

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Joint Budget meeting of the Scrutiny & Overview Committees held Online via the Zoom App on 17 January 2022**

#### **Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 9.30 am and ended at 1.48 pm

#### **38 Public speaking**

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

#### **39 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were received and noted at the previous session on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

#### **40 Declarations of interest**

43. Key Service Plan Objectives 2022 – 2023

Councillor Eleanor Rylance, Personal, Recipient of Covid Business Support Grant.

43. Key Service Plan Objectives 2022 – 2023

Councillor Jake Bonetta, Personal, Member of Honiton Town Council.

43. Key Service Plan Objectives 2022 – 2023

Councillor Vicky Johns, Personal, Member of Ottery Town Council and on their Planning Committee.

#### **41 Matters of urgency**

There were no matters of urgency.

#### **42 Confidential/exempt item(s)**

There were no confidential items.

#### **43 Key Service Plan Objectives 2022 - 2023**

The committees considered individual service plan objectives as set out in these minutes for the following services:

- Finance
- Growth, Development and Prosperity
- Planning
- Governance and Licensing
- Place, Assets and Commercialisation
- Communications, Digital Services and Engagement Team
- HR and Payroll Service

**(a) Finance**

The Strategic Lead Finance, and the Service Lead Revenues and Benefits, provided clarification and response to questions from Members in relation to the service plan for the service for 2022-23.

For the Finance team, work for the coming year would include:

- Preparation of a new Procurement Strategy for Member approval, emphasising the Council's objective to be carbon neutral by 2040;
- Revision of the Investment Strategy to align with the Council's objective to be carbon neutral by 2040;
- Production of a Digital Strategy for Members consideration, with a view to an improved digital service for customers and creating efficiencies for the Council;
- Producing the statutory 2021-22 Statement of Accounts;
- Implementing a new financial system with improved efficiencies and reporting capabilities.

For the Revenues and Benefits team, work for the coming year would include:

- Reviewing the Council Tax Reduction scheme;
- Updating the Corporate Fraud and Compliance Strategy to reflect high risk areas of lost income;
- Undertaking further measures to improve business rates and sundry debtor income collection levels;
- Implementing online services including automation to reduce paper bills issued and create more efficient ways of working;
- Carrying out a review of the telephony within the Customer Service Centre;
- Continuing to develop a poverty dashboard to give greater insight into the impact of poverty within the district;
- The team had been contacted by the District Councils' Network over its work around financial resilience; the Network was very keen for the team to join a focus group session with the Department for Work and Pensions, as one of only eight district councils on that working group.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance thanked the Finance team for their very good work, remarking on the considerable work involved in delivering government grants within specified timescales and commending the team for having met targets every single time.

Clarification and responses included:

- Some Members raised that not everyone could access digital services, due to disability or lack of internet access or equipment, and asked whether information was available in hard copy, on request. The Strategic Lead Finance confirmed that people could make contact by phone and documents in hard copy would be produced, if required;
- In respect to the audit, a Member commented on difficulties with the auditor's timelines and asked if the team had enough resilience to account for delays. The Strategic Lead Finance stated that Finance was a small team and the audit coincided with the budget process, which was another key element of work. In pre-empting the challenges, the budget process had been started earlier to get standard calculations out of the way and free up the team for when the auditors come in;
- Comment was made that the introduction of new IT systems could go very wrong; was there enough contingency built in for the team to cope in the event of problems with the new finance system? The Service Lead Finance responded that Strata had put together a careful business case

concerning the budget required to implement the new system and there would be a stringent testing process carried out before the new system went live and the old system turned off;

- A question was asked about whether the Investment Strategy included the pension fund. The Strategic Lead Finance reported that the pension fund was not included within the Council's policies and strategies since it was administered by Devon County Council and Peninsula Pensions; East Devon DC did exert pressure, however, to ensure that investments were in the right place to address the carbon reduction programme;
- Members remarked on the considerable rise in costs of providing emergency accommodation for the homeless; comment was made that there should be a key objective in the Finance service plan around working with the Housing service to review this issue. The Strategic Lead Housing & Environment and the Strategic Lead Finance agreed that wording could be included in the Finance service plan to this effect;
- A Member commented that when major financial difficulties arise for people, matters can escalate quickly. They questioned: i) were the Revenues & Benefits team able to identify when people were showing early warning signs of financial stress and were at risk of homelessness?; and ii) given they had lost two full-time equivalent staff members, were they adequately resourced in the event of an upturn in threatened homelessness? The Service Lead Revenues & Benefits stated that the poverty dashboard enabled the Financial Resilience team to identify issues in a holistic way and intervene early and proactively. Early communications around missed council tax payments were softer, to encourage early engagement with people, and more joined-up working had been developed across teams and with Citizens Advice. With these measures in place, a sudden upturn in threatened homelessness was unlikely, and resourcing problems were not anticipated.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees** that the Service Plan 2022-23 for the Finance service be adopted, subject to:

- Inclusion of a Key Service Objective for the Finance service to work with the Housing service to review the rise in costs of providing temporary accommodation for the homeless.

**(b) Growth, Development and Prosperity**

The Service Lead Growth, Development and Prosperity provided clarification and response to questions from Members in relation to the service plan for the service for 2022-23.

For the Growth, Development and Prosperity team, work for the coming year would include:

- Investment proposals for Cranbrook town centre, particularly the delivery of Cranbox, to provide the community with a revenue generating asset;
- Supporting the work of the Cranbrook Strategic Delivery Board;
- Delivering the Clyst Valley Regional Park proposals, in engagement with key stakeholders and the community;
- Progress the Crystal Clear Clyst bond work, utilising funding from the Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund;
- Delivering the South East Devon Habitat Migration Strategy;
- Actively sourcing and securing funds to promote the district's economy in relation to the Shared Prosperity Fund and the Levelling Up agenda;
- Ensuring the Innovation and Resilience Fund is fully deployed to support economic recovery and promote transition to a low carbon economy;

- Delivery of the Employment and Skills project;
- Developing initiatives to secure economic investment in the district and generate employment opportunities;
- Supporting the development of projects funded through the Community Renewal Fund to benefit local people and organisations;
- Supporting delivery of the Poverty Reduction Strategy;
- Developing the infrastructure needed to support the local economy;
- Developing a Tourism Strategy with an emphasis on sustainable tourism, ensuring alignment with the Cultural Development Strategy;
- Leading the Enterprise Zone programme to accelerate delivery of new commercial space;
- Continuing to develop the simplified planning regime in the Enterprise Zone area by bringing forward further Local Development Orders;
- Supporting the development of a sustainable aviation cluster focused on Exeter Airport, in line with the Local Industrial Strategy;
- Supporting improvements to digital connectivity in the district by liaising with Connecting Devon & Somerset appointed and commercial providers.

The Portfolio Holder Economy and Assets commented on the impact of the pandemic on tourism, retail, high streets and the economy, and thanked the team for their work in consistently drawing in funds from government grants to support resilience in business and the creation of jobs in East Devon.

The Portfolio Holder Climate Action and Emergencies remarked that the UK had 'some of the leakiest homes in Europe' which needed retrofitting, and this created opportunities for jobs and upskilling.

Clarification and responses included:

- Following request for clarification, the Service Lead Growth, Development & Prosperity stated that, with an initial cohort of ten farmers/landowners in the Clyst Valley, the Crystal Clear Clyst Bond was looking at whether there was a financial regime that could incentivise tree planting as part of the long-term economic sustainability for farms, going forward, and what it would take to move from the current level of tree coverage up to the objective of 20%;
- A Member asked that the wording around increasing canopy cover through the Crystal Clear Clyst Bond includes explicit reference to trees;
- It was noted that the statutory five-year treasury-funded business rate relief for the Enterprise Zone ends in March 2022; would this affect the attractiveness of the Zone, going forward? The Service Lead Growth, Prosperity and Development stated that whereas the relief had been helpful in relation to the Science Park, it had not been a deal-maker or a deal-breaker in accelerating other types of investment. It was particularly relevant to small business, and the team were exploring whether they could extend some form of locally-funded discretionary support to ensure a continued incentive regime, going forward;
- Providing clarity around the Levelling Up bid, the Service Lead Growth, Prosperity and Development stated that the bids for Exmouth had been unsuccessful and an invitation had been received to a feedback session with the Department for Transport and Department for Levelling Up. It was hoped that an anticipated Levelling-Up White Paper would give an indication of the aims and timescales for future rounds of Levelling-Up funds and, at that point, the team would work with local MPs to agree a way forward for future bids;
- A Member commented that the Clyst Valley Trail proposals were exciting

and, if completed, could change the way people commute; how far were we with the delivery plan on this? The Service Lead Growth, Prosperity and Development stated that the team were doing all they could to secure funds to deliver the infrastructure. The delivery plan was expected to be agreed with Devon County Council early this year, which would then be brought to Cabinet to demonstrate how the project would move forward;

- A Member asked if there was a guaranteed number of houses that the new improved heat system would provide for. The Service Lead Growth, Prosperity and Development stated that currently the two networks served 8,000 homes for build out, and 2 million square feet of commercial space. There was potential to also serve a further 4,000 homes in the Cranbrook expansion areas.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees** that the Service Plan 2022-23 for the Growth, Development and Prosperity service be adopted.

**(c) Planning**

The Strategic Lead Planning provided clarification and response to questions from Members in relation to the service plan for the service for 2022-23.

The service plan for the coming year included:

- Drafting policies to deliver better quality homes and more affordable housing, particularly social housing;
- Ensuring site allocations within the new local plan are robust and clear about the infrastructure that must be delivered to support timely delivery;
- Collecting and spending Community Infrastructure Levy monies to deliver the infrastructure to support new development;
- Working with Neighbourhood Planning Groups to deliver Neighbourhood Plans which reflect the aspirations of the community;
- Completing work on and adopting a new Playing Pitch Strategy;
- Engaging with communities on planning applications and policies through neighbourhood planning and implementation of the Neighbourhood Planning Communications Strategy;
- Continuing to work to reduce carbon emissions involved in the operation of the service and drafting policies requiring zero carbon development and measures to minimise embedded carbon;
- Through the new Local Plan, requiring the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure as part of new developments;
- Working to minimise the impact of developments on bio-diversity, trees and migration, and delivering all necessary habitats and flood mitigation measures;
- Develop planning policy to encourage new highly skilled and well paid employment across the district;
- Through the new Local Plan, supporting the diversification of town centres to enable them to thrive;
- Moving forward with planning at Cranbrook and consulting on the main modifications to the development plan;
- The service had seen a considerable increase in applications, and temporary resources had been brought in to deal with these. The high demand was likely to continue into the foreseeable future and would need to be planned for in terms of resourcing. Putting in permanent resources would be cheaper than temporary but would have budget implications for the coming years; however, additional fee income should help to cover the higher expenditure.

Clarification and responses included:

- A Member asked how the service would improve enforcement, and feedback to Members. The Service Lead Planning stated that enforcement was key in ensuring unauthorised development was addressed, otherwise it undermined the policy process above it. The service had three Enforcement Officers doing good work in keeping on top of cases, however enforcement was not a statutory part of the service and was resource-dependent;
- Some Members expressed concern that ward members could no longer see what enforcement action was taking place on particular sites; this information used to be on the website but was not any longer. The Service Lead Planning responded that some site owners complained that publication of enforcement information suggested a presumption of guilt, and he understood the Information Commissioners Office had provided guidance to be taken into account. He recognised it might be appropriate to review how the information was made available to ward members;
- A member asked that the wording of the objective regarding enforcement was revisited to make it a 'SMART' objective. The Service Lead Planning stated he would look again at the form of words, but it would be difficult to make it time-bound;
- Responding to a question about what level of carbon reductions the service hoped to achieve, and how this would be monitored, the Service Lead Planning stated the service's powers were limited to mitigating the impact of development through ensuring key policies were in place via the new Local Plan to address climate change and the impact on biodiversity and protected habitats;
- Concern was raised about a disjointed public transport system particularly on the east end of the district going across the border to Dorset. Could the Council have any impact on this? The Service Lead Planning stated that the Council worked closely with Devon County Council and public transport providers but had limited influence. The service did seek to ensure that new developments were well serviced by public transport. He added that in terms Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) spend, the Infrastructure Delivery Plan talked about improvements to the rail services, particularly delivery of passing loops to deliver half-hourly services along the line to Cranbrook, Honiton and Axminster, and they were in ongoing discussions with Network Rail about the Council potentially part-funding the project;
- A Member asked that an objective be added to the service plan concerning the production of a list of survey requirements for the validation of planning applications. The Member added that they would like to see the validation requirements in relation to bats be set out on the website, together with a report to Strategic Planning Committee within the next three months detailing what the requirements are. The Service Lead Planning responded that validation requirements as drafted were quite broad and dealt with a broad range of species. He stated that he would review the validation requirements and add an appropriate objective to the service plan;
- Concern was expressed that the service did not fully engage with communities over planning applications; it was noted for example that notices were no longer posted on lampposts for minor applications and it had been felt on occasion that democracy was not served. A Member asked for a review of how the Council engaged with the community on planning applications. The Service Lead Planning stated he was happy to review if it was felt appropriate but pointed out that:
  - people were able to register online for automatic notifications of planning applications in their area;

- site notices were still displayed in some circumstances where there were wider implications e.g. on busy routes;
- there were implications in terms of cost and carbon footprint in printing and displaying notices; and
- during the pandemic, developers were asked to post the notices on lampposts themselves and send a photograph confirming they had done so, and this had worked well, but was not enforceable;
- The Service Lead Planning stated that there was a Statement of Community Involvement in place but it was quite light-touch and not specific to various circumstances, and he would be happy to review it and add further detail if Members felt it appropriate;
- It was suggested an objective be added to the service plan to develop policies around low carbon and sustainable tourism and visitor accommodation. The Service Lead Planning responded that he would add this in as an objective, and confirmed it was being worked on already through the new Local Plan;
- Some Members questioned why there were sites put forward for development in the Local Plan which had only recently been refused due to concerns around habitat or unstable land. The Service Lead Planning stated it was important through the Local Plan process to consider all sites put forward, and to assess them. Whilst a previous application might have been unacceptable, that did not mean the site itself was unacceptable. He added that applications would have been assessed in the context of the Local Plan in place at that time but the new Local Plan was being developed which could potentially lead to a different outcome, and it was possible that issues identified could be addressed and overcome;
- A Member observed that there was nothing in the service plan regarding homes in a state of disrepair; could the service exert pressure to bring these homes up to standard, and could there be compulsory purchase of those not brought up to standard? The Service Lead Planning stated that the Planning service could serve an Untidy Land Notice for property in a very poor state of repair but otherwise had little power. Much of the work regarding vacant homes was through Environmental Health and Council Tax and, where there are planning issues, the service worked with those teams to coordinate the response;
- Some Members noted that town and parish councils had put a lot of effort and money into producing their own Neighbourhood Plans and expressed concern that the Council's Local Plan would override that work. The Service Lead Planning acknowledged the potential conflict; the Local Plan took priority in legislation but he recognised the need to respect the content of Neighbourhood Plans and engage in communication over any district-wide issues which conflicted with Neighbourhood Plans. He remarked that the Neighbourhood Planning Officer was available to provide advice, and a regular newsletter was circulated containing guidance. He added that town and parish councils might need to review their Neighbourhood Plans in light of the new Local Plan, if they were to continue to hold weight in decision-making.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees** that the Service Plan 2022-23 for the Planning service be adopted, subject to:

- A review of the Council's enforcement processes and how information about cases is communicated to ward members and the public;
- A review of the validation information requirements for ecological surveys and assessments;
- A review of the Statement of Community Involvement and consultations on planning applications to consider making greater use of site notices to publicise planning applications.

**(d) Governance & Licensing**

The Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing provided clarification and response to questions from Members in relation to the service plan for the service for 2022-23. He informed Members of the following additional information not included in the published service plan:

- There were 4 taxi licence suspensions during the year due to public safety;
- The average response time for Freedom of Information requests is 11 working days;
- A slight change to objectives around reducing the carbon footprint, that enforcement visits will be coordinated to ensure the carbon footprint is minimised when travelling for enforcement purposes.

The service plan for the coming year included:

- Continuing to secure affordable housing through planning and property transactions;
- Providing timely advice and support in relation to site acquisitions and repurposing, to support provision of affordable housing, in conjunction with the Housing Task Force;
- Progressing the Member Development Working Group and completing a review of the Member Development/Training and the Member Induction Programmes to inform preparation for May 2023. In a consultation exercise, the public would be asked for their views on what training should be mandatory for Members and whether what is in the Code of Conduct is adequate;
- The Council's approach to meetings; the government had not legislated for virtual meetings and this Council had responded to a consultation exercise but irrespective of the outcome, there would be some work involved in facilitating virtual, in-person or hybrid meetings.

The Portfolio Holder for Council and Corporate Coordination thanked the Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing and acknowledged the work necessary to facilitate meetings, in whatever form, going forward. He commented on the importance of training for officers and members in understanding governance issues.

The Portfolio Holder for Democracy, Transparency and Communications thanked the Democratic Services team for their support with the development of the Member training and induction programmes.

The Portfolio Holder for Coast, Country and Environment offered thanks to the Licensing team for doing a wonderful job, and to the Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing and his team, for their work over a challenging year.

Clarification and responses included:

- A Member commented they would like to see suggested timescales for the review of the Community Infrastructure Levy regime, and hoped it would be completed before the end of the Council term. The Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing commented that the objective was around supporting the strategic development planning function and did not have an end date but he would add, as a timescale, the end of the Council year;
- It was a Member's understanding that the governance review included in the plan had been shelved and cancelled. The Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing stated that it had not been possible to go to



other Councils to see them in operation, due to the pandemic, and the Government Working Partnership would need to consider how it wanted to proceed with this objective;

- It was commented that some committees were advisory and should continue to hold their meetings virtually irrespective of whether the government legislates for hybrid or remote meetings. A Member expressed that virtual meetings facilitated greater participation and public engagement;
- Responding to a request for clarification, it was confirmed that within the key service objectives, reference to securing affordable housing was based on the government definition of the term. However, the objective of supporting the main Council ambition of affordable housing was more wide-ranging and went beyond the government definition, focusing on delivering what was affordable for the district.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees** that the Service Plan 2022-23 for the Governance and Licensing service be adopted.

**(e) Place, Assets and Commercialisation**

The Service Lead Place, Assets and Commercialisation provided clarification and response to questions from Members in relation to the service plan for the service for 2022-23.

The service plan for the coming year included:

- Contributing to the Strategic Leisure Review and future strategy;
- Supporting the Council's Public Toilet Review by delivering building and refurbishment work, and advising on options for the disposal of surplus public convenience stock;
- Working to improve energy efficiency of the Council's property assets in order to reduce the Council's carbon footprint, and the appointment of a specialist energy consultant to review the current building asset stock and make recommendations;
- Supporting a review of town centre economy and prosperity through work with consultants on the Axe Valley project and the Devon Place Board;
- Considering how the regeneration of the Queen's Drive site and other place making opportunities across Exmouth can support economic recovery and prosperity;
- Preparation of a new Investment Fund Framework to support an interventionist approach to economic recovery and wider prosperity ambitions;
- Managing the Community Asset Transfer processes to support communities through the transfer of appropriate community assets to towns and villages;
- Delivery of a further 3% increase in total rent roll from let property;
- Delivery of £3.25 million of capital works and £250k of maintenance reserve works.

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Action and Emergencies remarked positively on the plans to improve energy efficiency and commented that employing a consultant to advise on the portfolio would pay dividends in the longer term.

Clarification and responses included:

- In response to a question about the process which leads to the registration

of Assets of Community Value, the Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing reported that whilst it was possible for Members to be first decision makers, review must be undertaken by an officer; difficulties could arise in the event that a Member decision is overturned by an officer, upon review. It was countered that Members fully understood that officers must use their professional judgement and, following discussion, it was proposed to recommend a review of the process;

- In clarification concerning the Community Asset Transfer procedure, the Service Lead Place, Assets and Commercialisation stated that learnings had been taken from the Beer pilot which indicated there was significant input required from other services (e.g. StreetScene, car parking) with resourcing implications for those service areas;
- A Member observed that there were inconsistencies in commercial rents within the district and asked how the decision for a 3% rent increase had been taken. It was clarified that the 3% increase was a target across the portfolio as a whole and this was reviewed annually to determine where the market is;
- Concerning preparation for a new Investment Fund Framework, a Member asked what size of the budget it would require and whether this had been added to the list of priorities. The Service Lead Place, Assets and Commercialisation responded that the Investment Fund would be through borrowing via the Public Works Loan Board, and paying back the cost of the borrowing would have implications for the capital budget. The size of the fund would need to be dictated by what is in the framework and what Members are hoping to achieve.
- Responding to a question about how many of the Council's commercial buildings have solar panels, and whether there were plans to extend that for further roll out, the Service Lead Place, Assets and Commercialisation reported that there were solar PV panels on only a small handful of buildings and, through the energy consultant, a range of solutions would be considered some of which use newer technology.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees** that the Service Plan 2022-23 for the Place, Assets and Commercialisation service be adopted, subject to:

- A review of the process that leads to the registration of Assets of Community Value.

**(f) Communications, Digital Services and Engagement Team**

The Service Lead Communications, Digital Services and Engagement provided clarification and response to questions from Members in relation to the service plan for the service for 2022-23.

For the Communications, Digital Services and Engagement team, work for the coming year would include:

- Playing a key role in refreshing the website and improving its accessibility and making it easier for residents to access services online through the website and the East Devon app;
- With the recent appointment of a Corporate Performance and Data Analyst, the service will be able to better reflect the performance of the Council's services through a greater range of performance dashboards and making use of data when the Council makes its decisions;
- Improving the way residents can engage in consultation and engagement exercises in the future.

remarked that the service had faced unprecedented work levels through the pandemic in terms of facilitating the communications being filtered down from central government, on top of their regular work which also increased in keeping residents well informed of service changes, and they had done a sterling job.

Clarification and responses included:

- A Member asked whether the service dealt with matters concerning communications coming in as well as information going out. They had observed that the website showed a digital link to customer service but no telephone number. The Service Lead Communications, Digital Services and Engagement noted the concern and recognised that it was important those without access to digital platforms could still feed into the organisation;
- In response to a question about using the app to deliver outward communications, and how granular that information could be, the Service Lead Communications, Digital Services and Engagement stated that the app could communicate with people via postcode, address or town. Around 30,000 people were registered with the app and whilst he recognised the opportunities, there was a balance to be had because if notifications went out too often, there was a danger that people would delete the app.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees** that the Service Plan 2022-23 for the Communications, Digital Services and Engagement service be adopted.

**(g) HR and Payroll Service**

The Service Lead HR and Payroll provided clarification and response to questions from Members in relation to the service plan for the service for 2022-23.

For the HR and Payroll team, work for the coming year would include:

- Agreeing and implementing changes to working arrangements as a result of the Worksmart Review which is focused on how the organisation meets customer needs, how it meets employee needs and how its ways of working can support climate change aspirations. It was highlighted that, subject to final agreement, this included an Independent Management Review;
- Progressing any recommendations agreed as a result of the Independent Reward Review;
- Developing and implementing a 'grow our own' approach to mitigate against current recruitment and retention challenges and to support diversity and inclusion;
- Improving the Council's employer brand to increase attraction to potential candidates.

The Portfolio Holder for Council and Corporate Coordination welcomed the Service Lead HR and Payroll who started with the organisation 6 months ago and quickly got to work to understand and respond to key issues. He thanked her for outlining the service plan and remarked on the significance of the outcomes set out in the plan for the organisation.

Clarification and responses included:

- A Member highlighted the cost to the organisation of the Investors in

People accreditation and sought to understand the added value that it generates. He observed that other councils in the local area did not have the accreditation. The Service Lead HR and Payroll responded that anecdotally, new starters had reported that Investors in People had contributed to their decision to join the organisation, and it was one of the reasons she herself had been interested in joining. She expressed a view that the accreditation did add value and linked with other priorities around staff recruitment, retention and well being, and how managers were supported, and these would be looked at in more detail in the year;

- In response to a question about trade union links and how membership could be expanded, the Service Lead HR and Payroll stated that the organisation had an excellent working relationship with Unison, and they were involved in all elements of discussions from an early stage. Overall staff membership numbers were not known but from a wider staff engagement point of view, the Council was a very good organisation with regular surveys carried out and acted upon.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees** that the Service Plan 2022-23 for the HR and Payroll service be adopted.

#### 44 **Draft Revenue and Capital Budgets 2022 - 2023**

The committees had agreed a provisional recommendation to Cabinet, subject to discussion on the service plans taking place. The Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing and the Strategic Lead Finance confirmed that none of the recommended amendments to the service plans would have a material impact on the proposed budget.

Councillor Paul Millar proposed, seconded by the Chair, a modification to the list of car parks which it was recommended would be subject to an increased hourly charge of £2.00, to include Exmouth Foxholes and Beer Central, thereby ensuring fairness across the district. One Member expressed that they did not support this proposed modification. There were no further objections.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

The following recommendations by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to Cabinet were agreed at this point:

- To adopt the draft Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2022-23 taking account of the following:
  - adopting a £2.00 an hour charge for a limited number of popular hot-spot car parks within Category 1: Beer Central, Exmouth Queen's Drive, Exmouth Queen's Drive Echelon, Exmouth Foxholes, Exmouth Beach Gardens, Budleigh Lime Kiln, and Sidmouth Ham (East and West) from April 2022; and
  - adopting a £1.50 an hour charge for all other Category 1 car parks from April 2022 but avoid the 10p per year charge for the subsequent three years to prevent damage to vulnerable High Street businesses.
- To review other budgetary requests (e.g. Tree Strategy and StreetScene) which have been rejected in line with new estimated budget forecasts.
- That a working draft of the Car Parking Strategy be presented to the next Overview Committee in order to set timescales for a speedy adoption.

**Attendance List**

**Councillors present:**

T Wright (Chair)  
V Ranger  
M Chapman  
A Colman  
O Davey  
S Hawkins  
J Kemp  
T McCollum  
P Millar  
H Parr  
E Rylance  
D Barrow  
J Bonetta  
S Gazzard  
M Hartnell  
B Ingham  
V Johns (Vice-Chair)  
A Moulding  
T Woodward

**Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)**

A Dent  
M Rixson  
J Loudoun  
P Arnott  
M Armstrong  
K Bloxham  
P Hayward  
S Jackson  
J Bailey  
C Brown  
P Faithfull  
D Ledger  
I Thomas  
J Rowland

**Officers in attendance:**

Tim Child, Service Lead - Place, Assets & Commercialisation  
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance  
Sarah Helman, Democratic Services Officer  
Susan Howl, Democratic Services Manager  
Joanna Fellows, Corporate HR Manager  
Ed Freeman, Service Lead Planning Strategy and Development Management  
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing (and Monitoring Officer)  
Andrew Wood, Service Lead - Growth Development and Prosperity  
Andrew Hopkins, Communications Consultant  
Libby Jarrett, Service Lead Revenues and Benefits

Mark Williams, Chief Executive

**Councillor apologies:**

M Allen  
A Bruce  
C Gardner  
D Manley  
I Hall

Chairman .....

Date: .....