

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Council held at Online via the Zoom App on 24 February 2021

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 9.09 pm

123 Public speaking

The Chair welcomed members of the public and Councillors to the meeting and explained that all participants were taking part remotely and the meeting was also being viewed online and recorded.

The Chair then started the meeting by doing a roll call of those present, and confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

During the meeting the public would be able to participate if they had pre-registered to speak. No members of the public had pre-registered.

124 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the three previous meetings of the Council held on 9th December 2020, 13th January 2021 and 9th February 2021 were confirmed and agreed as a true record.

125 Declarations of interest

130. Revenue Estimates, Capital Programme and Council tax Resolution 2021/22.
Councillor Paul Hayward, Personal, Clerk to All Saints, Chardstock, Newton Poppleford and Harpford Parish Councils.

131e. Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 10 December 2020 Minute numbers 95 - 107.
Councillor Denise Bickley, Personal, Husband has a parking permit.

131e. Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 10 December 2020 Minute numbers 95 - 107.
Councillor Joe Whibley, Personal, An Exmouth Town Councillor and partner has a parking permit.

131e. Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 10 December 2020 Minute numbers 95 - 107.
Councillor Paul Millar, Personal, Paid employment with the Co-operative Group, a store between two car parks.

134. Motion: Future High Streets Funding.
Councillor Olly Davey, Personal, An Exmouth Town Councillor.

134. Motion: Future High Streets Funding.
Councillor Paul Jarvis, Personal, Works on a High Street.

134. Motion: Future High Streets Funding.
Councillor Paul Millar, Personal, Paid employment with the Co-operative Group

126 **Matters of urgency**

There were no matters of urgency.

127 **Announcements from the Chair and Leader**

The Chair announced the resignation of Cllr Kathy McLauchlan as an EDDC Councillor and Ward Councillor for Whimple and Rockbeare, last week. She was elected in May 2019 and made a valuable contribution to the work of the Council in her role on a number of Committees such as Planning. She thanked her for the service she gave whilst serving for EDDC and wished her all the best in her future endeavours.

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

There were no confidential or exempt items.

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

Fifteen questions had been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 9.2. The questions and answers had been circulated with the agenda and published on the website. Councillors submitting questions are entitled to put a related supplementary question (Procedure Rule 9.5). A summary of the supplementary questions asked and the responses is set out below.

Q1: Cllr Chapman asked if Domestic Abuse had increased proportionately in East Devon in line with a national increase and if more support was needed for those affected. In response the Portfolio Holder for Homes & Sustainable Communities stated that there had been a big increase, with 88 approaches since April 2020 by those citing Domestic Abuse, and 27 Households being placed in temporary accommodation. It was a high priority, with some discussion ongoing about the use of properties in future being made available for those specifically affected by these issues.

Q2: Cllr Millar thanked the Chair for clarification about points of order being a procedural matter used in relation to the business of the meeting, but since there had been 77 points of order since the current Council term began which had not been raised appropriately, would the Chair remove those attempting to use them if this was the case in future. In response, the Chair stated that she would ensure that all meetings run smoothly and in accordance with the Constitution.

Q4, Cllr Hall asked the Leader if EDDC should not be proactive rather than reactive in its approach to DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) checks on Cllrs. The Leader responded by stating that the Council had to act in accordance with existing legislation and that Cllr Hall could contact his local MP on this matter.

Q5. Cllr Moulding that ward Cllrs had been pressing for developments at Millway Rise for some time, so would the Portfolio Holder for Finance be prepared to meet with the Portfolio Holder for Economy & Assets, ward Cllrs and officers to discuss possible projects for the site.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Finance confirmed that he was happy to do so.

Q6. Cllr Allen stated that he had raised matters in relation to the Members Code of Conduct with the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team about what appeared to be the downgrading of an issue which is a legal necessity by the Chair.

In response, the Chair said that she had also spoken to the Chief Executive on the matter, who would be addressing the issues accordingly.

Q7. Cllr Allen said that since the Chair had interfered with three Conservative Motions proposed for the meeting and that the Leader appeared to be colluding with this, but would he now be advising the Chair to resign.

The Leader stated that he would not dignify the question with a response.

Q8. Cllr Allen asked a supplementary question of the Leader following the written response given but the Leader confirmed that he was unable to answer the question or understand why it was put to him.

Q9. Cllr Twiss asked the Leader if the new Council Plan would be presented to Council before the next elections in two years' time.

In response, the Leader confirmed that the Statement of Intent had been raised at Council in December 2020, and that a lot work would be done on the Council Plan in March ready for it to be available in late spring or early summer 2021.

Q10. Cllr Twiss raised issues relating to improving standards of behaviour by Cllrs, to which the Leader responded by pointing out that it was colleagues of Cllr Twiss which had caused the recording of previous meetings to be removed from the internet.

Q11. Cllr Allen asked the Leader if he understood the legal necessity for a proper stress risk assessment.

In response, the Leader confirmed that he did and had received advice from the HR team because of the complex nature of such matters, which need to be addressed by the Chief Executive as Head of the Paid Service.

Q12. Cllr Allen asked the Chair why three Motions were taken off the agenda but one on High Streets Funding retained.

In response, the Chair confirmed that she had already informed Cllrs of the reason for her decision, based on the number of other significant items on the agenda.

Q13. Cllr Skinner asked the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development if he would support the setting up of a working group to deal with the immediate need to move forward.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development stated that there already plans in place which would be taken forward by the Strategic Planning Committee as a cross-party committee, and that there was no need for another working group.

Q14. Cllr Skinner sought support to make adjustments to policy in order to move forward, to which the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development confirmed that the process was already streamlined and was another debate to be had at the Strategic Planning Committee.

Q15. Cllr Parr stated that the response from the Leader had avoided answering the question about what had made the issue so urgent and led to an Extraordinary Council meeting. She wanted to know when the video recording of the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee would be put back onto the website, since it showed the Chief Executive

being criticised by a Cllr for answering the question put by another Cllr, and the Deputy Leader telling a Cllr to be quiet.

In response, the Leader stated the issue under consideration related to the mental health of staff and Cllrs which was currently proving a challenge. The current administration had sought to appoint a Mental Health officer and had already appointed a Member Champion on this issue. The matter of putting the video recording onto the website was one of legal judgement given that an individual had been specifically referenced in it, but he had nothing to hide if it was put back on.

130 **Revenue Estimates, Capital Programme and Council tax Resolution 2021/22**

The Chair invited members to consider the report of the Section 151 Finance Officer and the recommendations of the Cabinet from its meeting on 3 February 2021 relating to the Revenue and Capital Estimates, the purpose of the report being to enable the Council to calculate and set the Council Tax for 2021/22, and to include the Queens Drive Delivery Group recommendations into the 2021/22 budget of an additional £73k to the Capital Budget and to allocate £19k to Queens Drive Revenue Budget.

The precepts from Devon County Council, the Police & Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall, Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority, and town and parish councils (preceptors) had been added to EDDC's Council Tax requirement. The Council, as billing authority, would formally set the Council Tax for the area to include all the amounts to be collected.

The Council Tax requirement for 2021/22 be set at £9,119,550 with a resulting Council Tax Band D amount of £151.78 (an increase of £5 a year (3.41%) which was within the threshold stipulated by government before triggering a council tax referendum) and that the budget be agreed as presented in the Council papers. The Chair moved the recommendations set out in Appendix A to the report.

Members were reminded that in line with legislation that came into force on 25 February 2014, The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, a recorded vote would now be taken on the budget decision.

The proposal, to agree the formal Council Tax Resolution, as printed in Appendix A to the report was put to the vote and carried.

Recorded vote on the budget:

Councillors Megan Armstrong, Paul Arnott, Jess Bailey, Denise Bickley, Kevin Blakey, Kim Bloxham, Susie Bond, Colin Brown, Fred Caygill, Sarah Chamberlain, Maddy Chapman, Iain Chubb, Andrew Colman, Olly Davey, Alan Dent, Peter Faithfull, Cathy Gardner, Steve Gazzard, Ian Hall, Marcus Hartnell, Sam Hawkins, Paul Hayward, Nick Hookway, Mike Howe, Stuart Hughes, Ben Ingham, Sarah Jackson, Paul Jarvis, Luke Jeffery, Vicky Johns, Geoff Jung, David Key, Fabian King, Dan Ledger, John Loudoun, Dawn Manley, Tony McCollum, Paul Millar, Andrew Moulding, Helen Parr, Geoff Pook, Geoff Pratt, Val Ranger, Marianne Rixson, Jack Rowland, Eleanor Rylance, Philip Skinner, Brenda Taylor, Ian

Thomas, Phil Twiss, Joe Whibley, Tony Woodward, Eileen Wragg, Chris Wright, Tom Wright - voted in favour – 55.

Councillor Mike Allen – voted against – 1.

RESOLVED:

1. It be noted that on 6th January 2021 Cabinet (minute reference 290 refers) calculated the Council Tax Base 2021/22
 - (a) for the whole Council area as 60,084 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")]; and
 - (b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates as detailed in Schedule 1 attached.
2. As a preliminary step, calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2021/22 (excluding Parish precepts) is £9,119,550.
3. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2021/22 in accordance with Sections 30 to 36 of the Act:
 - (a) £91,145,038 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
 - (b) £77,670,005 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
 - (c) £13,475,033 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
 - (d) £224.27 being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
 - (e) £4,355,483 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per the attached Schedule 1).
 - (f) £151.78 being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.
 - (g) The amounts stated in column 5 of the schedule 1 attached given by adding to the amount at 3(f) above the amounts of the special item

or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area specified in column 1 of Schedule 1 divided in each case by the amount at 1(a) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area set out in column 1 of Schedule 1 to which one or more special items relate.

(h) The amounts set out in Schedule 2 attached given by multiplying the amounts at 3(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

4. That it be noted that for the year 2021/22 Devon County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall and Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the District Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Valuation Bands	Precepting Authority		
	Devon County Council	Police & Crime Com for Devon & Cornwall	Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue
A	£1,007.52	£157.71	£60.00
B	£1,175.44	£183.99	£70.00
C	£1,343.36	£210.28	£80.00
<u>D</u>	<u>£1,511.28</u>	<u>£236.56</u>	<u>£90.00</u>
E	£1,847.12	£289.13	£110.00
F	£2,182.96	£341.70	£130.00
G	£2,518.80	£394.27	£150.00
H	£3,022.56	£473.12	£180.00

5. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3 (h) and 4 above, the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the amounts set out in Schedule 3 attached as the amounts of council tax for the year 2021/22 for each of the categories of dwellings shown in Schedule 3.

- 6 The Council has determined that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2021/22 is **not** excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992. As the billing authority, the Council has **not** been notified by a major precepting authority that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2021/22 is excessive and therefore the billing authority is not required to hold a referendum in accordance with Section 52ZK Local Government Finance Act 1992.

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

(a) **Minutes of Cabinet held on 2 December 2020 Minute numbers 267 - 271**

Cllr Arnott presented the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 2nd December 2020. Following a vote by those present in favour these were agreed.

(b) **Minutes of Cabinet held on 6 January 2021 Minute numbers 272 - 302**

Cllr Arnott presented the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 6th January 2021.

Arising from consideration of the minutes the following minutes were called by Councillor Allen:-

1) Cabinet of 6 January, minute number 288 – Minutes of Strategic Planning Committee, with reference to Minute 100, Garden Communities & Delivery Vehicles, regarding a Budget of £300k

Cllr Allen wanted to point out that this was a lot of money to be allocated to the local plan review, which could be going into the Council's work on poverty.

Cllr Ledger stated that this recommendation had been debated at the Strategic Planning Committee, which was a cross-party committee, and had been agreed unanimously.

2) Cabinet of 6 January, minute number 292 – Poverty – our response to the crisis', regarding the Poverty Strategy

Cllr Allen wanted to stress the urgency of bringing forward the poverty strategy and noted the proposal for £100,000 to be allocated to supplement the Hardship Fund. He asked the Leader when he expected the Strategy to be ready.

The Leader confirmed that Cllr Armstrong had been leading the work on the poverty strategy at the working panel, which is where the issues should be debated.

Cllr King confirmed that he had proposed that the £100,000 should be allocated as a contingency fund and used after April 2021, and that it could be reduced accordingly if Devon County Council make funds available, which they now have.

Cllr Armstrong confirmed that a draft of the Poverty Strategy will be available in April.

Following this debate and a vote by those present, the minutes of Cabinet on 6th January were agreed.

(c) Minutes of Cabinet held on 20 January 2021 Minute numbers 303 - 309

Cllr Arnott presented the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 20th January 2021. Following a vote by those present in favour these were agreed.

(d) Minutes of Cabinet held on 3 February 2021 Minute numbers 310 - 331

Cllr Arnott presented the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 3rd February 2021.

Arising from consideration of the minutes the following minutes were called by Councillor Allen:-

Cabinet of 3 February, minute number 318 – Minutes of the Poverty Working Panel held on 18th January, regarding the Hardship Fund Support

Cllr Allen confirmed the issue had been covered under the previous called minute.

Cabinet of 3 February, minute number 321 – ‘Supporting economic Recovery’, regarding the Prospectus for £1 million addition to Business grant funds

Cllr Allen referred to the decision made in relation to funding to be made available offering support for businesses and asked the Deputy Leader to clarify the eligibility criteria for the new grant funds.

The Deputy Leader stated that there were two separate funds and the Council would effectively be acting as agent on behalf of government, and applying their criteria. He also said that Andrew Wood, Service Lead for Growth, Development & Prosperity had emailed Cllrs on 24th February with the details.

Following a vote by those present in favour these were agreed.

(e) Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 10 December 2020 Minute numbers 95 - 107

Cllr Brown presented the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 10th December 2020.

Arising from consideration of the minutes the following minute was called by Councillor Millar:-

Scrutiny Committee of 10 December, minute number 106, regarding the recommendation on an increase in Car Park charges.

Cllr Millar wanted to move an alternative recommendation to those proposed in the minutes, on the basis that car parking charges had not increased for eleven years. However, Councils no longer received Government revenue support grants and payments via car parking charges was an income stream which helped councils to maintain other services.

He wanted to propose” that Council agrees to defer the

recommended increases for Category 1 car parks and all permits until 1 April 2022”.

Cllr Rowland seconded the alternative recommendation proposed.

Comments in a debate on the issue included the following;

- That caution had to be exercised in relation to the risks to the budget and that charges would have to be increased next year.
- That the Council had to produce a balanced budget and manage its reserves or face a shortfall.
- That the introduction of a monthly payment scheme should not be deferred to April 2022, since this would make permits more affordable to people during 2021.
- That deferring the increase in charges is not sensible given that it supports the maintenance of other services.
- That charges should be deferred but the Council should not limit its freedom to decide in future what the charges should be.
- That to defer an increase in charges this year is socially irresponsible and suggestions are needed to determine how the shortfall in the budget of approximately 3% is to be made up.
- That the current situation is highly unusual with external circumstances balanced against risks to the budget, but reserves are there to support such situations.
- That there is an argument in favour of many people who cannot afford increased car parking charges.

Cllr Loudoun proposed having a recorded vote on the revised recommendations, which was seconded by Cllr Thomas and following a vote was carried by a majority of those present.

Following discussion on the proposal the Monitoring Officer confirmed the revised recommendations to Council contained within the Scrutiny Committee minutes (minute 106 refers) as follows;

1. That TAFF Members propose the introduction of a new tariff of £1.20 per hour in East Devon District Council’s category 1 (prime location) car parks effective from 1 April 2022
2. That TAFF Members also propose the introduction of a revised pricing structure for car parking permits with a £120 per annum for a single town (and an additional £24 per each town added) up to a maximum annual permit charge of £240 to cover all towns from 1 April 2022, and to provide a ‘pay monthly’ scheme for all regular customers starting with a single town permit for just £10 per month from 1 April 2021.

East Devon District Council’s Category 1 Car Parks are currently as follows;

Sidmouth - Roxburgh, Ham (East and West), Manor Road, Mill Street and Manor Pavilion

Exmouth - Imperial Road, Imperial Recreation Ground, London Inn, Beach Gardens, Queens Drive, Queens Drive and Queens Drive Echelon,

Honiton - Lace Walk, King Street and New Street (North and South),

Beer - Central and Fore Street

Budleigh Salterton - Rolle Mews and Lime Kiln

The Chair invited those present to vote.

Recorded vote:

Councillors Mike Allen, Paul Arnott, Denise Bickley, Fred Caygill, Sarah Chamberlain, Olly Davey, Peter Faithfull, Cathy Gardner, Steve Gazzard, Sam Hawkins, Paul Hayward, Nick Hookway, Mike Howe, Stuart Hughes, Ben Ingham, Sarah Jackson, Luke Jeffery, Vicky Johns, Geoff Jung, David Key, Fabian King, Dan Ledger, John Loudoun, Dawn Manley, Tony McCollum, Paul Millar, Andrew Moulding, Helen Parr, Val Ranger, Marianne Rixson, Jack Rowland, Eleanor Rylance, Philip Skinner, Brenda Taylor, Joe Whibley, Eileen Wragg, - voted in favour – 36.

Councillor Jess Bailey, Kevin Blakey, Kim Bloxham, Susie Bond, Colin Brown, Iain Chubb, Andrew Colman, Alan Dent, Ian Hall, Marcus Hartnell, Paul Jarvis, Geoff Pook, Ian Thomas, Phil Twiss, Tony Woodward, Chris Wright, Tom Wright – voted against – 17.

Councillor Megan Armstrong, Maddy Chapman – abstained – 2

Following the vote the revised recommendation was carried.

RESOLVED:

1. That TAFF Members propose the introduction of a new tariff of £1.20 per hour in East Devon District Council's category 1 (prime location) car parks effective from 1 April 2022.
2. That TAFF Members also propose the introduction of a revised pricing structure for car parking permits with a £120 per annum for a single town (and an additional £24 per each town added) up to a maximum annual permit charge of £240 to cover all towns from 1 April 2022, and to provide a 'pay monthly' scheme for all regular customers starting with a single town permit for just £10 per month from 1 April 2021.

Following a vote by those present in favour the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 10th December 2020 were agreed.

(f) Minutes of the Joint Scrutiny & Overview Committees Budget meeting held on 13 January 2021 Minute numbers 108 - 114

Cllr Hookway presented the minutes of the Joint Scrutiny & Overview Committees Budget meeting held on 13th January 2021.

Following a vote by those present in favour these were agreed.

(g) Minutes of the Joint Scrutiny & Overview Committees Budget meeting held on 14 January 2021 Minute numbers 115 - 121

Cllr Brown presented the minutes of the Joint Scrutiny & Overview Committees Budget meeting held on 14th January 2021.
Following a vote by those present in favour these were agreed.

(h) Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 4 February 2021 Minute numbers 122 - 130

Cllr Brown presented the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 4th February 2021.

Arising from consideration of the minutes the following minute was called by Councillor Jung:-

Scrutiny Committee of 4 February, minute number 128, 'Verbal update by Cllr Jung on the role of Coast, Countryside and Environment Portfolio Holder', in order to make a statement to correct an inaccuracy.

Cllr Jung made a statement to correct an inaccuracy in the minutes and clarified that in relation to the Exmouth Beach Management Plan, due to the fact that the report produced was a joint study of the coastline, EDDC's share was £75,000 and not £250,000.

Following a vote by those present in favour the minutes were agreed.

(i) Minutes of the Housing Review Board held on 21 January 2021 Minute numbers 85 - 101

Cllr McCollum presented the minutes of the Housing Review Board held on 21st January 2021.

Following a vote by those present in favour the minutes were agreed.

(j) Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee held on 15 December 2020 Minute numbers 89 - 102

Cllr Ledger presented the minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee meeting held on 15th December 2020.

Following a vote by those present in favour the minutes were agreed.

(k) minutes of the Planning Committee held on 6 January 2021 Minute numbers 186 - 193

Cllr Wragg presented the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 6th January 2021.

Following a vote by those present in favour the minutes were agreed.

(l) Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 7 January 2021 Minute numbers 194 - 202

Cllr Wragg presented the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 7th January 2021.

Following a vote by those present in favour the minutes were agreed.

(m) Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 10 February 2021 Minute numbers 203 -121

Cllr Wragg presented the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 10th February 2021.

Following a vote by those present in favour the minutes were agreed.

- (n) **Minutes of the Audit & Governance Committee held on 26 November 2020 Minute Numbers 51 - 61**
Cllr Hawkins presented the minutes of the Audit & Governance Committee meeting held on 26th November 2020.
Following a vote by those present in favour the minutes were agreed.
- (o) **Minutes of the Audit & Governance Committee held on 28 January 2021 Minute numbers 62 - 74**
Cllr Hawkins presented the minutes of the Audit & Governance Committee meeting held on 28th January 2021.
Following a vote by those present in favour the minutes were agreed.
- (p) **Minutes of the Standards Committee held on 19 January 2021 Minute numbers 27 - 34**
Cllr Gardner presented the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 19th January 2021.
Following a vote by those present in favour the minutes were agreed.

132 **Changes to governance arrangements**

The Chair introduced a late report from the Monitoring Officer brought to Council with her agreement, in order to address the changes to the political balance and committee allocations arising recently.

RESOLVED that the following be agreed;

1. The revised political balance and number of seats for the political groups as set out in the table at paragraph 3;
2. The change in committee seats reflecting that the Independent Progressive lose seats on the Audit & Governance, Overview and Licensing & Enforcement Committees. The seats on the Audit & Governance and Licensing & Enforcement go to the Democratic Alliance Group while the Overview Committee seat goes to the Conservative Group;
3. The revisions to the Committee appointments and the appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair of Overview Committee be as detailed in paragraph 6;
4. The revisions to the makeup / appointments to the Panels, Forums and Joint Bodies as detailed in paragraph 7;
5. That Cllr Joe Whibley will continue as this Council's representative on the Devon Rail Forum (formerly the Devon and Exeter Rail Working Party).

133 **Motion: Future High Streets Funding**

The following motion was;

Proposed by; Cllr Joe Whibley

Seconded by; Cllr Paul Millar

Supported by Cllrs; Paul Arnott, Olly Davey, Tony Woodward, Eileen Wragg.

Future High Streets Funding

This Council resolves to write to Simon Jupp MP and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government Robert Jenrick to express our disappointment that

Exmouth was not, as promised on December 8th 2019, given the opportunity to engage with the bidding process for the Future High Streets Fund, and asks:

- 1) Why the announcement four days before a General Election ([Appendix A](#)) was not followed with any communication, a firm process and confirmation of the next steps to be announced to East Devon District Council (the responsible authority for submitting such bids)?
- 2) Why no reply was received to the letter sent by the former Leader of the Council in January 2020 ([Appendix B](#))?
- 3) If there will be future iterations of Future High Street funding, even though the previous process was described as 'once in a lifetime' and a spokeswoman from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government has stated that the rest of the funding has been transferred elsewhere? ([Appendix C](#))
- 4) Was a unilateral decision taken by the Secretary of State anywhere else in the country to subvert the bidding process?

Should there be confirmation that the Future High Streets funding is to continue, the Council resolves to request a meeting with Mr Jupp to work together cross-party to prepare a bid.

Should there be confirmation of no further Future High Streets funding, that this Council agrees to take independent legal advice to establish whether there is a basis for making a complaint to the Electoral Commission about possible election fraud.

The Chair invited the proposer, Cllr Whibley, to speak to the motion

Cllr Whibley gave a brief narrative about the promise given in 2019 of £150,000 for Exmouth to develop a bid to support an application to the High Streets Fund being made available by government. The money did not arrive and subsequent letters and approaches to the MP Simon Jupp from the Leader of EDDC received no reply. In January 2021, it was stated in the press that Simon Jupp MP was looking forward to working with the Council. Cllr Whibley had proposed the Motion because he considered that an explanation was now required from the MP.

The Chair invited the Seconder, Cllr Millar to speak to the Motion.

Cllr Millar emphasised the difference between a pledge and a formal announcement of funding for Exmouth which was given by the MP Simon Jupp. Given subsequent statements in the press it appeared to be the case that Exmouth was considered one of the towns most in need of regeneration funds, he wanted to know why there was no opportunity to bid for any. It appeared that Exmouth may have been used for political purposes prior to the election in 2019, in which case, the promise to Exmouth could involve election fraud and EDDC needed to take independent legal advice on the matter.

Cllr Jackson stated that she had been surprised that Exmouth had been pushed forward by a prospective MP at the time rather than Axminster, but also considered that the District Council should be able to operate as the body which assesses which community which could benefit most from government funding. She proposed an amendment to the motion to replace the penultimate paragraph of the Motion as follows;

“Should there be confirmation that the Future High Streets funding is to continue, the Council resolves to request a meeting with all local MPs to work together cross-party to prepare a bid for whichever town or community is, according to the grant criteria, and East Devon District Council’s assessment, most likely to succeed in any such bid”.

Cllr Whibley as proposer, and Cllr Millar as seconder, were happy to accept the amendment into the Motion.

Cllr Loudoun expressed his view that Exmouth had been used as a political football prior to the last election, and that the MP Simon Jupp appears to denigrate the Council and not wish to work with it. He appealed to Conservative Cllrs to invite Simon Jupp to work with the Council in future in the interests of his electors.

He wanted to propose an amendment to the Motion by removing the final paragraph on the basis that the action outlined in the final paragraph would be pursued.

Cllr Whibley as proposer, and Cllr Millar as seconder, were happy to accept the additional amendment into the Motion so this remained the substantive Motion to be debated.

Cllr Chapman commented that Simon Jupp MP had demonstrated his support for Exmouth on many occasions and had lobbied the Secretary of State, Robert Jenrick, to add Exmouth to the list of places which could apply for government funds, and that the Council should work with the local MP rather than sabotage his efforts.

Cllr Bailey expressed her view that this was a political Motion and was confrontational rather than collaborative.

Cllr Caygill referred to plans by government to boost the High Streets and regeneration of towns through initiatives such as the Levelling Up Funds and UK Shared Prosperity Funds, the prospectuses for which may be released soon.

Cllr Arnott stated that there were issues relating to fair play in politics. He agreed that questions needed to be answered by local MPs and saw little point in seeking legal advice about promises made by politicians. However, writing to ask for factual information about the issues under discussion would be expected and not considered confrontational or impolite.

The Chair invited Cllr Whibley to give his right of reply.

Cllr Whibley encouraged support for the amended Motion, and said that he would be happy to work with Simon Jupp in a collaborative manner if it was in the interests of Exmouth residents.

The Chair invited those present to vote and the Motion was carried by a majority.

RESOLVED that;

This Council resolves to write to Simon Jupp MP and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government Robert Jenrick to express our disappointment that Exmouth was not, as promised on December 8th 2019, given the opportunity to engage with the bidding process for the Future High Streets Fund, and asks:

- 1) Why the announcement four days before a General Election ([Appendix A](#)) was not followed with any communication, a firm process and confirmation of the next steps to be announced to East Devon District Council (the responsible authority for submitting such bids)?
- 2) Why no reply was received to the letter sent by the former Leader of the Council in January 2020 ([Appendix B](#))?

- 3) If there will be future iterations of Future High Street funding, even though the previous process was described as 'once in a lifetime' and a spokeswoman from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government has stated that the rest of the funding has been transferred elsewhere? ([Appendix C](#))
- 4) Was a unilateral decision taken by the Secretary of State anywhere else in the country to subvert the bidding process?

Should there be confirmation that the Future High Streets funding is to continue, the Council resolves to request a meeting with all local MPs to work together cross-party to prepare a bid for whichever town or community is, according to the grant criteria, and East Devon District Council's assessment, most likely to succeed in any such bid.

The Chair thanked all those participating or watching the meeting online and declared the meeting closed at 9.09pm.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

V Ranger (Vice-Chair)	V Johns	S Gazzard
M Armstrong	D Ledger	I Hall
P Jarvis	J Rowland	M Hartnell
S Jackson	J Loudoun	M Howe
S Chamberlain	D Bickley	B Ingham
P Arnott	J Bailey	G Jung
K Blakey	P Hayward	H Parr
K Bloxham	S Hawkins	G Pook
F King	A Moulding	G Pratt
F Caygill	D Key	M Rixson
A Colman	C Gardner (Chair)	E Rylance
P Millar	S Bond	P Skinner
T Woodward	M Allen	B Taylor
N Hookway	D Manley	I Thomas
C Wright	C Brown	P Twiss
O Davey	M Chapman	E Wragg
J Whibley	I Chubb	T Wright
L Jeffery	A Dent	S Hughes
T McCollum	P Faithfull	

Officers in attendance:

Mark Williams, Chief Executive
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing
Susan Howl, Democratic Services Manager
Sarah Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer

Councillor apologies:

D Barrow
C Pepper
B De Saram

Chairman

Date: