local Ward Councillors

- 14.1 To enable them to carry out their Ward role effectively, Councillors need to be informed about matters affecting their Ward. Senior Officers must ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the requirement to keep local Councillors appropriately informed, thus allowing Councillors to contribute to the decision-making process and develop their representative role.
- 14.2 Issues may affect a single Ward. Where they have a wider impact, a number of local ward councillors will need to be kept informed.
- 14.3 Whenever a public meeting (not a formal Council/Committee meeting) is organised by the Council to consider a local issue, all the Councillors representing the ward affected should, as a matter of course, be invited to attend the meeting. Similarly, whenever the Council undertakes any form of consultative exercise on a local issue, the relevant local ward Councillors should be notified at the outset of the exercise, and consulted over the proposed consultation date.
- 14.4 In seeking to deal with constituents’ queries or concerns, Councillors should not seek priority but should respect and follow the Council’s procedures.

15. Breaches of the Protocol

- 15.1 This paragraph of the Protocol should be read in conjunction with the Council’s Whistleblowing Policy.
- 15.2 Where the relationship between Councillors and Officers breaks down or

becomes strained, every effort will be made to resolve matters informally, through conciliation by an appropriate Senior Officer or Councillors.

- 15.3 A Councillor who is unhappy about the actions taken by, or conduct of, an officer should:
- i. avoid personal attacks on, or abuse of, the officer at all times,
 - ii. ensure that any criticism is well founded and constructive,
 - iii. never make a criticism in public
- 15.4 Where a **Councillor** is dissatisfied with the conduct, behaviour or performance of an Officer, the matter should be raised with the relevant Senior Officer. Where the Officer concerned is a Director, the matter should be raised with the Chief Executive. Where the employee concerned is the Chief Executive, the matter should be raised with the Monitoring Officer.
- 15.5 The Senior Officer will acknowledge the complaint and advise on next steps. The timescale for dealing with such a complaint will be in accordance with the Council's normal complaints procedure.
- 15.6 Councillors have a right to know if action has been taken to address a matter, but they must not, either:
- a) influence, or seek to influence, the level of disciplinary action to be taken against an Officer, nor
 - b) insist (nor be seen to insist) that an Officer is disciplined.
- 15.7 Councillors have a right to be told the outcome of any disciplinary case but have no entitlement to detailed information about the hearing or its conduct aside from those Members of the Employment Appeals Sub Committee where specific cases are considered by the Sub Committee.
- 15.8 Where an **Officer** feels that they have not been properly treated with respect and courtesy and wishes to make a complaint under the Councillors' Code of Conduct this should be made to the Monitoring Officer. In the event of the concerns being raised informally, the Monitoring Officer may refer the matter to the leader of the relevant party group or to the Councillor concerned. In the event of a formal complaint, the Monitoring Officer will consider whether the complaint should be referred for investigation, other action or whether no further action should be taken and the Council's procedures for dealing with Councillors' Code of Conduct complaints will be followed as set out in the Constitution.
- 15.9 Breaches of this Protocol by a Councillor may constitute a breach of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.
- 15.10 Breaches of this Protocol by an Officer may be referred for disciplinary action.

16 Monitoring, Review and further Advice

- 16.1 The application and implementation of this Protocol will be monitored and reviewed by the Council's Standards Committee in consultation with the Council's Monitoring Officer. The Protocol itself will be reviewed by the Committee every three years.
- 16.2 Further advice on the interpretation of this Protocol is available from the Monitoring Officer.



Report to: Council

Date of Meeting 15 October 2025

Heading/Title: Wreath Laying Protocol for East Devon District Council

Cabinet Member(s): Council Co-ordination & External Engagement
(Councillor John Loudoun)

Director/Assistant Director: Governance

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Key decision No

If a Key Decision has it appeared on Forward Plan

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

1. Background

- 1.1 Each year, East Devon District Council is invited to participate in Remembrance events across the district through the Chair of Council's office. The Council recognises the importance of honouring all those who have served and sacrificed and will lay wreaths in its area.
- 1.2 Laying wreaths at central memorials in the main towns (e.g. Exmouth, Honiton, Sidmouth, Axminster, Seaton, Ottery St Mary, and Budleigh Salterton) ensures that the Council's respect is publicly and visibly demonstrated in locations with the highest footfall and community engagement. These ceremonies are often attended by a wide cross-section of the community, including veterans, schools, and civic leaders, amplifying the symbolic impact of the Council's participation. It is however recognised that there are other memorials where traditionally Ward Councillors have laid wreathes.
- 1.3 The Wreath Laying Protocol provides a rationale for wreath-laying ceremonies at memorials across the district.

- 1.4 Given the number of memorials across the district, supplying a wreath to every location could result in significant expenditure. It is therefore essential that the Council considers the financial implications and budgets accordingly.
- 1.5 Ward Councillors will still be able to represent the Council at memorials within their own Wards, ensuring local representation where possible. To be able to lay a Council wreath Ward Councillors should notify Democratic Services by 26 September each year to allow sufficient time for a wreath to be obtained. In multi-Member Wards one wreath would be available and the local Ward Councillors can share the responsibility of wreath laying at local ceremonies.

2. Recommendations/Decision

- 2.1 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 as set out in Appendix A.

3. Reasons for Recommendations/Decision

- 3.1. The Wreath Laying Protocol aims to provide a rationale for wreath-laying ceremonies in East Devon and ensures visibility and representation where ceremonies are widely attended.

4. Options

- 4.1 Wreaths for Remembrance events are ordered through the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. The cost of wreaths varies depending on the type selected, the preferred wreath is a Type C at £25.00 per wreath.

5. Relevance to Council Plan/priorities

Set out how report links to the Council Plan/priorities:

- ☒ A supported and engaged community that has the right homes in the right places, with appropriate infrastructure
- ☐ A sustainable environment that is moving towards carbon neutrality and which promotes ecological recovery.
- ☐ A vibrant and resilient economy that supports local business, provides local jobs and leads to a reduction in poverty and inequality.
- ☐ A well-managed, financially secure and continuously improving council that delivers quality services

6. Financial Comments/Implications

- 6.1 The cost to supply wreaths to councillors is £25 for each wreath, plus postage. The total cost of supplying wreaths will depend on the number of requests received. If all wards required a wreath to be laid the total cost would be £750 (30 wards) and these costs can be met from existing budgets.

7. Legal Comments/Implications

- 7.1 There are none.

8. Risk Implications

- 8.1 The main area of risk include health and safety at the event and reputational implications from not attending such events and laying a wreath on behalf of the Council.

Activity/ plant/ materials etc	List significant hazards	People at risk	Assessment of Risk			Existing controls e.g. Safety procedures	What further action Is required to control/mitigate the risk?
			*Impact 1-4	*Likeli hood 1-4	Risk Score		
Reputation							Use inclusive language, consult with community representatives, and ensure clear communication.
Awareness of a perceived exclusion if certain individuals or groups are not invited or acknowledged							This protocol covers the role expected of a councillor attending an event.

Health & Safety Risks, including slips, trips and falls, crowd control and traffic hazards.							The local organisers will be required to have a risk assessment in place to mitigate such risks.

*Impact – Major = 4 Serious = 3 Significant = 2 Minor = 1

*Likelihood – Very Likely = 4 Likely = 3 Unlikely = 2 Remote =

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9. Equality Implications (Public Sector Equality Duty)

9.1 The act of wreath laying is seen as symbolic and respectful, it's important to ensure the protocol reflects the values of inclusivity and cultural sensitivity.

Scope <i>(Provide an overview, including objectives and desired outcomes)</i>	Wreath Laying Protocol
Evidence gathered and engagement <i>(List stakeholders consulted and relevant processes, policies, and data sources)</i>	Best practice from other organisations with a wreath laying policy in place. Chair of Council Armed Forces Covenant Councillor Champion
Relevance assessment findings <i>(If relevant to equality, undertake a full EIA or If no relevance to equality, explain why with supporting information)</i>	A full EIA is required: Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, this assessment has demonstrated relevance to equality with regard to: Please check relevant boxes ☐ Age ☐ Pregnancy and maternity ☐ Disability ☐ Sexual orientation ☐ Race ☐ Gender reassignment ☐ Sex ☐ Marriage or Civil Partnership ☐ Religion or Belief ☒ Armed Forces ☐ Other, e.g. carers, care leavers, low income, rurality/isolation, etc. If no, explain why: Through this protocol the Council acknowledges the contributions of people from all faiths and backgrounds in the armed forces.
Relevance ranking	☐ High – Very relevant to protected characteristics ☒ Medium – Somewhat relevant to protected characteristics ☐ Low – Not relevant to protected characteristics

Key findings and impacts	Offering to make a wreath available to all councillors for events in their wards.
Conclusion drawn (<i>i.e No major changes needed; EIA found no negative impact or adjust policy/process to remove identified barriers</i>)	No major changes required.
Actions (<i>Proposed actions to mitigate negative impacts on identified groups</i>)	The policy allows Ward Councillors to represent the Council in their own wards, which helps address this. It may be helpful to communicate this clearly to communities to avoid perceptions of exclusion.
Signed off by	•

10. HR and Workforce Implications

10.1 None.

11. Community Safety Implications (Crime and Disorder)

11.1 The attendance at remembrance ceremonies are usually organised by local organisations, i.e. Town or Parish Council, local Royal British Legion representatives and those organisations will be responsible for ensuring that a risk assessment, traffic management plan and adequate security arrangements are in place for such events.

12. Climate Change Implications

12.1 There are no Climate Change implications.

13. Health & Safety and Health & Wellbeing Implications

13.1 There are no Health & Safety implications.

13.2 There are no Health & Wellbeing Implications.

14. Procurement and Social Value implications

14.1 The protocol promotes unity and shared respect by recognising individuals who have served the community, fostering civic pride and collective remembrance.

15. Land and Buildings (non-housing)/Asset Management Implications

15.1 None.

16. Overview and Scrutiny Committees Comments/Recommendations

16.1 None.

17. Digital and Data

17.1 N/A.

18. Consultation and Engagement

18.1 Consultation on the protocol has included the Chair of Council, the Armed Forces Covenant Councillor Champion and Portfolio Holder.

19. Communications

19.1 The Death in Service Protocol sets out clear guidance on what tributes should be made in such events.

20. Next Steps

20.1 If approved the protocol sets out the basis for the Council at future remembrance events.

20.2 If approved the protocol sets out what should be done in the event of the passing of a councillor.

21. Appendices

21.1 The Wreath Laying protocol is set out at Appendix A.

22. Background Papers

22.1 None.

Wreath Laying Protocol

1. Purpose

On Remembrance Sunday and 11 November (Remembrance Day), several local places of worship and other organisations invite East Devon District Council (EDDC) to nominate a representative to lay a wreath on behalf of the Council. This policy outlines the protocol for wreath laying across the district and how a councillor can request a wreath and includes consideration of financial and environmental implications.

2. Principles

There is no perfect formula for deciding who will lay the wreaths. Party politics must not influence the selection of representatives. The process should be respectful, inclusive, and sustainable.

3. Protocol

3.1 Wreaths may only be laid on Remembrance Sunday or 11 November (Remembrance Day).

3.2 The Chair of the Council has first choice of location and this is usually at a ceremony at Exmouth.

3.3 The Lord Lieutenant and/or Deputy Lieutenant take precedence over the Chair of Council in wreath-laying.

3.4 The Armed Forces Covenant Champion may also lay a wreath on behalf of the Council.

3.5 Ward Councillors may lay a wreath in their own Ward only and the Council will provide a wreath, subject to a request for a wreath to be submitted to Democratic Services by 30 September each year. Please note only one wreath per Ward will be supplied to be laid on behalf of EDDC.

3.6 If multiple Councillors wish to lay a wreath in the same Ward, they must resolve the matter between themselves or alternate annually. Where a Councillor requests a wreath but is unable to attend a memorial service in their Ward they may nominate a non-political representative who can lay a wreath on behalf of the Council, i.e. local veteran, vicar, representative of the Royal British Legion.

3.7 The only Councillors permitted to lay wreaths outside their Ward, in order of preference, are:

Chair of the Council
Armed Forces Covenant Member Champion
Leader of the Council

3.8 By mid-October each year, the final wreath-laying schedule will be circulated to all Councillors via email.

3.9 Wreaths will be available for collection at Blackdown House. Councillors will be notified when a wreath is available for collection.

4. Financial Implications

The cost of purchasing wreaths will be met from the Democratic Services budget. A standardised wreath design will be used to ensure cost control and consistency. Wreaths to be purchased from the Royal British Legion poppy shop.

When travelling to wreath laying ceremonies Councillors are encouraged to car-share or use public transport where possible to reduce travel expenses.

Any additional costs (e.g. for new locations or special ceremonies) must be approved in advance by the Chair's Office.

5. Main Locations for Wreath Laying

- Axminster, St Mary the Virgin Church, Minster Green, West Street, Axminster, EX13 5AP
- Budleigh Salterton, Coastguard Hill, jct Salting Hill, Budleigh Salterton EX9 6NU
- Cranbrook
- Exmouth – Strand, Rolle Street, Exmouth, EX8 1HL
- Honiton, St Paul's Church, High Street, Honiton, EX14 1PG
- Ottery St Mary, St Mary's Church, The College, Ottery St Mary, EX11 1DQ
- Seaton, St Gregory's Church, Case Gardens, Colyford Road, Seaton EX12 2DF
- Sidmouth, St Giles and St Nicholas Church, Church Street, Sidmouth, EX10 8LG

Other locations can be considered, taking account of established local practice or subject to a Councillor request being submitted to the Chairs' Office (via Democratic Services). Such requests to be made before 30 September each year to allow time to order additional wreaths.

6. Wreath type

The preferred wreath type is a Type C – Blank Badged Medium Wreath available from Royal British Legion Poppy Shop £24.99 plus postage.



To include EDDC logo and message.



Report to: Council

Date of Meeting 15 October 2025

Heading/Title: Appointment of Tenant Representative to serve on the Housing Review Board

Cabinet Member(s): Corporate, Council Co-ordination and External Engagement

Director/Assistant Director: Director for Governance

Author and Directorate: Andrew Melhuish (Governance Directorate)

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Key decision No

If a Key Decision has it appeared on Forward Plan No

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

1. Background

- 1.1 This report sets out details of the recruitment process for the appointment of a Tenant Representative to serve on the Housing Review Board. The appointments aim to ensure that the voices of tenants are heard and considered in the board's decision-making processes.
- 1.2 The Housing Review Board is one of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and will consider matters relating to the Council's landlord and housing management functions. The Board will advise the Council's Cabinet on housing policy and operational practice, where this affects the Council's tenants and leaseholders. The Board will keep under review the housing stock options appraisal and monitor the conditions which will influence the future arrangements for the ownership and management of the Council's housing stock.

2. Recommendations/Decision

- 2.1 That Council appoints Richard Sidney Ford to serve as a Tenant Representative on the Housing Review Board until 30 April 2029.

3. Reasons for Recommendations/Decision

- 3.1 To meet the requirements of the Council's Constitution for the appointment of representatives on the Housing Review Board.
- 3.2 All appointments are subject to Council approval and non-councillor Board members will serve for a maximum of eight years, subject to annual reappointment by the Council, with the objective that every four years one quarter of the non-councillor members will stand down.

4. Options

- 4.1 To consider the recommendation from the interview panel to appoint Richard Sidney Ford as a Tenant Representative on the Housing Review Board.

5. Relevance to Council Plan/priorities

Set out how report links to the Council Plan/priorities:

- ☒ A supported and engaged community that has the right homes in the right places, with appropriate infrastructure
- ☐ A sustainable environment that is moving towards carbon neutrality and which promotes ecological recovery.
- ☐ A vibrant and resilient economy that supports local business, provides local jobs and leads to a reduction in poverty and inequality.
- ☒ A well-managed, financially secure and continuously improving council that delivers quality services

6. Financial Comments/Implications

- 6.1 An allowance is claimable to each Tenant Representative and can be met from within existing budgets.

7. Legal Comments/Implications

- 7.1 The legal issues are dealt with in the body of the report. The proposals set out in this report comply with the Council's Constitution.

8. Risk Implications

Activity/ plant/ materials etc	List significant hazards	People at risk	Assessment of Risk			Existing controls e.g. Safety procedures	What further action Is required to control/mitigate the risk?
			*Impact 1-4	*Likeli hood 1-4	Risk Score		
Appointm ent of and independ ent represent ative on the HRB	None.	None.	1	1	2	Advertisemen t and job role	None.

*Impact – Major = 4 Serious = 3 Significant = 2 Minor = 1

*Likelihood – Very Likely = 4 Likely = 3 Unlikely = 2 Remote = 1

9. Equality Implications (Public Sector Equality Duty)

9.1 This relevance assessment aims to analyse gathered information for potential relevance to equality. If a Full Equality Impact Assessment is required ([Equality analysis impact assessment form](#)), include it as an appendix. At the minimum, the following table must be completed.

Scope (<i>Provide an overview, including objectives and desired outcomes</i>)	To appoint an independent person to the Housing Review Board
Evidence gathered and engagement (<i>List stakeholders consulted and relevant processes, policies, and data sources</i>)	Interview of candidate undertaken by Assistant Director of Housing (Regulated Services) Communities Team Manager and Democratic Services Officer
Relevance assessment findings (<i>If relevant to equality, undertake a full EIA or If no relevance to equality, explain why with supporting information</i>)	A full EIA is required: Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, this assessment has demonstrated relevance to equality with regard to: Please check relevant boxes ☐ Age ☐ Pregnancy and maternity ☐ Disability ☐ Sexual orientation ☐ Race ☐ Gender reassignment ☐ Sex ☐ Marriage or Civil Partnership ☐ Religion or Belief ☐ Armed Forces ☐ Other, e.g. carers, care leavers, low income, rurality/isolation, etc. If no, explain why: Vacancy available to all residents of East Devon.

Relevance ranking	☐ High – Very relevant to protected characteristics ☐ Medium – Somewhat relevant to protected characteristics ☒ Low – Not relevant to protected characteristics
Key findings and impacts	
Conclusion drawn (<i>i.e No major changes needed; EIA found no negative impact or adjust policy/process to remove identified barriers</i>)	No negative impact by appointing a tenant representative to serve on the HRB. Advert was open to all residents of East Devon to apply.
Actions (<i>Proposed actions to mitigate negative impacts on identified groups</i>)	None.
Signed off by	Andrew Melhuish

10. HR and Workforce Implications

- 10.1 A recruitment process for the selection of a tenant representative was conducted, including advertising the vacancy through the Council's Volunteer page on the website.
- 10.2 Applications were reviewed by the Chair of the Housing Review Board and officers and a shortlist of candidates was created.
- 10.3 Following an interview of the candidate by the Vice Chair of the Board, Tenancy Services Manager and Democratic Services Officer one candidate was selected for their suitability to serve on the Housing Review Board.

11. Community Safety Implications (Crime and Disorder)

- 11.1 Please confirm if there are any Community Safety Implications. No

12. Climate Change Implications

- 12.1 Please confirm if there are any Climate Change implications. No

13. Health & Safety and Health & Wellbeing Implications

- 13.1 There are no Health and Safety and Health and Wellbeing implications arising from the recommendations in this report.
- 13.2 There are no safeguarding issues that may arise from the recommendations in the report.

14. Procurement and Social Value implications

- 14.1 There are no Procurement and Social Value implications arising from this report.

15. Land and Buildings (non-housing)/Asset Management Implications

15.1 There are no land and buildings/asset management implications arising from the recommendations in this report..

16. Overview and Scrutiny Committees Comments/Recommendations

16.1 There are no recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny committees.

17. Digital and Data

17.1 There are no digital and data implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report.

18. Consultation and Engagement

18.1 The vacancy for tenant representative was advertised on the Council's Volunteer web page inviting applications to be submitted.

19. Communications

19.1 There are no communications implications, once the appointment has been confirmed the details of the tenant representative will be included on the Council's website.

20. Next Steps

20.1 To update the Council's website to confirm the appointment and to ensure that the appointed candidate undertakes any relevant training and development.

21. Appendices

21.1 None.

22. Background Papers

22.1 None.

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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