

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Overview Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 12 October 2023

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.54 pm

9 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 July 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 July 2023 were signed as a true and accurate record.

10 Declarations of interest

Cllr B Bailey – Minute 15; Affects Non-Registerable Interest: Member of Exmouth Town Council.

Cllr K Blakey – Minute 15; Affects Non-Registerable Interest: Cranbrook ward member and member of Cranbrook Town Council.

Cllr K Bloxham – Minute 15; Affects Non-Registerable Interest: Cranbrook ward member.

Cllr J Brown – Minute 15; Affects Non-Registerable Interest: Member of Honiton Town Council.

Cllr T Dumper – Minute 15; Affects Non-Registerable Interest: Member of Exmouth Town Council.

Cllr P Fernley – Minute 15; Affects Non-Registerable Interest: Member of Broadclyst Parish Council.

Cllr M Martin – Minute 15; Affects Non-Registerable Interest: Member of Ottery Town Council.

Cllr D Wilson – Minute 15; Affects Non-Registerable Interest: Member of Exmouth Town Council.

Cllr T Olive wished it to be recorded for minutes 14, 15 and 17 that he is Assistant Portfolio Holder Coast, Country & Environment.

11 Public Speaking

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

12 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

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

There were no confidential or exempt items.

14 **Car Parking Strategy - Draft principles and objectives**

The Parking Services Manager introduced this report which set out the draft principles and objectives that will form the basis for the Council's Car Parking Strategy for the proposed dates of 2024-2031, for the Committee to consider.

In discussion at length, Members were broadly supportive of the principles and objectives, and several Members made comments which aligned with a number of the specific objectives set out in the report.

Other points and clarification included the following:

- People who park and charge electric vehicles are currently only charged for charging, and not for parking. This can be reviewed in the future; there are inconsistencies across Devon and some other councils charge for both parking and charging.
- Some members were keen to ensure that parking in short-stay car parks remains free after 6pm.
- Residents parking permits need to be widely promoted, to raise awareness. However, one member was of the view that parking permits are not suitable for all residents.
- Some members would like to see reduced tariffs available for locals and for people who need to travel by car into town from rural locations.
- One Member was of the view that a 7-year strategy could be too long given the changes that can occur over that time, and it might be appropriate to consider a reduced time span.
- Constituents want to see value for money, and if car parking charges are reviewed, then this needs to be balanced with what is spent in wards.
- People should be encouraged to use public transport where possible, given the climate emergency.
- The draft principles and objectives do not cover coach parking.

The following were then agreed:

RESOLVED:

1. The Committee agreed the proposed principles and objectives that will form the basis for EDDC's Car Parking Strategy.
2. The Committee agreed the dates of 2024-2031 for the time period in which the strategy will cover.
3. Members will feed into the strategy by providing their comments to the officers who are preparing the strategy.
4. The strategy is to be brought back to Overview Committee for debate and recommendation to Council via Cabinet.

15 **StreetScene Public Bin Review**

The Assistant Director - StreetScene introduced this report which was a review of the StreetScene bin collection service. The review arose due to Cranbrook Members requesting, through a question to Council, a review of equitable bin charging across the district, and also from the Service's own planned work to review service delivery within operations tied to the recycling and waste contract work.

The review examines the council's litter, recycling and dog collection service charges and operational model. Members were asked to consider the overall policy and the findings of the review, and to discuss whether dog bin charges should be increased in line with the litter bin charges and whether this increase should be staged over two years as suggested, or come forward to one year.

Discussion and clarification included the following:

- Members asked direct questions concerning the content of the report, raised wider issues around the collection and disposal of waste and the town and parishes service charges, and highlighted concerns of particular relevance to their towns, parishes and wards.
- The due date for this report, as set out in the Service Plan, was Spring 2024, however one Member expressed disappointment that the report was not prepared earlier.
- The first occupation in Cranbrook was ten years ago and Cranbrook members were of the view that a strategic plan for the bin collection service should have been prepared alongside developer planning applications and delivery of dwellings. It was noted that continued growth in Cranbrook and other areas required a fundamental review of the bin collection service, and the current report looks at the service holistically.
- Towns and parishes will be looking at their costs, and will be less concerned with equity when compared to Cranbrook; it is Officers assessment that the increase to service charges risks wider reputational damage if those towns and parishes make complaints.
- Whereas the review aims to bring about a more equitable scheme of charges for bin collections, it would not be appropriate to expect residents of resort towns to pay for all of their visitors' rubbish to be collected.
- The proposed new service charges will cover labour costs and on-costs.
- Benchmarking with local district councils is being carried out in order to explore if the StreetScene Service is achieving best value, or if other services apply margins to their external charges.
- Mixed waste bins containing dog waste have weighed up to 30kg and Cranbrook Town Council has worked with StreetScene to put in extra bins at extra cost to the town council, to make manual handling easier.
- Bins on EDDC land or adopted public realm land are collected free of charge by the StreetScene service. Bins on other relevant land owned by others, such as a Town Council, are chargeable.
- This council adopted a policy some 10 years ago which set out that open spaces, and any public waste bins required in those spaces, would become the responsibility of a management company, with residents responsible for the management company's fees. Cranbrook Town Council took the decision to take these charges into their precept, and it is for this reason that bin collections in Cranbrook have become the responsibility of Cranbrook Town Council, and not EDDC.
- Some members expressed a view that the increased charges to town and parish councils should be implemented without delay, given that the Council is currently delivering the service at a loss. It was clarified that the rationale for the proposed two-year roll out for the increase is to reduce the impact on customers and to enable parish and town councils to build the charges into their budgets from April 2024.
- The mapping of bins that has taken place will improve the reliability of dog bin collections.
- It was suggested that if the government reinstate the Dog Licence at a suitable level, this could cover the costs involved in dog waste collection.
- StreetScene Area Officers will work with town and parish councils regarding the locations for new bins.
- Cabinet have agreed to set up a Portfolio Holder team to look at future services work for the recycling and waste contract, and the model of operation for StreetScene operations will be considered as part of this. This work will need to be completed by 2026, when the waste and recycling contract renews.
- StreetScene Operations is working with the Property, Assets and Commercialisation team to identify further depot locations in the district; one Member suggested this could be included in the S106 negotiations current taking place for the Cranbrook expansion areas, or for developments in Honiton or Ottery St Mary.

- Under future services work, it would be appropriate to look into other models of operation, to bring innovation and future transformation into the service delivery.
- The government is due to give some guidance around the Environment Act and the Deposit Return Scheme, and this Scheme will change the landscape of what recyclable materials there are in the materials stream; it is therefore not appropriate to invest heavily in recycling bins and associated logistics, at the present time.

Following the discussion, Members were invited to make suggestions for officers to consider incorporating into the policy, which would then go to Cabinet. Members then voted in favour of the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDED:

1. That the proposed increase to the litter bin collection rate should be applied to the dog bin collections.
2. That the increase to all town and parish service charges should be spread over two years.

16 **Minutes of Scrutiny Committee held on 9 June 2022**

The minutes of Scrutiny Committee held on 9 June 2022 had been referred to Overview Committee by Cabinet on 13 July 2022, to look into making further progress on the following recommendations (set out at minute 7 of the 9 June 2022 minutes):

- To consider a petition platform within the Council's website
- To publicise the Council's petition scheme via the Council's weekly press release

Discussion included the following points:

- Some members expressed concern about bias and leading questions in petitions, however it was noted that this can occur irrespective of whether a petition is on a digital platform, or on paper.
- Members were of the view that a digital petition platform would improve democratic participation in local government and give everyone a voice.

The following was then agreed:

RESOLVED:

1. Officers to research what other authorities have done in terms of digital petition platforms on their websites. In doing so, it would be appropriate to explore costs relative to the benefits, and how councils have ensured that people cannot sign a petition if they are ineligible to do so under the rules set out in the constitution.

17 **Work Programme 2023-2024**

This item was for Members to consider additions to the Overview Committee's work programme. The Chair ran through the items on the current work programme, and invited comment.

Members referred to the item regarding grass cutting in urban areas, and suggested the report should include the idea of liaising closely with Devon County Council and local town and parish councils, given that those authorities also have grassed areas to manage in East Devon.

Members then considered a proposal form submitted by Cllr Mike Goodman which proposed that Overview Committee receives an update on the implementation of the public toilet strategy following recommendations made by Council in 2021, and reviews the direction of travel. It was agreed to add this item to the Committee's work programme, and an update report is expected from the Assistant Director – Place, Assets & Commercialisation.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

B Bailey
J Brown
T Dumper
P Fernley
A Hall (Chair)
Y Levine
M Martin
T Olive
H Riddell
D Wilson (Vice-Chair)

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

P Arnott
K Blakey
K Bloxham
C Brown
M Goodman
N Hookway
G Jung
D Ledger
M Rixson

Officers in attendance:

Richard Easthope, Parking Services Manager
Andrew Hancock, Assistant Director StreetScene
Sarah James, Democratic Services Officer
Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Andrew Melhuish, Democratic Services Manager

Councillor apologies:

J Heath
V Johns
C Nicholas

Chair:

Date: