

Agenda for Overview Committee
Thursday, 30th January, 2020, 6.00 pm

Members of Overview Committee

Councillors: N Hookway (Chairman), V Johns (Vice-Chairman),
M Allen, S Chamberlain, B De Saram, I Hall, M Hartnell,
S Hawkins, F King, J Loudoun, M Rixson, T Woodward and
P Millar

Venue: Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton

Contact: Susan Howl;

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(or group number 01395 517546)

Tuesday, 21 January 2020



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1 Public Speaking

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

2 Minutes of the previous meeting (Pages 3 - 14)

3 Apologies

4 Declarations of interest

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

5 Matters of urgency

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

6 Confidential/exempt item(s)

To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including press) have been excluded. There are **no** items that officers recommend should be dealt with in this way.

7 Draft Drone Policy (Pages 15 - 21)

8 House of Lords Select Committee on Regenerating Seaside Towns (Pages 22 - 28)

9 Economic Development in Coastal & Rural Areas - A short presentation by Councillor Mike Allen (Pages 29 - 37)

10 Update on the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service Consultation of future Service Delivery - Safer Together (Pages 38 - 39)

11 Overview Forward Plan 2019/20 (Pages 40 - 41)

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[Decision making and equalities](#)

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EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**Minutes of the meeting of Overview Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 14 November 2019****Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 9.20 pm

28 Public Speaking

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

29 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 August were confirmed as a true record.

30 Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were given.

31 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

32 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There were no items classified this way.

33 Presentation from Jurassic Fibre

The meeting was joined by Michael Maltby, Chief Executive of Jurassic Fibre who gave a short presentation followed by a question and answer session.

Michael Maltby introduced himself as a resident of Sidmouth who had founded Jurassic Fibre in response to the position regarding the roll out of high speed broadband in the UK which he considered to be currently unfit for purpose, and based upon his experience of better provision overseas. Jurassic Fibre was a large scale project designed to be delivered across the South West, applying state of the art techniques to the development of fibre optic broadband.

It is planned to have a commercial launch in February 2020, when a live network will have been set up which should, over time, ultimately reach approximately 350,000 premises, including coverage of much of East Devon and parts of the M5 corridor. Phase 1 currently underway encompasses about 12,000 premises to the east of Exeter and on the western side of East Devon. Mr Maltby said that the impact of Gigaclear projects was unclear and he understood Connecting Devon & Somerset (CDS) were going to undertake an open market review.

He concluded by saying that about 80% of the premises in East Devon could be served by the Jurassic Fibre network by 2023, so it raised the issue of how this would help the Council and what the Council's approach would be to putting fibre into their own offices or housing stock, particularly if tenants requested it.

He stated that increased connectivity would assist in service delivery and local businesses would benefit, as part of a broader economic focus.

The Chairman thanked Michael Maltby for his presentation and invited comments or questions from Committee members.

Discussion included the following;

- Problems with Gigaclear and CDS had been raised previously at Scrutiny Committee with concerns about the essential requirement for decent rural broadband. Concerns remained after hearing from Jurassic Fibre that the rural hinterland would still be left isolated.

Mr Maltby responded by saying that there were connectivity problems all across East Devon, in towns as well as rural areas. They had been working with farmers to put wayleaves across their land, but the costs of extending the network to more dispersed areas were prohibitive to the extent that it was unlikely that many remote areas would be reached, unless there was government subsidy.

- Dealing with a private company was very different to dealing within the public sector procurement processes.

Q 1 – How many of the 350,000 premises would relate to untried or new customers as opposed to those picked up from competitor companies?

Q 2 – Wayleave permissions were an enormous strain on Gigaclear and responsible for many of their delays and problems. Will the same issue affect Jurassic Fibre?

Mr Maltby responded by saying that the Jurassic Fibre approach was to roll out fibre to the premise which was not going to be available in communities in East Devon, and that in relation to the wayleaves issue, they were trying to negotiate with farmers so that they are able to be part of the project rather than simply receiving a request to dig on their land.

- Q 3 - What about packaging of other services for the end user, such as TVs, telephones or other devices?

Mr Maltby said that Jurassic Fibre regarded themselves as digital plumbers, putting in a decent connection whilst the rest of the package for end users can be offered by the likes of Netflix with whom they do not want to compete.

- Q 4 - How much would it cost to install?

Surveys had suggested that a standard installation would be expected in around 80% of the premises. In relation to Council housing stock the Council would not have to pay if individual tenants took up the service. Costs were outlined during the presentation, but would be charged at a fair rate to customers, with an infrastructure related return expected.

- Q 5 - How would the connectivity to the Council housing stock be delivered?

A tenant may want to connect to the Jurassic Fibre network but the Council would need to agree that this could be done. Permissions could be given on a street by street or estate basis.

- Q 6 - What is the proposition to the Council?

There is no detailed proposition yet. This needs to be the subject of further discussion to define the Council's ambitions in relation to digital infrastructure.

- Businesses need fibre to continue to be competitive and the roll out of a further fibre network should be welcomed to encourage progress and further development.

34 **Economic Development update**

The Chairman invited the Economic Development Manager, Rob Murray, to present the key issues from his report, which provided an update on Economic Development activity

and summarised the findings of this year's House of Lords (HOL) Select Committee inquiry into Rural Economies.

Rob Murray referred to headline economic indicators for East Devon, such as employment and unemployment rates; businesses across the District including top employers by the numbers of employees; enhancing productivity via tailored business support and the drive to increase productivity across core sectors, an initiative offering a range of fully funded workshops and one-to-one support for pre-start and existing businesses across East Devon.

He went on to say that as a result of the launch of Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Hub service in 2016, more businesses have benefitted from Growth Hub support in East Devon than in any of the other 14 LEP districts.

East Devon Business Centre (EDBC), has through a focussed process of improvement, marketing and communications (including social media) been turned into a positive net income generator to EDDC with 100% of offices let and meeting room income increased by 67% compared with 2014-15.

East Devon had led on the production of the Shared Economic Strategy for Exeter and the Heart of Devon (EHOD) (2017-2020) which sets out the ambition, growth priorities and approach to enable growth of the regional economy.

In relation to Brexit, EDDC became one of the first local authorities in the country to publish detailed online guidance to inform and support businesses preparing for Brexit. Rob Murray referred to more effective engagement with planning, and events such as Honiton Gate to Plate which had been a big success.

Economic Development Priorities 2019-2020 have recently been presented to Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees in September by Cllr Blakey and the Deputy Chief Executive with the following two key priorities in the coming year:

- The 'Our Towns' Study to improve understanding of our main towns
- Business Centre extension & additional workspace in East Devon

EDDC Evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on the Rural Economy included views and question responses provided through consultation with representatives from economic development, planning policy and development management as well as with our rural district members. They reflected the concerns, issues and opportunities expressed and identified through a specific 'think tank' session held on Weds 29th Aug 2018. The Select Committee's final report was published in April 2019.

Its key recommendations included the development of a coherent rural strategy; rural proofing of policy impacts and place-based approaches to delivery.

In terms of a rural strategy, it is clear that rural economies are facing significant opportunities and challenges, including the UK's impending departure from the EU, cuts to local authorities' budgets, digital connectivity, affordable housing, and an ageing rural population, which make this an ideal moment for the Government to develop a comprehensive rural strategy, to set out its ambition for rural areas

The Government needs to rethink and reform the rural proofing process to ensure that relevant policies and legislation are attuned to the needs of rural communities and rural economies.

Discussion on this item included the following;

- Q 1 – What is the impact of the changes to Flybe on the local economy?
Rob Murray responded to this by saying that this was one of the biggest risks to the local economy, the airport and engineering roles.
- Q 2 - Could events such as Gate to Plate be replicated in other towns? Potentially they could.
- Cllr Allen moved a vote of thanks to Rob Murray for his achievements since taking up his role. Thanks to his efforts, EDBC was no longer losing money and was now operating with a profit, and Gate to Plate had been highly successful. He stated his view that EDDC needed a proper Economic Development resource to deliver the Council Plan, on a tactical and strategic level, and to enable local people to develop skills which will deliver a thriving future economy.
- Q 3 – How can Exmouth Town Council be encouraged to develop a Business Improvement District (BID)?
People need to work together locally to achieve this, and it is left to Councils at all levels to engage with local businesses to promote BIDs, most notably with their largest business rate payers to meet the minimum support required.
- Q 4 – What is the difference between Gate to Plate and Taste of the West?
The former is an EDDC brand in its entirety, whilst the latter is a private sector organisation who we partnered with last year to support the delivery of our Gate to Plate event.
- Q 5 – How many of the economically inactive are over 50 years of age who cannot find jobs, or single parents unable to take up available employment?
This would need to be checked outside the meeting but the term economically inactive people does not simply refer to retired people.
- Q 6 - What do Town Centre Managers do and what are the benefits of having one?
They lobby on behalf of local businesses, encourage local events, develop a local vision.
- There is not much churn in the businesses occupying the EDBC and there is a waiting list of 6/7 businesses to go in.
- Q 7 – In relation to the ‘Our Towns study’ which will dovetail into the High Street TAFF, what are the project costs?
This is still under debate.
- Q 8 - The Propeller group in Exmouth are having a positive economic impact. Are there any plans to roll out any other incubators across East Devon, for example in the Growth Point area?
This local initiative operates as a result of having two years Business Rate Relief, but there is no funding to new businesses. In principle this policy remains open to do more.
- Q 9 – With poor transport and the slashing of existing services, what can we do to help people obtain local work within easy reach?
Encouragement is being given to rural areas to develop more economic work spaces locally.
- There needs to be a debate about developing an Economic Development Strategy and the resources to do this.
- Q 10 - The 8% increase in employment referred to in the report is very large. Is this accounted for by double counting and more part time jobs? Zero contracts create an inability for people to take other jobs to support their income.
The term total employment includes anyone over 16 years of age, in full-time or part-time employment, so is a deceptive statistic.

RESOLVED that:

1. Members note the progress made in delivery of local economic development activity.
2. Members note the local evidence submitted by EDDC to the HOL Select Committee enquiry and the main findings of the rural strategy report.

35 **Update on Draft Drone Policy**

The Chairman invited the manager of Property & Estates, Tim Child, to provide a verbal update on progress. Although he was not in a position to present a Policy to Committee, he could outline progress and next steps.

A policy had been drafted over the summer, and consultation had taken place with the legal team and key departmental colleagues on it. Accordingly, officers were aware of a range of legal issues involved relating to the operation of UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles – Drones) on or over land belonging to EDDC, particularly in relation to enforcement. As a result, they did not want to present a policy which may not be practically enforceable and which the Council have no mechanism for ensuring compliance against.

Tim Child referred to the draft in progress which introduced a policy inviting an application from people who wish to fly drones. In the case of requests from commercial operators who may want to survey by use of drones, for example, the safety of cliffs or work to be conducted on roofs, EDDC may want to approve this and then seek evidence of public liability insurance, conduct risk assessments and possibly charge a fee. However, in the case of private individuals, it is considered unlikely that they would apply at all.

So there is a final piece of work to be completed about the practical enforceability of a policy before bringing it to the Committee. Tim Childs advised that it could be presented to the next meeting before then going on to the Asset Management Forum to be reviewed and monitored with other Council policies.

There was brief discussion about the fact that the CAA have just introduced a new registration scheme requiring operators to have Identification numbers which can be recorded. Operators have to be over the age of 13 years and pass a test.

36 **Poverty in East Devon**

The Chairman invited the authors of the report, Libby Jarrett, Service Lead for Revenues, Benefits, and Customer Services and Amy Gilbert-Jeans, Service Lead for Housing to present the key issues.

Amy Gilbert-Jeans gave a brief introduction, stating that the report had been drawn out of a number of data sets that EDDC have access to. Since it was such a multi-faceted issue officers would have been unlikely to be able to address every aspect of it, largely due to the fact that EDDC had limited influence over national policy.

However, the report provided Members with a detailed assessment of a number of factors that relate to poverty within East Devon, and outlined work that is already undertaken that links with poverty as well as information around how customers are currently supported.

From this work a series of recommendations had been identified to better support people living in East Devon who may be impacted by poverty, which is a follow up to the recommendation made by Cabinet on 6th March 2019.

Particularly with reference to Recommendation 1, the creation of an East Devon Poverty Strategy, the costs of delivery are likely to be attached, whilst Recommendation 9, the work on fuel poverty needs to be developed.

Discussion on this item included the following;

- Members thought that the report was an excellent piece of work with substantial research having been undertaken.
- Q 1 – Was support given from Devon Strategic Partnership (DSP)?
Much data was obtained by EDDC and classified as sensitive, and so analysis was done by EDDC thereby limiting the involvement of others. However, officers are happy to share the report with the DSP.
- More information was required in order to understand the reliance on food banks by people.
- Building co-ownership properties for local people would be highly advantageous, and multi-generational housing along similar lines to that being built in Germany and Switzerland.
- There were suggestions for further recommendations from Members, particularly in the light of witnessing a local family which had become victim to a S21 eviction by a private sector landlord, and who subsequently could not find alternative accommodation. It was suggested that a recommendation be developed by which the Council would work more closely with the private rented sector and specifically to review the reference requirements placed on potential tenants.
- Funding for Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) should be maintained since they are of great positive benefit. It was confirmed that the Council wanted to safeguard funding for the CAB and other independent sources of advice for people in poverty.
- As EDDC does provide some funding for the CAB, there was a potential to influence the direction of their work with respect to services which could be offered outside the five towns with a CAB service, so that people outside the towns could benefit from an outreach service or more services via phone or online.
- £16,000 of new budget had been identified as required. It was clarified that this was a resource identified as being necessary to develop the poverty strategy itself. The Strategic Lead for Finance, Simon Davey, confirmed that the significant time required to put the report together for Committee indicated that external assistance was needed to develop the Strategy over a 3-4 month period.

Cllr Allen thanked officers for their report and made a number of comments in relation to specific recommendations therein. He then referred to a paper which he had recently drafted and circulated to Committee members before the meeting which he wanted to formally propose for incorporation with the recommendations already presented in the report. He said that the paper contained one recommendation consisting of twenty one points.

The Strategic Lead for Finance pointed out that the additional recommendation and associated actions from Cllr Allen had not yet been considered by officers or costed.

The Chairman stated that the meeting should address the nine recommendations in the report. The one received from Cllr Allen could then be added to the minutes of the meeting and would be considered going forward in the developing poverty strategy, after scoping and legal and financial consideration.

Cllr Allen stated that much of his recommendation should be debated.

Cllr Hartnell stated that he agreed with the comments of the Strategic Lead for Finance, and that there was a need to consider the legal and financial implications of any recommendations or actions. He went on to formally propose that the Recommendations 1-9 contained in the Poverty Report were accepted, and that Cllr Allen should then talk to officers and the Chair of Overview about his further proposal before the report is presented to Cabinet. The proposal could be noted in the minutes for further discussion.

Cllr De Saram seconded the proposal by Cllr Hartnell.

Cllr Loudoun said that he had wanted to make amendments to the recommendations in the report.

The Chairman invited Committee members to vote on the proposal put forward by Cllr Hartnell. It was carried by a majority, with one member abstaining, on the basis that they had not debated the recommendations in the report.

Cllr King had wanted to ask about the costs and benefits of the recommendations, and sought clarification about the outcomes sought by the recommendations if it was not considered possible to lift people out of poverty.

Amy Gilbert-Jeans clarified that it was not suggested that the Council could not lift people out of poverty, but that it could not do this alone.

Cllr Allen wanted to formally raise concerns in relation to Members not being allowed to put forward proposals which had not been costed beforehand. He felt that this would suppress debate and would seek further clarification at Council about this matter. He considered this to be a level of interference from officers which would close proposals down before they were scoped.

The Strategic Lead for Finance clarified that he had suggested that it was sensible for Members to have details available to aid their discussion and decision making, but had not said that proposals could not be considered if they had not been costed.

Members expressed disappointment that they had not been able to debate the recommendations in the report further.

The Strategic Lead for Health, Housing and Environment, John Golding reassured the Committee that the poverty strategy will cover all the points made and explore all matters legitimately related to poverty.

Cllr Armstrong confirmed that the Council should be tackling issues relating to poverty, and as Portfolio Holder for Homes & Sustainable Communities, she would be leading on this work with the Finance Portfolio Holder, Libby Jarrett, Amy Gilbert-Jeans, Natalie Brown and George Whitlock. She intended to take on board Cllr Allen's comments on Economic Development and get the support of the whole Council.

RECOMMENDED:

That Cabinet;

1. Consider funding the creation of an East Devon Poverty Strategy to further develop and target the areas identified within this report that we are able to influence and to support a corporate approach to ensure consistency across Council Services.
2. Carry out a review of the funding and delivery arrangements for Money Advice to ensure that we're focussing on the key issues identified in the report.

3. Recommend that Council protect the existing funding levels contributed for Money Advice to Homemaker South West and Citizens of circa £120,000 for 2020/21 to enable the review (Recommendation 2) to be undertaken.
4. Update Corporate Debt Policy to include; Breathing Space in-line with proposed Government changes & to consider any other supportive measures that may be beneficial.
5. Agree to the Council's frontline services, in collaboration, setting up a series of local events across the District with key stakeholders that focus on Universal Credit, Money/Debt advice (including how to avoid Loan sharks), budgeting, fuel poverty, etc with the over-arching aim of supporting people to become more financially resilient.
6. Consider lobbying central Government directly and/or through our MPs in the following areas;
 - Right to Buy
 - Removing the freeze on Local Housing Allowance Rates in order to be reassessed to reflect market rents.
 - Universal Credit – More financial support to be given to customers to help with the transition. More funding to be given to local Councils to reflect the support that customers need with moving onto this Benefit.
7. Continue to explore opportunities to increase our supply of social housing through either redevelopment of existing stock and/or building new Council Housing, in conjunction with a review of the current Housing Revenue Account business plan.
8. Agree to the Council working alongside East Devon foodbanks to better understand demand and eradicate dependency that could lead to a reduction and possible extinction of the need for foodbanks in the district.
9. Undertake a detailed analysis of fuel poverty in the district with a view to developing a separate action plan.

37 **Update on the High Street Task & Finish Forum**

The Chairman provided an update to Members on the work of the High Street TAFF.

Cllr Hookway and Cllr Hartnell had met with the Deputy Chief Executive, Richard Cohen and the Economic Development Manager, Rob Murray, in September to discuss how the two strands of work relating to the 'Our Towns Study' and the High Street TAFF would be progressed. A draft report had recently been received. It had four recommendations, including that the 'Our Towns Study' would be undertaken by an external expert commissioned for the purpose. This would be funded through Business Rate Pool Funds.

A steering group of members would report to Overview Committee, publishing a series of reports. Two members of the Overview Committee would join the steering group, alongside the Economy Portfolio Holder and Rob Murray.

Cllr Loudoun proposed that this was put on the agenda for the next meeting and the report circulated before the meeting.

Cllr Allen seconded the proposal.

This was agreed by those present.

38 **Report back from the Overview Committee Working Group on Governance held on 17 October 2019**

The Chairman introduced a report drafted by the Monitoring Officer following the informal meeting on 17th October of the Governance Working Group, and following a recommendation to Council to establish a Working Group to include representatives of the LGA. An initial meeting of the Governance Working Party took place on 11th November, which was joined by Members of the LGA who were very positive about the discussion which took place.

A series of dates have been agreed which would continue into 2020, the next one scheduled for 25 November.

Cllr Allen suggested that meetings were arranged to take place in the evening.

The Chairman confirmed that all following meetings had been arranged during the evening.

Cllr Loudoun confirmed that although the working group was open to all Members, determining the outcomes needed to remain solely with members of the working party. The Chairman confirmed that this would be the case, and also that the next meeting would set out Terms of Reference and the scope of work to be progressed.

39 **Overview Forward Plan**

The Chairman drew Members attention to the next meeting of the Committee which would be a Joint meeting with the Scrutiny Committee focussing on the Service Plans and Budget for the next financial year.

On 30 January, Committee would consider the report of the House of Lords Select Committee on Regeneration of Seaside Towns if it was published.

On 27 February, it would discuss governance arrangements.

Cllr Loudoun said that Members had agreed to put the Drone Policy on the agenda for the next meeting, but suggested that the Public Toilet Review could wait until March.

The forward plan for the committee was noted.

Proposal received from Councillor Allen for Overview Committee on 14 November 2019

Recommendation:

That Cabinet;

1. Consider funding the creation of an East Devon Poverty Strategy to further develop and target the areas identified within this report that we are able to influence and to support a corporate approach to ensure consistency across Council Services.
2. Carry out a review of the funding and delivery arrangements for Money Advice to ensure that we're focussing on the key issues identified in the report.
3. Recommend that Council protect the existing funding levels contributed for Money Advice to Homemaker South West and Citizens of circa £120,000 for 2020/21 to enable the review (Recommendation 2) to be undertaken.
4. Update Corporate Debt Policy to include; Breathing Space in-line with proposed Government changes & to consider any other supportive measures that may be beneficial.
5. Agree to the Council's frontline services, in collaboration, setting up a series of local events across the District with key stakeholders that focus on Universal Credit, Money/Debt advice (including how to avoid Loan sharks), budgeting, fuel poverty, etc with the over- arching aim of supporting people to become more financially resilient.
6. Consider lobbying central Government directly and/or through our MPs in the following areas;
 - Right to Buy
 - Removing the freeze on Local Housing Allowance Rates in order to be reassessed to reflect market rents.
 - Universal Credit – More financial support to be given to customers to help with the transition. More funding to be given to local Councils to reflect the support that customers need with moving onto this Benefit.
7. Continue to explore opportunities to increase our supply of social housing through either redevelopment of existing stock and/or building new Council Housing, in conjunction with a review of the current Housing Revenue Account business plan.
8. Agree to the Council working alongside East Devon foodbanks to better understand demand and eradicate dependency.
9. Undertake a detailed analysis of fuel poverty in the district ***with a view to supporting residents in fuel and water poverty to reduce their energy and water bills by providing advice to residents on the availability of the benefits of achieving financial savings through installing energy and water efficiency measures, switching to cheaper energy tariffs, and installing water meters.*** Develop a separate action plan to *Partnering with utilities providers (experience shows home visits have proved to be the most effective method of engaging residents who are in fuel poverty)*

10 Work with HOTSW Carers Hub and Careers SW to develop:

- Improved adult skills training,
- careers counselling to raise young people's awareness of the employment opportunities with local employers and deliver additional apprenticeships in the growth sectors in the Exeter and Heart of Devon economy.
- Consider funding a learning and development service at Exmouth and Honiton and appointing an employment advisor with HOTSW/ LABGI joint funds, to support 45+ older residents into employment, further education or training, and voluntary placements or work experience.

11. Work with JobCentre Plus to relieve initial burden of Childcare for 3-6 months with single parents or returners to work with A levels using Flexible Support Fund

12. Learn from organisations such as "Business against Poverty" to mobilise Business actions against poverty in East Devon

13 Promote actions to increase hours worked by part-time workers on benefits

14. Promote the Living Wage to East Devon Employers by developing an accreditation by EDDC so that they become accredited as "Living Wage employers"

15. Work with Private Rented Sector to improve duration of tenure for reliable tenants and EDDC to enhance checks on quality and suitability of homes

16. Target the 7 Wards in highest need which are in the top 10% of deprivation nationally

17. Use Disabled Facilities Grants to improve homes where disabled tenants require action

18 Continue to develop Homelessness strategy in terms of Rapid Rehousing and Rough Sleepers with 5 year Funding in the Council's MTFS

19. Sustain funding to Young Devon (£20k) and Citizens Advice Bureau.

20. Review Money advice services to over-indebted 18+ aged people including retired residents

21. Consider developing a "Lifebelt" scheme using small loans for those in immediate risk of losing a home. The funding to come from New Homes Bonus supplemented by Crowdfunding

Attendance List

Councillors present:

N Hookway (Chairman)
V Johns (Vice-Chairman)
M Allen
B De Saram
M Hartnell
S Hawkins
F King
J Loudoun
M Rixson
T Woodward
P Millar

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

K Bloxham
J Bailey
D Ledger
E Wragg
G Jung
M Armstrong
S Jackson
J Rowland
S Bond
P Faithfull

Officers in attendance:

Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment
Libby Jarrett, Service Lead Revenues and Benefits
Amy Gilbert-Jeans, Service Lead Housing
Robert Murray, Economic Development Manager
Tim Child, Senior Manager Property and Estates
Andrew Wood, East of Exeter Projects Director
Giles Salter, Solicitor

Councillor apologies:

S Chamberlain
I Hall

Chairman

Date:



Report to: **Overview Committee**
Date of Meeting: 30 January 2020
Public Document: Yes
Exemption: None
Review date for release: None

Subject: **Drones Policy / Procedure**

Purpose of report: With the increasing use of drones for recreational and commercial purposes the Overview Committee requested that Officers prepare a Drone policy / procedure detailing the Council’s position on the flying of drones on Council owned land and the process to be followed should a request be made.
 This policy / procedure has now been adopted and sits on the Council’s website alongside other procedures for applications to use / acquire Council owned land.

Recommendation: **That Overview Committee: Note the attached Drone Policy / Procedure adopted January 2020 and is available on the Council’s website.**

Reason for recommendation: To provide Overview Committee with an understanding of the Drone policy / procedure requested by the Committee.
Officer: Tim Child, Service Lead – Place, Assets & Commercialisation
tchild@eastdevon.gov.uk
 01395 571692

Financial implications: There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Legal implications: The legal position relating to the flying of drones over Council land is covered within the report. Legal Services has no further comment to make at this time and will be available to deal with any queries that may arise in respect of any requests.

Equalities impact: Low Impact

Climate change: Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk
 The Council is protecting itself from possible claims for injury, damage to possessions and breach of privacy by restricting its consent for flying of drones.

Links to background information: None

Link to Council Plan: **Continuously improving to be an outstanding Council**

DRAFT Drone Policy / Procedure

Date: Jan 2020
Version: DRAFT

Contact details

Place, Assets & Commercialisation
East Devon District Council
Blackdown House, Border Road, Heathpark Industrial Estate,
Honiton, EX14 1EJ
DX 48808 Honiton

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@eastdevon

To request this information in an
alternative format or language
please phone 01404 515616 or
email csc@eastdevon.gov.uk

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Background

Unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) or drones as they are more commonly known are a relatively modern technology and are extensively used by the military. Their benefits are immense when coupled with high definition cameras. As with any development of technology the sophistication has expanded as the size and price has decreased. Current legislation over their use is restrictive but largely unknown by the public. Additionally, the use of drones are open to misuse and illegal use – these are not explicitly covered by Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) regulations since their main issue is safety and in particular aircraft safety. Notwithstanding this the CAA grant permissions for commercial operations (PfCO) which is essentially a licence to operate on a commercial basis, but this is not for domestic / pleasure drones. For the purpose of this policy the terms ‘UAV’ and ‘drone’ covers all forms of remotely operated aircraft.

The council’s policy on drone usage

This policy is in response to an upsurge in public request and usage occurrences on public land including parks, public open spaces and beaches. The law stipulates that any drone may only be flown from and over land for which the land owner has given written permission.

Drones may not be flown from or above council land without first obtaining written permission from East Devon District Council.

Permission will only be granted, where usage of a drone device aids risk reduction in the work place such as working at height, land and building survey work and / or undertaking professional services such as festivals, archaeological survey, events media, etc and then subject to conditions.

The reasons for this policy

- The close proximity of many of our parks and open spaces or other council owned land to neighbouring residential and business properties and the potential risk of causing disturbance, annoyance or harassment to occupants and the users.

- Potential risk of accident, injury to visitors and site users to parks and green spaces or council property as a result of user or drone error.
- Granting permission could leave the council liable for subsequent actions brought about by drone activity when operated from land in the council's ownership.
- Potential risk of causing alarm, distress or harassment to the wildlife and biodiversity within the council's parks and green spaces.
- Civil Aviation Authority guidance specifying that drones must not be flown within 50m of people, vehicles and buildings and/or over congested areas.
- Granting permission could leave the council liable for subsequent actions brought about by drone activity when operated from land in the council's ownership.

How to request permission for council owned land

You will be required to submit the following information for us in order to consider granting permission for drone flights over council owned land:-

1. A description of the purpose of the flight(s).
2. A copy of your public liability insurance certificate (with provides cover for a minimum of £10,000,000 in respect of any one claim).
3. A copy of your flight plan including specified launch and landing points.
4. A copy of the site assessment.
5. A copy of your CAA issued Permission for Commercial Operation (PfCO) document.

By email to:-

property@eastdevon.gov.uk

By post to:-

Place, Assets & Commercialisation, Blackdown House, Border Road
Heathpark Industrial Estate, Honiton, Devon, EX14 1EJ

Upon receipt of these documents, consideration and approval/rejection will be given within 10 working days. At this point the fee for commercial photography / filming / other drone activity of £200.00 will be due before final permission is granted.

In addition to the above, if permission is granted then the operator must also agree to:-

- Make sure the area is safe at all times whilst using the drone.
- Ensure that they at all times comply with the current Civil Aviation Authority Air Navigation Order and the current Drone Code.
- Indemnify the council against any injury or damage caused.
- Have in place suitable secure arrangements for the handling of personal data captured.

Enforcement

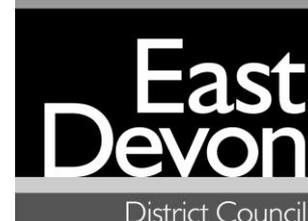
If any person/persons are found to be using a drone device from East Devon District Council land without a letter of permission they will be instructed to stop immediately.

Drone filming by the council

If the council wishes to film using a drone then we will only hire a pilot or company with the appropriate Civil Aviation Authority permission/accreditation.

Release of lanterns

The Council will not consent to the release of lanterns from Council land.



Report to: **Overview Committee**

Date of Meeting: 30th January 2020

Public Document: Yes

Exemption: None

Review date for release None

Agenda item: 7

Subject: **House of Lords Select Committee on Regenerating Seaside Towns and Communities**

Purpose of report: To inform the Committee of the Select Committee's report findings.

Recommendation:

1. To note the content of the report and where appropriate that the Select Committee's report recommendations and the Government's response are fed into the Council's forward planning process including service plans.
2. To use the Select Committee recommendations and Government responses where possible to inform funding bids and influence among third parties such as HotSW LEP, MHCLG or Lottery Fund.
3. That the Committee may wish to recommend that the Select Committee's report and the Government's response be referred to the Housing Review Board and Devon County Council members as the report makes significant reference to housing, education and skills.

Reason for recommendation: The East Devon District Council response to the House of Lords Select Committee call for evidence was an opportunity to outline the challenges and opportunities facing East Devon's coastal communities. Whilst not experiencing the scale of some of the very acute social and economic issues affecting many of England's coastal communities, the Council has always been very aware that the unique mix of coast and countryside that makes East Devon so very special also presents a unique set of challenges in terms of policy, service delivery and intervention. The Select Committee's report recommendations and the Government's subsequent response highlight both current and emerging key policy and initiatives in relation to coastal communities.

Officer: Linda Perry, Place, Assets and Commercialisation
Linda.perry@eastdevon.gov.uk
 Direct: 01395 517509

Financial implications: There are no direct financial implications resulting from the recommendations in this report.

Legal implications: There is no specific legal comment at this time. Advice on specific issues which may arise in the future can be provided at that time.

Equalities impact: Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk

This is an update regarding The House of Lords Select Committee's findings on Regenerating Seaside Towns and Communities and the Government's response.

Links to background information:

- [Select Committee on Regenerating Seaside Towns and Communities](#)
- [East Devon's submission to the House of Lords Select Committee on Regenerating Seaside Towns and Communities](#)
- [Report: The future of seaside towns \(PDF\)](#)
- [Written evidence volume: The future of seaside towns \(PDF 7.56 MB\)](#)
- [Oral evidence volume: The future of seaside towns \(PDF 3.67 MB\)](#)
- [Government response to the Report of Session 2017-19 of House of Lords' Regenerating Seaside Towns and Communities Select Committee, on The Future of Seaside Towns](#)

Link to Council Plan: Outstanding place, communities and environment – highlighting the issues affecting our seaside towns and communities, particularly the extent of demographic change.

Outstanding level of economic growth, productivity and prosperity – stressing the importance of robust and diverse economies for our coastal towns.

Outstanding council and council services - sharing our knowledge and experience of Regeneration and place shaping in our coastal towns and communities.

Report in full

The House of Lords Select Committee on Regenerating Seaside Towns and Communities was appointed by the House on 17 May 2018.

The remit of the Committee is “to consider the regeneration of seaside towns and communities”.

The Committee explored a number of key issues in detail and issued a public call for written evidence to a list of questions.

A number of seaside towns are located along the East Devon coastline, namely the principal seaside towns of Exmouth (East Devon's largest town) and Sidmouth, together with the seaside towns of Seaton and Budleigh Salterton. Having an extensive coastline and an understanding of

the challenges faced by coastal communities, East Devon District Council and partner organisations have considerable knowledge and experience to respond to the call for evidence.

Following the input of Members by the Overview Committee and the endorsement by Cabinet on 5 October 2018. East Devon District Council submitted evidence to both The House of Lords Select Committee on 9th October and to the Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group workshop on 31st October.

House of Lords Select Committee

The Select Committee's report was published on the 4th April 2019.

The main findings and conclusions from the report include:

- The challenges of peripherality in coastal areas can be overcome by improving digital connectivity. The Government should promote initiatives to support digital connectivity in coastal communities specifically. It should engage with local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and businesses in remote coastal communities to understand how better digital connectivity, such as high-speed broadband, can be delivered.
- Limited access to education, particularly to FE and HE institutions, is severely curtailing opportunities and denting aspirations for young people in some coastal areas. The Government needs to facilitate partnership working between the FE and HE sectors, and local business and industry, in coastal and other isolated areas.
- Poor-quality housing is a significant problem for many seaside towns. The Committee recommends a package of measures for housing to help tackle perverse financial incentives to offer poor accommodation, ease the pressures on inspection and enforcement regimes, and to support more regeneration of existing housing.
- Inadequate transport connectivity is holding back many coastal communities. The Government should prioritise improvements to the coastal transport network when it takes decisions on planning and investment. This should be informed by a detailed review of the coastal transport network.
- Many seaside towns feel left behind by national strategies aimed at increasing economic growth and productivity. Local Industrial Strategies present a key opportunity for renewed focus on addressing the skills gaps, low-wage economies and aspiration challenges faced by many coastal communities. As LEPs develop these strategies, the Committee recommends that they are given a specific requirement to consider the needs of deprived seaside towns and communities.
- The UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which is set to replace EU funding after Brexit, is an important opportunity to help support coastal business development, and to tackle deprivation in coastal communities. The Government must be clear about how coastal areas will benefit from the Fund. The Fund should prioritise solutions for areas where there has been persistent deprivation, including disadvantaged coastal communities.
- The Coastal Communities Fund is viewed as too small scale to support sustainable regeneration. The Government should review the Fund's effectiveness. If it is making a positive impact, then it should continue with it and increase the Fund's resources.
- The Committee strongly supports the Grimsby town deal, involving a strategic approach between national and local government, and LEPs. The Committee recommends that the Government should secure town deals with other coastal towns. Given that issues relating to housing and deprivation in Blackpool are well-recognised as being some of the most significant in the country, the Committee recommends a town deal is secured with Blackpool first.
- A variant of Enterprise Zones designated specifically for coastal areas could offer seaside towns a package of place-based interventions. This could support long term, sustainable change. The Committee recommends that new Enterprise Zones be created in coastal locations, and that the support offered should be tailored to meet the specific needs of seaside towns.

- Some towns have boosted regeneration by cultivating their local creative industries. The Committee supports this arts-led regeneration and wishes to see other towns diversifying their economies and enhancing their local cultural assets in this way.

It should be noted that the Select Committee specifically noted in its report that it was encouraged by East Devon District Council's Leadership in Regeneration and, picking up on the report positively when they interviewed Wayne Hemingway, BBC Radio Devon highlighted East Devon District Councils' work in Exmouth.

The published report has received considerable media coverage. The Select Committee has rightfully highlighted the acute social and economic issues affecting many of England's coastal communities.

The Chairman of the Committee, Lord Bassam of Brighton, said:

"For too long, seaside towns have been neglected. They suffer from issues rooted in the decline of their core industries, most notably domestic tourism, but also in fishing, shipbuilding and port activity, and from their location at the 'end of the line'. The potential impact of Brexit on these towns, particularly the hospitality sector, also remains an open question.

"A single solution to their economic and social challenges doesn't exist. What is needed is a package of strategic initiatives and interventions where national and local government work together to address issues such as transport, housing, post-school education and high-speed broadband.

"Places like Brighton and Bournemouth have shown that 'the seaside' can successfully reinvent itself. The Committee is confident that if our recommendations are pursued seaside towns can once again become prosperous and desirable places to live in and visit."

Government Response

On 4 June 2019 the Government published its response. The report is wide ranging and states that 'The Great British Coast has enormous potential and this Government is determined to see it thrive all year round. We are committed to support coastal communities to unlock barriers to their development and growth, and to strengthen their appeal as places to live, work and visit'.

The economy of seaside towns – Capital Investment

It stresses the importance of investment in the economy of seaside towns and highlights that the government has updated the statutory codes allowing local authorities to use commercial structures to kick start local economic regeneration to respond to local market failures or to deliver services more effectively.

Tourism Sector Deal and Coastal Action Zones

The Government launched the Tourism Sector Deal in June 2019. The aim is to boost the productivity of our tourism industry, the implementation plan is set out below; however, there seems to be some slippage in terms of the proposed timetable in relation to Tourism Action Zones

Other commitments in the Tourism Sector Deal include:

- More than 130,000 new hotel rooms are set to be built across the UK, with 75% being built outside of London. £250,000 to improve broadband connectivity in conferences centres across the UK for business visitors.

- The deal also outlines the government’s ambitions for the UK to become the most accessible destination for disabled visitors, through improvement of disabled facilities and access to destinations across the country.
- 10,000 employees in the sector to benefit from new mentorship schemes.
- A new government strategy to grow the number of Business Events and Conferences, helping to drive off-season visitors.

Implementation plan

| Date | Milestone |
|---------------|---|
| June 2019 | Tourism Sector Deal launched |
| June 2019 | The UK government’s International Business Events Action Plan launched |
| August 2019 | Competition for improved broadband at conference centres |
| December 2019 | Tourism Zone details published, with applications open – Note: No details currently announced |
| March 2020 | Announcement of successful Tourism Zones |
| Summer 2020 | Annual Review of the Sector Deal including considering further measures as appropriate |

Local Skills

The Government’s response states that it is working in partnership with places to develop Local Industrial Strategies to set out priorities for how all places, including coastal communities, can contribute to and benefit from growth. Each Local Industrial Strategy will include a People chapter, which building on the national Industrial Strategy, will focus on generating good jobs and greater earning power for local people through employment and skills policy.

Housing

The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government is committed to making the housing market work for everyone, and that means understanding local places and building communities. This place-based approach is well evidenced by many funding streams, and by Homes England, who operate many of these housing funds on the Ministry’s behalf.

Good Design

The National Planning policy framework and associated design guidance should be taken in to account to ensure that development and planning processes not only offer protection, but also take the opportunity to improve public realm and the wider economy. The national Planning Policy Framework states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities, and that planning policies and decisions should establish or maintain a strong sense of place.

Support for regeneration – funding and delivery

Local Industrial Strategies will set out the spatial impacts of national and local policy: informing priorities and choices and demonstrating how they will allow all communities to contribute to, and benefit from, economic prosperity.

Local Enterprise Partnerships play an active role in coastal regeneration through delivering funding programmes and setting plans for regeneration, this includes supporting coastal areas through Local Growth Fund and engaging with Coastal Community Teams and coastal local authorities in the design of local strategies. Some Local Enterprise Partnerships also have dedicated coastal working groups as part of their Governance structures.

Coastal Community Fund

The response does not provide clarity as to the future of the Coastal Community Fund after 2021. It stresses that the Coastal Community Fund has, in places, provided significant and sustained funding to areas/ projects that deliver sustainable economic growth and jobs.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

The Government has confirmed that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will support people to benefit from economic prosperity, especially in those parts of the country whose economies are furthest behind. It recognises that many coastal areas face economic disadvantage, including physical isolation, high deprivation levels and reliance on low wage, low skill and often seasonal employment. **DETAILS TO BE ANNOUNCED.**

Implications for East Devon

As previously stated, the Select Committee's report focuses upon the most challenged coastal locations and whilst much of the local picture supports a degree of affluence across the East Devon District particularly when considering average house prices and the economic position. As stated in East Devon District Council's submission to the Select Committee, the coastal towns of East Devon (Exmouth, Budleigh Salterton, Sidmouth and Seaton) in common with many other coastal areas have an older age profile. An ageing population will have an impact on the provision of health care, housing requirements, the labour market and economic growth.

Two Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) in Exmouth are in the most deprived 30% of all areas across England (Knowing East Devon, Release 4 – source: Office for National Statistics: LA Summaries ID 20102012). This may be partly a function of the housing type and tenure within those predominately urban areas, with their coastal location not being a direct causal factor. However, similar to rural areas, communities in coastal locations may experience challenges in relation to accessing employment and training opportunities and to key services.

East Devon District Council has, for some time, recognised the importance of ensuring that our coastal communities remain economically sustainable and has supported a balance of development including a mixed housing offer, appropriate employment space, visitor accommodation and coastal infrastructure.

The report's authors applaud the efforts of seaside towns that have demonstrated ambition and focus and have tackled and/or headed off the decline of their traditional industries. East Devon has done this and we must continue to ensure that our seaside towns remain prosperous by seeking and supporting appropriate economic investment and strive for inclusive growth to flow from this.

Local Industrial Strategy

The Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (HotSW LEP) are currently producing a Local Industrial Strategy for the sub-region. In addition to the primary Local Industrial Strategic document, a sub group has been put together to develop a coastal productivity plan. East Devon District Council have commented on the draft. At the time of writing this report (December 2019) our overriding observation is that the draft plan does not fully convey the diversity of our coastal towns and the many and differing productivity challenges/ opportunities that they face and that there is perhaps a lack of ambition, for our coastal towns, as to how they can contribute to raising productivity in the HotSW LEP sub-region.

There is reason to be optimistic that our coastal locations can become better connected and drivers of place shaping and prosperity. Our coastal communities have already led the way in rising to the challenges and opportunities that they face, whether it be by a whole host of unique events i.e. Budleigh Literary Festival, Sidmouth Folk week and Seaton's Grizfest (to name just a few). In addition we are witnessing innovative and ambitious investment in tourism and leisure infrastructure i.e. the new Seaton tramway terminal and Grenadier's investment in the Sideshore Watersports facility in Exmouth, new visitor accommodation as well as the establishment of co-working spaces in Exmouth and Sidmouth supporting entrepreneurs and creatives.

It is unlikely that East Devon will be able to attract significant external funds to support its efforts and our prosperity strategy needs to reflect this. Broadly this could mean the Council continuing to support and/ or directly make strategic investments in the local economy.

Comments on the Economic Strategy of East Devon District Council

East Devon is the largest District Authority in Devon and is categorised as ‘Largely Rural’ by ONS with urban centres at Exmouth, Sidmouth, Seaton, Axminster and Honiton. The population of East Devon is 139,908, accounting for 18% of Devon’s total population. The vast majority of our district comprises rural land with two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty covering two thirds of the District. We benefit from the Jurassic Coast, a World Heritage site coastline, and numerous other natural and built heritage assets. These environmental qualities help define the outstanding character of our District but they can also place constraints on scope for growth and development.

| Data 2017 ONS | Count | Employment | Turnover (£'000s) |
|---------------|--------|------------|-------------------|
| Devon | 37,300 | 299,544 | 22,666,462 |
| East Devon | 6,330 | 37,802 | 3,485,706 |
| Exeter | 4,075 | 6,378,525 | 6,376,520 |

Note: 89% of businesses have 10 or less employees plus large numbers of part time or self-employed workers

There are 3 main strategic economic areas:

1. East of Exeter Growth point
2. Coastal area
3. Rural area

Our aging demographic, which includes high numbers of incoming retirees, presents us with both economic challenges and opportunities. This large retired population results in a per head output performance in East Devon of £17,246 whilst the average house price in the second highest in Devon (at £240,000), making it difficult for young people and families to find housing they can afford.

For decades there have been strategies to break a low skills - low wage economic situation which keeps wage rates 20% below the national average. Recently strong partnerships locally and with Government support have begun to transform the situation

Many of our specific issues have been examined in some depth within The South West Rural Productivity Commission report of 2017. This was commissioned by the four south west Local Enterprise Partnerships. See: <http://heartofswlep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/HotSW-14332-A4-Overview-report-digital-doc-FINAL.pdf>

The Commission was established by four LEPs in the South West to explore and understand how the economy in rural areas of the South West is performing and to identify opportunities to stimulate productivity and growth. The Commission found huge potential for economic growth if key opportunities are seized and challenges addressed. This report shows examples of tangible projects that will deliver benefits throughout the community. The full report is here: [SW Rural Commission Report](#) and the evidence here: [SW Rural Report Evidence](#)

The most important themes that emerged from the work are:

- Digital connectivity presents a game changing opportunity but without further urgent action businesses and communities will become left behind

- Innovation and Smart technologies have the potential to create solutions to many of the challenges faced by East Devon. The development of our innovation strategy on a regional scale has the ability to create higher value jobs
- Our area has a hardworking and entrepreneurial culture. If coupled with its stunning natural environment, with the right support, we can raise enterprise productivity and incomes
- Our agri-food-tourism economy is a strength upon which we can build globally recognised propositions as THE place to start and build and grow a value-added food business
- At the same time an innovation strategy focused in the Cities and TTWAs can change the economic prospects of our area
- Meanwhile there are genuine dangers that our smaller communities are spiralling downwards towards ‘fossilised retirement villages’ unless Government and local leaders take serious action. We therefore believe that local and national policy must move away from the ‘one size fits all’ approach that fails to recognise that each area is different in terms of transport, Broadband and cost of services.
- Additionally Brexit has the potential to shake the foundations of our economy. It can be expected to provide both a much needed boost and a sudden economic shock. Now is the time for concerted action if we are to reap the benefits in line with the Government’s expectations.

In addition we are conscious of a market gap in provision of small business units and offices to enable businesses to grow

However there are low skills and relatively productivity which needs management corrections throughout most of our businesses with a number of employees

Particular keys to improved performance and productivity include:

- Support for employee performance (training, appraisal systems, mentoring, coaching) all targeted on achieving organisational aims or plans
- Employee involvement and autonomy in decision making (the use of self-managed work teams and multi-skilling which provide the employee with the opportunity of developing team working and decision-making skills)
- Rewards for performance (individual and group-based performance pay) which focuses employee efforts on contributing to business performance
- Sharing of information and knowledge (communication of information to all employees) to enable them to fully contribute and to engage their enthusiasm.

Therefore we have major initiatives from EHOD and University and College at 16years-old+ levels
While these are mainly in other hands the success of these schemes is critical to our future

What interventions have we made

Growth Point

Along with the new town of Cranbrook we have allied with College and University Partners to develop a science park and further develop the Sky Park next to the airport and railway which facilitates UK-wide and export trade of goods and services. There is a dedicated team of four officers involved in this major development which now is covered by an Enterprise Zone. Extensive negotiation with Government and local developers has been essential

Small Business units

The East Devon the District Council actively seeks to support development of smaller business units and drop-in desks for people to work from. These may be in towns and villages. Typically there is better broadband connection in towns. However this reflects the fact that many towns will support and be intrinsically linked to the wider rural hinterland and with better Broadband, villages can prosper economically.

Through exploring the need for further units from our own resources, we have identified a market failure locally. There is a need for, and benefits to be gained from, more help to be given to support small business unit provision. Our businesses will often start off in a back bedroom but as they grow finding suitable larger business accommodation can be very challenging. Provision of 'grow-on' business units in rural and urban locations was seen as potentially part of the answer.

In recognition of this issue, we funded the development of the East Devon Business Centre (EDBC) in Honiton in 1998 which provides a modern adaptable business space; competitive office lets with flexible tenancy terms; conference, training and display facilities and business support. Demand for flexible office accommodation from new and growing businesses is such that we have 100% tenancy levels and generate a positive net return to the council whilst supporting C.70 FTE local jobs. We were confident that additional B1 office accommodation development in other locations that share strong transport connectivity will see similar success, and researched this area in 2016/2017

Promoting development of office accommodation by the private sector, however, still has its challenges. One problem that was highlighted in our review of Serviced Business premises was that business premises development will invariably attract lower commercial values to residential development land and often land owners will not bring business units forward in the hope that, at some future point in time, they will secure residential development. A sometimes perverse outcome is that employment development that does come forward in rural areas is on sites where any hope value for housing is extremely low. Such new business sites, on account of remoteness, can, however, be inaccessible to many rural (and urban) residents, especially those without cars that need jobs or want to access the services they may offer. Securing rural jobs close to where rural people live (including at villages) is a real challenge, but changes to NPPF have helped.

Business Support Services

Our second approach has been to set up a cross – border business support service with pooled contributions from the Greater Exeter Joint partnership of Teignbridge, Exeter City, Mid-Devon East Devon District Councils and Devon County Council. These services provide sound commercial advice, training advice. We have developed a dedicated business support programme to ensure rural land-based businesses receive the same quality and quantity of specialist support to promote new and existing business growth that our other business sectors are able to access – all free of charge. We're currently updating this service provision to focus on improved productivity of rural enterprises.

There is also a role for Exeter University in promoting Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and student placements with local rural employers. We have some very well established and successful major employers across our rural economy, fewer of whom proportionally are engaged with the University.

Broadband

We have actively chased any opportunity for delivering better and more reliable Broadband access for homes and business premises because we see the essential nature of this infrastructure

Rural

Until recently, land based agri-businesses have been excluded from accessing our ERDF funded Growth Hub, with no acknowledgement of the need for tailored rural provision from the LEP to address this.

When examining successes and good practice in our rural economy, we should draw attention to the remarkable achievements of our Local Action Group in Blackdown AONB

(<http://www.makingitlocal.org/>). The Rural Sector comprises of business and activities that by their nature have to be or are most appropriately located in rural or countryside areas, with most obvious example being farming and forestry and trades or services and supplies directly allied to processing or adding value to their outputs. This is a surprisingly small sector despite the rurality of East Devon and there are relatively small numbers employed. There is also a small rural tourism sector catering for equine and rambler interests with accommodation for tourists. The Agriculture sector has need of low wage immigrants

Coastal

The Coastal sector comprises mainly Leisure and Tourism along with some service businesses. The attraction of tourist visitors complements the restaurant and small shop environments with supermarkets located to supply the needs of the population. Here there is also a seasonal demand for immigrant workers

To achieve the regeneration of the coastal areas has involved heavy resources of senior officer time and local groups to work through the multitude of economic, social and environmental issues. Major projects in Exmouth are ongoing. Delivery of several projects in Seaton have been successful. Key projects in Sidmouth are now beginning

Issues across the whole area

Intermingled through these main areas are the many sectors comprising businesses and economic activities that are similar to those found in any urban town and city areas. These have grown in rural coastal and town locations, in part because of improved broadband connectivity.

Market towns as well as coastal towns are a clear and obvious economic locus. Honiton, for example, has a population of around 12,000 residents and sits in a central point in East Devon, well served by road and rail. By some definitions it would be classified as urban, but it very clearly forms a focal point for rural services and provides economic and wider services for a substantial rural hinterland of villages spread through Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Recent work in developing our Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (<https://www.gesp.org.uk/>) has identified four transformational sectors (or areas) as having significant potential to develop across the functional economic market area (FEMA) we share with neighbouring local authorities. These are across Smart Logistics, Data Analytics, Knowledge Based Industries and Environmental Futures and a transformational Sectors Action Plan is in development to identify ways in which strategic planning policies can support the growth of employment in these areas. A clearer focus is required on how these priority sectors might play a part in rural economic development, especially since analysis of European industrial strategy has shown huge increases in (output focussed) productivity through technological engagement in rural and agri-sectors.

Infrastructure and services

Transport

Most rural households need a car and, where available, will in most cases be the preferred, cheapest, quickest and most flexible means of transport. The public transport North-South across the area is poor. The availability of services can be of variable quality in most AONB areas which comprise 2/3 of the area. These services are often very poor and frequently it will be expensive.

Poor public transport availability in many rural areas to take children and young adults to education facilities, especially for 16 to 18 year olds to college, was highlighted as a particular concern. At this age, in comparison to education travel for younger pupils, there may be a requirement for pupils to pay for fares.

The worsening state of public transport provision between towns and to rural settlements remains an inhibitor to employment and skills development. This also has a direct adverse impact on the likelihood of employment generating development being approved in rural areas, since planning teams commonly cite 'dependence on motor vehicles' as a material reason for refusal. The issue here is that in public transport planning, provision often follows demand and if there were a concentration of increased commuting requirement in appropriate rural centres, routes would be amended to serve this.

Broadband

The quality of broadband connectivity is critical to the success or otherwise of rural, coastal or Growth point businesses. Nearly all businesses (whether urban or rural) are dependent to some degree on internet and mobile communications. There is, however, huge variation in broadband speeds across East Devon areas. To promote joint plan making with neighbouring authorities East Devon District Council commissioned Adroit Economics Ltd to produce a Greater Exeter Digital Connectivity Strategy, see: <https://www.gesp.org.uk/evidence/>

5.2 The map in the response to this question, taken from the report, illustrates the huge variation in broadband widths across a large swathe of Devon. The city of Exeter in the centre of the map and Newton Abbot (a town of 26,000 people) on the southern edge of the map are hotspots of connectivity. Elsewhere broadband speeds are hugely variable.

A distinctly rural part of East Devon, on the Eastern side of the map, is a localised hotspot of high connectivity but this is a rare exception in what is predominantly a pattern of poor, and frequently very poor, connections.

The concerns are, however, not just about download speed, they also extend to reliability and resilience. Evidence suggests that demand for digital connectivity (both fixed and mobile) will continue to grow exponentially for domestic, employment and transportation needs. On this basis, and in line with Government policy, we should therefore be moving towards full-fibre connections (i.e. Fibre to the Premises and minimising reliance upon archaic BT copper wires at any point in the network). Fibre allows for gigabit (i.e. >1,000Mbps) speeds uncontended (contention is the sharing of a broadband signal by a group of customers which results in reduction of the bandwidth available to each individual customer) and stable (not affected by weather, flooding etc) internet connections. Growth in the demands for automated and guided vehicles, smart infrastructure, precision farming, mobile working and mobile streaming etc. will require similar improvements in mobile connectivity, likely to be delivered through 5G. 5G mobile connectivity will be reliant upon sufficient fibre backhaul from masts/broadcasters.

Fibre provision is very costly and currently massively dependent upon inadequate commercial rollout. It is therefore difficult to avoid the conclusion that it will remain the case that Government money (in the absence of other subsidy mechanisms) and innovative public sector support will be essential in order to secure full high quality rural and coastal area coverage. Because businesses, and economic activity in general, is increasingly dependent on high speed, reliable and resilient fixed and mobile digital connections any areas that lack good connections are inherently at a disadvantage. Furthermore as more business actively moves on-line the gulf of disadvantage between those with good access and those without grows wider.

Business, employment, skills and demography

It was noted that planning constraints can prevent development of new or extended premises from being built. Economic Development report a common perception that Planning remains a barrier to employment provision across rural areas where there is land. In urban areas it is difficult to protect existing sites from conversion to housing. We need closer communication and a stronger shared understanding of the respective challenges facing both planners and businesses. Grants for removal of pre-application fees for smaller scale commercial applications Via Economic Development would go a long way to helping achieve greater dialogue.

However with significant environmental assets in East Devon there is a balance to be struck between maintaining high environmental quality (which is an economic asset in its own right) whilst also accommodating appropriate development.

Key recommendations from EDDC to recent House of Lords Rural enquiry include:

- Raising the profile of the EDDC area
- Develop an action plan for each sector
- A South West LEP's coalition to support the evolution of the food sector
- Upgrade and expand network of rural work hubs
- Proactively seek out relocation opportunities for organisations incl. gov. agencies to SW rural areas

1. **Small and Scale-up Businesses.** We seek to address issues associated with the higher proportion of self-employed, micro and small businesses in rural areas and the fact that while satisfying for those employed by them they are generally low paid with a lower success rate at scaling up compared to urban areas.

Key recommendations include:

- Encourage collaboration and sharing of resources, knowledge and experience to create a supportive environment
- Target support for women's enterprises and their untapped potential
- Utilise the train the trainer concept to improve the quality of business support
- Effective mentoring and networking programmes
- Develop business start-up apprenticeships with local colleges
- Support programmes for scale up businesses
- Seek government review of impact of tax regime on micro-businesses

2. **Workforce and Skills.** This section looks at issues of recruitment, training and skills in rural businesses. Key recommendations include:

- Develop an exceptional rural leadership and management programme with delivery partners and work with higher education institutions

- Establish a strategic approach to low pay by working with industry
- Look at alternative apprenticeship models to overcome barriers to apprentices in rural areas

3. **Brexit.** This section considers impacts of Brexit such as leaving CAP, loss of funding for economic development, loss of EU workers, changes to tariffs. Key recommendations include:

- Encourage DEFRA to reform system of support payments to agriculture and use the SW as pilot
- Ensure future rural development programme is fit for purpose
- Seek clarity on transition and long term arrangements for migration and trade
- Develop a Brexit response plan to provide support to information to rural businesses

4. **Transport and Accessibility.** This section looks at issues with the quality of strategic road and rail network and the need for improved speed and resilience, public transport integration, accessibility to rural employment, importance of rural cycling and walking, stifling development through planning

Key recommendations include:

- Work with DoT to bring forward improvements
- Develop a challenge fund to design, pilot and roll-out innovative solutions to rural accessibility such as social enterprise models.
- Government should rural proof its funding formulae so as not to disadvantage rural areas
- DEFRA should safeguard the future of national trails and provide funding

5. **Broadband and Mobile Connectivity.** This section identifies the issue of slow broadband speeds and the severe and protracted issues experienced by both residents and businesses in more remote rural areas. Key recommendations include:

- Government should ensure 30Mbps achieved in rural areas by 2020 and increased to more than this by 2025
- Government should require providers to provide roll-out plans to allow alternative projects to be developed where rural needs not to be met
- Provide practical support to community broadband schemes and pilot these and other alternative delivery models
- SW LEP's to conduct independent review of broadband provision in the area
- Government should improve rural mobile phone coverage
- SW LEP's to support businesses to understand how to make best use of digital opportunities

6. **Housing, Planning, Communities and Workspace.** This section identifies housing affordability as a significant issue, issues of delivering workspace when often end market value is less than build cost, threats to rural services through funding reductions.

Key recommendations include:

- DCLG should ensure that all sites for housing in rural areas contributes to affordable housing
- SW LEP's to engage more with LPA's on provision of housing in all settlements
- SW LEP's to liaise with LPA's on how to use best practice nationally to implement second homes policy
- SW LEP's to engage with LPA's on private sector solutions for provision and running of affordable housing schemes
- Local authorities to investigate potential for high quality hostel to address local labour needs
- Government should enable permission in principle to support small scale commercial developments
- SW LEP's to work with LPA's to create more positive and constructive relationships with businesses and follow NPPF

- DCLG should recognise costs of delivering services in rural areas and support pilot innovative solutions
- SW LEP's and LA's should support community and social enterprise businesses

7. **Natural and Cultural Heritage.** This section recognises the importance of heritage to economic success and the need to balance economic growth with protecting heritage or risk longer term damage to these assets. Key recommendations include:

- SW LEP's should invest in improving areas natural and cultural assets as key driver to economic growth
- SW LEP's should build on expertise in natural capital markets
- SW LEP's and LA's should ensure economic development projects safeguard natural and cultural assets
- Explore and develop concept of environmental enterprise zones creating opportunities for businesses to capitalise on these assets

8. **Geography, Hubs and Spheres of Influence.** This section considers urban bias of devolution, city and growth deals, identifies that rural areas within city regions perform better and the role that market and coastal towns could play in addressing this with the right support. Key recommendations include:

- Government should ensure funding deals are equally available outside city regions, develop funding processes that do not disadvantage rural areas by competing with urban projects
- SW LEP's to explore 'distributive' spatial growth with LPA's which recognises opportunities for growth in rural towns and villages creating growth hubs
- SW LEP's should identify opportunities for mutual growth between cities and rural areas e.g. matching rural job opportunities to urban unemployed, local supply chains
- DCLG should extend coastal communities model to cover market towns

9. **Science, Technology, Energy and Innovation.** This section considers how science and technology solutions could drive economic and social change and how rural areas need to keep up with that and maximise opportunities from it. Key recommendations include:

- Develop regional smart rural research platform creating a critical mass of scientists, entrepreneurs and investors
- SW LEP's to develop collaborative approaches to develop local renewable energy solutions including using crowd funding
- DEFRA should fund more on farm trials of new and innovative practices

ED and Regeneration strategic and tactical resources for Commercial Business premises projects

| Role | Growth Point | ED | Regen | Asset | Commercial | Planning Policy | Planning |
|---------|--------------|-----|-------|-------|------------|-----------------|----------|
| Action | AW | RM | AH | TC | Vacancy | MD | CR |
| Find | R | R | A | | R/T | I | |
| Design | R | R | I | T | I | | I |
| Deal | T | T | A | | R | | |
| Deliver | I | I | I | R | T | | T |
| Manage | T/R | T/R | | R | I | | |
| Sell | I | I | A | I | R | | |

A=Authorise R= Main responsibility T= team I=keep informed

Appendix

Economic Information

East Devon's economy comprises 48,000 jobs (BRES, 2016) with 6,320 registered businesses (ONS 2018), 89% of which employ fewer than 10 people. Much of the employment in East Devon is concentrated in the retail; health; accommodation and food industries. We have higher numbers of employees in construction, accommodation and food (tourism) and motor vehicles sectors than the UK average.

Higher skilled, more productive sectors such as finance & insurance; professional, scientific and technical; and business administration are under-represented in East Devon though total gross value added (GVA) in East Devon has been increasing at a growth rate of 16.6% over the last few years (£2,069m in 2011 to £2,413m in 2016). However the growth per capita remains low compared to surrounding Districts

Update for the Overview Committee meeting of 30 January 2020 on the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service 'Safer Together' proposals and public consultation

Following the recent public consultation, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority has approved recommendations on changes to how the service operates, and which will commence with immediate effect.

Under the original proposals, the following options were set out:

- Option 1: Close Appledore, Ashburton, Budleigh Salterton, Colyton, Kingston, Porlock, Topsham, Woolacombe
- Option 2: Option 1 plus remove 3rd appliances from Bridgwater, Taunton, Torquay and Yeovil
- Option 3: Option 2 plus remove 2nd appliances from Crediton, Lynton, Martock and Totnes
- Option 4: Option 3 plus day crew Barnstaple, Exmouth and Paignton
- Option 5: Option 4 plus move to night cover only on second appliance at Brixham, Chard, Dartmouth, Frome, Honiton, Ilfracombe, Okehampton, Sidmouth, Tavistock, Teignmouth, Tiverton, Wellington, Wells and Williton
- Option 6: Option 5 plus introduce 6 roving appliances

During the consultation, the Fire Service held 27 drop-in sessions, attended by nearly 2,000 people. In total, 3,818 responses were received: 3,232 completed questionnaires, 205 written submissions and 381 email responses. Five petitions were submitted with a total of 43,644 signatures.

Having taken account of the consultation response, and having considered alternative approaches, the Authority approved the following revised recommendations on 10th January 2020:

- a. Defer the decision to implement day crewing at Barnstaple, Exmouth and Paignton subject to a revised 24/7 crewing model being agreed with the Fire Brigades Union, including roving appliances, before the end of the 19/20 financial year.
- b. Close Budleigh Salterton fire station and allow affected firefighters to respond from Exmouth fire station.
- c. Relocate Topsham fire station to Service Headquarters (Clyst St George) and relocate one of the fire engines to Middlemoor fire station (both fire engines to be relocated to Service Headquarters until an on-call crew can be established at Middlemoor).
- d. The third fire engines from Bridgwater, Taunton, Torquay and Yeovil to be replaced with alternative vehicles.

- e. Remove the second fire engines from Crediton, Lynton, Martock and Totnes.
- f. Introduce variable fire engine availability dependent on risk.

Under the revised recommendations Colyton fire station would remain open but will be subject to periodic review. It was also recommended that risk-based availability is initially introduced for second fire appliances at Honiton and Sidmouth.

The full paper from the meeting of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority meeting held on 10th January is available at

<http://www.dsfire.gov.uk/News/Newsdesk/PressReleaseArticle.cfm?ReleaseID=2277&siteCategoryId=3&T1ID=26&T2ID=36>.

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|--|
| Overview Committee Forward Plan 2019/20 |
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Work allocated to the Forward Plan:

| Meeting date | Topic |
|------------------|---|
| 30 January 2020 | House of Lords Select Committee on Regeneration of Seaside Towns |
| 27 February 2020 | Governance Arrangements at EDDC |
| 26 March 2020 | Following discussion at the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Budget meeting on 15 th January 2020; Commercialisation Strategy Consultancy spend 2020 / 21 |

* Dependent on publication dates of the respective Select Committee.

Work for scoping and/or allocation to the Forward Plan:

| Proposed date | Topic |
|---------------|---|
| tbc | Following discussion at the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Budget meeting on 15 th January 2020; Delivery at Cranbrook Town Centre Seaton Wetlands Link Project |
| tbc | Public toilet review – consultation plan |
| | Select Committee report on Rural Economy* |
| tbc | Income generation – continuing the work of the Committee from the previous civic term in order to help the budget position, look to find more income generation opportunities. A suggestion was made that this be included in the Commercialisation Strategy development following the Joint Meeting on 15 January (see above). |
| tbc | High street and village centre regeneration – expand to include the development of new high street in reference to Cranbrook, and centres, initially relating to the towns before later work on villages. A suggestion was made that work on Cranbrook be included in Delivery at Cranbrook Town Centre following the Joint Meeting on 15 January (see above) |
| tbc | Natural Capital in the Heart of the South West document |

Work identified by the Committee for prioritisation, scope and allocation:

1. Business case for increase in community engagement officers – this fell under the remit of the Housing Review Board, where the issue had already be raised, but could also be monitored by the Overview Committee as part of its review of the service plans;
2. Review out of hours telephone system provided by the council for residents and tenants – the Portfolio Holder for Environment had raised this issue with the Chairman, as he had experienced a poor response to a call but also felt that the system had not been reviewed for some time and therefore should be considered by the Overview Committee;
3. Climate change – including rising sea levels, coastal erosion, single use plastics, to determine what can be done locally as well as lobby Government and feed into the Devon group;
4. Fairer funding from Government for the south west region
5. Community focus
6. Promotion of EDDC services to local residents
7. Improving working with Town and Parish Councils
8. Tackling poverty
9. Reviewing internal recharges – understanding the breakdown of recharges, and being satisfied that these are correctly applied to be confident that the Council is as efficient as possible before examination of making further budget reductions;
10. Street trading
11. Right to buy effect on housing stock
12. Delivery of housing, specifically assisted living
13. Transport – specifically fares for 16 – 18 year olds still in education but not qualifying for state help. A suggestion was made to widen this to look at the timetable too, as many recent changes has resulted in longer and more complex journeys for residents, particularly to the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital;
14. Policy implementation – that policies put in place were being applied in practice. Whilst no specific examples of where a policy was not being applied were given, the suggestion that equalities would be a good starting point;
15. GESP involvement