

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 29 November 2023**

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

The meeting started at Time Not Specified and ended at Time Not Specified

#### **72 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting of Cabinet held on 10 October 2023 were agreed.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the Judicial Review by Colyford Parish Council had been unsuccessful and a further update would be provided in due course.

#### **73 Declarations of interest**

The following declarations of interest were made:

Agenda Item 1 Minutes:

Cllr Paul Arnott declared a non registrable interest.

Agenda Item 23 Mill Street Car Park:

Cllr Paul Hayward declared a non registrable interest.

Agenda Item 15 Review of bin collection service:

Cllrs Olly Davey, Nick Hookway, Sarah Jackson, Kevin Blakey and Kim Bloxham.

Agenda Item 20 Exmouth Sea Wall:

Cllrs Olly Davey and Steve Gazzard declared a non registrable interest.

Agenda Item 29 Part B

Cllr Matt Hall declared a disclosable registerable interest and left the meeting during consideration of the item.

#### **74 Public speaking**

Two members of the public had registered to speak.

##### **Seaton Community Hospital – Application to register an Asset of Community Value:**

Jack Rowland, spoke in respect of Seaton Community Hospital and called on the Council to list the building as an Asset of Community Value. He requested that the application should be considered in a public forum and not through an officer delegated decision.

The Leader thanked him for his comments and officers of the council confirmed that the process for dealing with applications was delegated to officers and followed government legislation and guidance. It was further confirmed that the application had been submitted and the council would determine the application in line with the legislation and guidance.

##### **Agenda Item 15 Mill Street reserved parking spaces:**

A statement on behalf of Sweetcombe Cottage Holidays who represented fifteen Mill Street carpark space lease holders was read out and the comments were considered during the agenda item.

1. During the peak summer months a minimum of June, July, August and September and other school holidays, in our 35 years of experience the Mill Street car park reserved permit holder spaces are fully occupied with some being occupied 24hrs per day , the profile of occupancy will look different if looked at over a 12 month period.
2. If there are shared spaces in the carpark there are many opportunistic parkers who will use these to the detriment of the permit holders who may begin to wonder what they have paid for if they or there guests cannot use a permit holder space , the fees permit holders pay produce more revenue than the pay as you go spaces
3. We fully support Sidmouth residents being offered subsidised permit spaces in the Mill Street car park , a bigger subsidy would be available from the permit holders paying a commercial rate rather than the pay as you go short term spaces.
4. We would support permit holder only spaces at Mill street as there is demand to cover all spaces and a greater subsidy could be provided for local residents
5. If Mill street was turned into a short term car park only , this would be at great detriment to Sidmouth as the cottages let with car parking spaces , which is a key factor for guests booking ,bring in greatly increased footfall and income for the town centre , its shops and restaurants which carry the town throughout the year benefitting all. There is little alternative unrestricted roadside parking in Sidmouth and the Manor Road long stay carpark is an uphill walk for potential guests many requiring town centre accommodation and a level walk.

75 **Matters of urgency**

There were no matters of urgency.

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

There were two items which officers recommend should be dealt with in this way recorded at Minutes 99 and 100.

77 **Minutes of Scrutiny Committee held on 5 October 2023**

Members agreed to note the Minutes of Scrutiny Committee held on 5 October 2023.

78 **Minutes of Strata Joint Executive Committee held on 5 October 2023**

Members agreed to note the Minutes of Strata Joint Executive Committee held on 5 October 2023.

79 **Minutes of Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group held on 7 November 2023**

Members noted the Minutes and recommendations of Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group held on 7 November 2023.

Members discussed the need for an informal group to support the Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group and agreed that a sub group should be set up consisting of representatives from Exmouth Town Council, East Devon District Council, Devon County Council and other stakeholders to fulfil this role.

The Cabinet unanimously supported the recommendations.

**Minute 17 The Draft Placemaking Strategy**

1. That the draft Exmouth Placemaking Plan be fully supported.
2. That a sub group be formed consisting of Exmouth Town Council, East Devon District Council, Devon County Council and other stakeholders.
3. That a Park and Ride facility be considered on the outskirts of Exmouth which provides necessary space for motorhomes, coaches and lorries.

80 **Minutes of Overview Committee held on 12 October 2023**

Members agreed to note the Minutes of Minutes of Overview Committee held on 12 October 2023.

81 **Minutes of Recycling and Waste Partnership Board held on 25 October 2023**

The Cabinet agreed to note the Minutes and recommendations of Recycling and Waste Partnership Board held on 25 October 2023 and requested that the recommendation was amended to approve the budget provision for a trial collection of absorbent hygiene products.

**Minute 19 Absorbent hygiene products collection service - initial proposal**

1. that Cabinet approve the initial budget provision of £20,000 in 2024/25 to run a trial for the collection of absorbent hygiene products.
2. that East Devon District Council approach Devon County Council to share the research to date and seek support from them as the waste disposal authority.

**Minute 23 Any other business - DEFRA residual waste proposals**

that Cabinet approve that East Devon District Council respond opposing the DEFRA residual waste disposal proposals, both individually, collectively with other Devon authorities and lobby the local MP's.

82 **Minutes of Arts and Culture Forum held on 8 November 2023**

The Cabinet agreed to note the Minutes and recommendations of Arts and Culture Forum held on 8 November 2023.

**Minute 7 Arts and Culture Forum constitution update**

that Cabinet recommend to Council the proposed changes to the terms of reference of the Arts and Culture Forum.

83 **Minutes of Housing Review Board held on 9 November 2023**

The Cabinet agreed to note the Minutes and recommendations of Housing Review Board held on 9 November 2023.

**Minute 28 Future of Warm Hubs**

that Cabinet recommend to Council the approval of £50,000 to allocate towards delivering and designating the Warm Hubs project.

### **Minute 29 Review of housing compliance policies**

that Cabinet approve the proposed amendments to the electrical safety policy, legionella plan and policy and asbestos management plan and policy for housing.

### **Minute 31 Finance report**

that Cabinet note the Housing Revenue Account update.

### **Minute 32 Electrical compliance update**

1. that Cabinet note the revision of the Electrical Safety Policy.
2. that Cabinet agree that the Housing Review Board have oversight of the Housing Service's Compliance and Electrical Safety Policy.

## **84 Minutes of Overview Committee held on 9 November 2023**

The Cabinet discussed whether the proposed closing date of 31 March 2025 for Category B and C sites should be brought forward to 2024 due to the level of financial costs to the Council and the likely impact on a forthcoming motion on notice at Full Council on 6 December 2023.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the recommendations could be supported and a motion to rescind a previous decision could be used subject to it being signed by 15 councillors. In the circumstances the Cabinet supported the recommendations from the Overview Committee on 9 November 2023.

### **Minute 23 Public Toilets Update Report**

1. To extend the closing date and any necessary revenue budgets for Category B and C sites until 31st March 2025 to allow a further 12 months to enable an urgent revisiting of negotiations with town and parish councils to look at freehold disposals and other changes to the offer according to a specified timetable and including a renewed effort through Ward Members to engage town and parish councils, with the reality of reduced or removed public toilet provision at the sites should agreement not be reached.
2. For this Council to write to the Secretary of State to push for public toilets to become a statutory service, and to invite other councils in Devon and Cornwall to also do so.

## **85 Review of bin collection service and town and parishes' service charges**

The Cabinet considered a report highlighting details of a review of the StreetScene bin collection service which had examined the council's litter, recycling and dog collection service charges and operational model.

Members recognised the need to continue with the current litter and dog bin collection service, noting that further strategic options were being considered.

In respect of Town and Parish service charges increasing to £4.00 per litter bin collection which would be spread over two years to reduce the impact on customers the Cabinet noted that these charges would be spread out during the two year period.

The Cabinet also considered whether charges for dog bin collections should be increased in line with the charge for litter bin collection and in noting the

recommendations from Overview Committee the Cabinet supported that a charge of £4.00 per dog bin collection should be introduced

Members also received details of a number of other options that would be introduced, including:

- introduction of QR codes on all litter, dog and recycling bins to improve quality management
- further work to be undertaken to explore alternative models and working relationships between StreetScene Operations and Recycling and Waste as part of the SUEZ contract replacement work.
- StreetScene Operations to develop a strategic plan to manage the anticipated population growth in Cranbrook
- Strata project to provide StreetScene Operations with an appropriate software package to manage its operations efficiently

The Cabinet unanimously supported the additional options and agreed the recommendations.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the continuation of the current litter and dog bin collection service whilst further strategic options are considered, be endorsed.
2. To increase all town and parish service charges to £4.00 per litter bin collection which will be spread over two years to reduce the impact on customers, be agreed.
3. That increasing charges for dog bins in line with litter bins following a recommendation made by Overview, be considered.
4. That QR codes to be introduced on all litter, dog and recycling bins to improve quality management.
5. That further work will be undertaken to explore alternative models and working relationships between StreetScene Operations and Recycling and Waste, as part of the SUEZ contract replacement work which is currently underway.
6. That StreetScene Operations develop a strategic plan to manage the anticipated population growth in Cranbrook, the proposed new town and the wider district.
7. That the Strata project to provide StreetScene Operations with an appropriate software package to manage its operations efficiently is prioritised.

**REASON:**

StreetScene Service Plan Objective 5 - Review of the collection model for street litter bins and dog waste bins and the charges:

- Bring about a more equitable scheme of charges for such services, which cover delivery costs.
- Appraise the various models of collection and charges a clearer and more equitable charging schedule across the district where we provide such services.

86 **Housing Benefit Modified Scheme Policy**

The Cabinet received a report setting out details of the Modified Scheme for disregarding income from war pensions for the purposes of administering Housing Benefit.

Members unanimously supported the Housing Benefit Modified Scheme policy continuing to disregard war pensions from the calculation of Housing Benefit to ensure that financial compensation received during service could be used for the purposes it was intended for. Members also requested that the District Council write to the Veterans Minister, Hon. Johnny Mercer MP, to ask that the government amend The War Pensions Disregards Regulations 2007 to ensure that 100% of War Pension income paid to veterans is disregarded from the means test for housing benefit rather than the £10 disregarded at present to recognise the sacrifice and service that veterans have provided to their King and Country.

The Cabinet unanimously supported the policy and the request to write to the Veterans Minister.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Housing Benefit Modified Scheme policy continues to disregard war pensions from the calculation of Housing Benefit, be agreed.
2. That the District Council write to the Veterans Minister, Hon. Johnny Mercer MP, to ask that the government amend The War Pensions Disregards Regulations 2007 to ensure that 100% of War Pension income paid to veterans is disregarded from the means test for housing benefit rather than the £10 disregarded at present to recognise the sacrifice and service that veterans have provided to their King and Country.

**REASON:**

EDDC were signed up members of the armed forces covenant and as part of this were committed to supporting veterans and their families. However, due to changes in senior management the existing covenant has been unable to be located. A new signed covenant was currently being developed by the Corporate HR Manager and it was intended that the modified scheme policy would be reflected within it. However, in the interim EDDC needed to put in place a local Modified Scheme Policy to continue to fully disregard income from war pensions.

87 **Safeguarding update following recommendations from Council 11 July 2023**

The Monitoring Officer updated members following the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 11th July 2023, where Council considered a report from Verita into the actions of the Council following allegations and then criminal charges against former Cllr John Humphries.

Members noted that an Action Plan had been developed to address a number of matters arising from the Veritas report, including:

- Updating the Council's safeguarding procedure to reflect the need for anyone from EDDC invited to a LADO meeting not to go unaccompanied and that they should consult the Safeguarding Lead.
- A report to review and reform the appointment of honorary Aldermen/Alderwomen to be presented to the Overview Committee in 2024.
- Implementation of a development programme for members to incorporate regular 1-2-1's, ongoing training needs assessments, surveys and exit interviews for councillors to be considered by the Member Development Working Group
- Specific procedural guidance added to the safeguarding policy to help users understand how risk should be assessed and managed
- nominating a councillor to be the Safeguarding Champion for members
- Attending mandatory safeguarding training for all officers and councillors
- concerns had been raised with Devon County Council and Devon and Cornwall Police and a copy of their responses was submitted
- Reviewing record keeping had been subject to an Information Governance Audit and the results of the audit would be presented to the Audit and Governance Committee.

Members raised concerns that the response from Devon County Council and Devon and Cornwall Police. Members felt that not all issues raised had been fully addressed and requested that a meeting between Devon County Council, Devon and Cornwall Police, Leader of Council, Monitoring Officer, Safeguarding Lead and Portfolio Holder for

Communications and Democracy and Cllr Jess Bailey should be arranged to bring this matter to a satisfactory conclusion.

**RESOLVED:**

That the update be noted.

**REASON:**

The Council made several important resolutions regarding the Council's safeguarding procedures, and it was important that those resolutions were implemented.

88 **Safeguarding Policy update report**

The Cabinet received a report setting out details of the East Devon District Safeguarding Policy for all staff, members, other workers and volunteers of East Devon District Council.

The Cabinet noted that districts across Devon had produced and adopted a joint safeguarding policy designed to protect children and vulnerable adults. In raising safeguarding standards, EDDC had taken the Devon Districts Safeguarding Policy as an overarching framework and included some additional requirements to the original policy specific to the Council.

Members discussed a number of issues and requested that consideration should be given to incorporating them into the policy and to bring the policy back to Cabinet in January 2024, including:

- How councillors might make referrals needed to be clarified;
- Review the referral process;
- Constitution to be updated to reflect the safeguarding policy;
- Submission of an annual report to Full Council on safeguarding

**RESOLVED:**

To amend the Safeguarding Policy to take into account the comments raised during consideration of this item, as set out above and request that the policy is reported back to Cabinet reflecting the issues raised.

**REASON:**

To ensure that there was a 'fit for purpose' safeguarding policy in place for the organisation.

89 **Homelessness Service update**

The Cabinet received a report setting out an update and review of the homelessness service and resource levels for the Housing Options team, including details of challenges ahead and progress on the composition of the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy.

Members acknowledged that whilst staffing levels were considered adequate at this moment in time there were a number of challenges and risks ahead that could result in the need for additional resources in the future.

The Cabinet noted the report and the challenges that were faced and requested that a further report is provided in six month's time confirming progress and impact.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report and the potential impact of the challenges ahead, and a further report is provided in six months' time confirming progress and impact, be noted.

**REASON:**

To ensure the homelessness service was sufficiently set up and equipped to deal with the level of pressure and homelessness demand, and to keep Cabinet informed and updated in respect of the potential consequences of the challenges ahead.

90 **Exmouth Sea Wall Emergency Repairs Budget**

The Cabinet received an outline to the emergency repairs to Exmouth Seawall, highlighting ongoing risks and to seek authority for the Council to spend up to £1.1m to carry out an emergency repair works.

Members noted that following the recent storms emergency repairs had been carried out with further works identified to carry out repairs to around 255 metres of the sea wall.

The Cabinet unanimously supported the proposals set out in the report and noted that whilst this was a significant spend for the Council it was anticipated the contributions from other parties would reduce the overall costs to the authority.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the carrying out of emergency (and potentially permanent) repairs to Exmouth seafront and delegated authority be given to the Director of Housing Health and Environment in respect of the project, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Director of Governance and Licensing, be approved.
2. Given the emergency nature of the works, the exemption to contract standing orders in respect of the consultancy spend for the sum of £60,000 has been approved by S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer as provided for in the Constitution, be noted.
3. That the exemption to contract standing orders in the sum of £1.1m in respect of the awarding of the contract in respect of the construction works for repairs to the sea wall, be approved.

**RECOMMENDED to Council:**

4. That the sum of up to £1.1m is allocated to the project to carry out emergency works to Exmouth Seafront; such works may also act as the permanent solution. It is noted that external contributions may be received which may reduce the spend.

**REASON:**

Given the location of the failed and failing wall, it was not an option to do nothing and allow the sea to erode the seafront further. Therefore, the most cost-effective option (option C) had been selected to proceed as it would restore the sea defence and reduce impact on public and businesses and allow options going forward for aesthetic improvements if required by planning conditions.

Meeting adjourned at 8.05pm for a 10 minute comfort break.

The meeting recommenced at 8.15pm

91 **Peer challenge update report**



The Cabinet received an update from the Monitoring Officer on the progress towards the Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) and other items following the Council motion passed on the 19 July 2023.

Members noted the following:

- Position Statement currently being prepared.
- Membership of Peer Team
- Interviews with members and officers to be supported with a briefing beforehand.
- Peer Team on site at Blackdown House from 6 – 8 February 2024
- Feedback and a full report at the end of the Peer Team visit to identify what is working well and areas for improvement.

The Cabinet noted that following the report the Council would be invited to prepare an Action Plan within 3 months on the recommendations from the CPC.

Members queried the membership of the Peer Team and whether an Independent Councillor should have been included. The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that the Local Government Association has a rationale for selection of the Peer Team and that this would be raised with them.

The Cabinet supported the approach set out in the report and noted the report.

**RESOLVED:**

That the update and the positive direction of travel, be noted.

**REASON:**

To ensure that Cabinet was up to date in relation to progress towards implementation of the Council motion of 19 July 2023.

92 **Car Park Summer Income report**

The Cabinet considered a report which reviewed the car parking tariff increases that was introduced across the district in April 2022.

Members noted that car parking revenue for Summer 2023 was almost identical to that achieved in 2022, despite a reported decline in visitor numbers to the region due to poor weather.

The Cabinet noted that the Car Parking Strategy for East Devon would be produced in 2024 which would set out how car parks would be used and managed in future years, including reviewing car park pricing, offers and individual car park reviews.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the car parking comparisons for the most recent summer periods, be noted.
2. That the impending EDDC Car Parking Strategy and commitment to ensuring that any future tariff changes were carried out in accordance with the strategy principles once agreed, be noted.

**REASON:**

Car Parking Tariffs are an important mechanism for managing car parking demand, as well as attracting and facilitating visits to East Devon. Tariffs are able to influence traffic movement through our towns and are also intrinsically linked to economic activity in the locations that are served by the car parks. Although the current tariffs were considered a dramatic increase on those that were in place before, the tariffs had not been reviewed

for 10 years previously. With the East Devon Car Parking Strategy being produced next year, it is important to ensure that any future changes are made in accordance with the agreed principles of the strategy, to ensure that the future competing demands for car park use are effectively prioritised. As is demonstrated in the report, other car park schemes such as the permit offer are directly affected by tariff changes, and therefore a holistic approach should be taken when considering future changes to the tariffs and price modelling for our car parks.

### 93 **Mill Street Reserved Permits & Devon County LEVI (EV) Funding Bid**

The Cabinet received a report setting out details of the review of the reserved parking arrangements at Mill Street Car Park, Sidmouth, and detailed the Devon County LEVI funding bid for Electric Vehicles. The Cabinet noted that this would see up to 78 “slower” EV charging units for residential use provided within EDDC car parks.

The Cabinet noted the comments raised by a public speaker in respect of the reserved parking spaces and discussed the proposed options set out in the report.

Member recognised that further investigation of the options was required before the Cabinet could make a recommendation in respect the redesignation of the Mill Street Car Park and whether a resident concessionary scheme was appropriate. Members requested that a further report to be presented to Cabinet on 3 January 2024 to allow further information and engagement to be undertaken.

Members also considered details of current engagement between the Council and Devon County Council LEVI EV funding and noted that the fund included a grant pot for trailing EV charging gullies and it was proposed that the trials would focus on Exmouth and Sidmouth. A list of car parks where the installation of charging points could be installed was also submitted.

The Cabinet supported the proposals to continue with the engagement with the Devon County LEVI EV funding.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. To defer the redesign of Mill Street Car Park, including the creation of a dedicated “Reserved” Parking area, where permit holders are able to use any available bay, as opposed to having their own dedicated space, and to present a report to Cabinet on 3 January 2024 with the conclusion of further investigation into the proposals.
2. That the current EDDC engagement with the Devon County LEVI EV funding bid and approval of the list of car parks put forward for the project, be noted.

#### **REASON:**

Mill Street – To carry out further investigation/engagement on the proposals for the creation of a dedicated reserved parking area at Mill Street Car Park and to bring a report back to Cabinet on 3 January 2024 with the conclusion of that work.

LEVI bid – Working with Devon County Council on the LEVI bid would provide access to an important funding stream, as well as the associated project management to ensure the successful delivery of much needed slower EV chargers for residents within EDDC’s car parks. This approach would also provide a level of consistency and cohesion across the County and help encourage the transition to EV vehicles ahead of the proposed national ban on petrol and diesel vehicle sales in 2035. EDDC would not have any

Capital cost for the delivery of this project, but would benefit from a percentage of the income of all future charging sessions that took place through the chargers.

94 **Treasury Management Performance 2023/24 - 1 April to 30 September 2023**

The Cabinet received a report setting out a half-year review of the Council's treasury management activities and performance from 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023.

Members noted the six month position in respect of treasury activity including Prudential Indicators and an overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and how it contributed to the provision of services.

The Cabinet unanimously supported the recommendations.

**RECOMMENDED to Council:**

That the report, the treasury activity and recommend approval of any changes to the prudential indicators, be noted.

**REASON:**

The Council was required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 and the Code of Practice on Treasury Management published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accounting (CIPFA) to produce a half-yearly review of its treasury management activities and performance.

95 **Financial Monitoring Report 2023/24 - Month 6 September 2023**

The Cabinet received a report setting out a summary of the Council's overall financial position for 2023/24 at the end of month six (30 September 2023).

Current monitoring indicated that:

- The General Fund Balance is being maintained within the adopted levels.
- The Housing Revenue Account Balance is being maintained at or above the adopted level.

The Cabinet noted the summary of the financial position for the General Fund Balance and Housing Revenue Account.

**RESOLVED:**

That the variances identified as part of the Revenue and Capital Monitoring process up to Month 6 be acknowledged.

**REASON:**

The report updated Members on the overall financial position of the Authority at set periods and included recommendations where corrective action was required for the remainder of the financial year.

96 **Application to designate West Hill Neighbourhood Area**

The Cabinet received a report setting out a request from West Hill Parish Council for the designation of their whole Parish as a Neighbourhood Area for neighbourhood planning purposes.

Members noted that West Hill Parish currently falls within the already designated Ottery St Mary and West Hill Neighbourhood Area and was covered by the joint Ottery St Mary and West Hill Neighbourhood Plan, 'made' in July 2018. When this area was designated, West Hill Parish Council was not in existence and the area covered was served by Ottery St Mary Town Council only. West Hill Parish Council was formed when preparation of the neighbourhood plan was well advanced, and it was agreed at that time to continue progressing the plan jointly.

The Cabinet were advised that following a review of the current arrangement, West Hill Parish Council resolved to apply for the creation of a new Neighbourhood Area for the West Hill parish only, with the intent to prepare a new neighbourhood plan for this area.

The Cabinet welcomed the new Neighbourhood Area for West Hill Parish for neighbourhood planning purposes and unanimously supported the recommendations.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That Cabinet approve the designation of the whole of the parish of West Hill as its own Neighbourhood Area for neighbourhood planning purposes, and;
2. That Cabinet agree to amend the existing joint Ottery St Mary and West Hill Neighbourhood Area to remove the whole of the parish of West Hill and rename it accordingly as the Ottery St Mary Neighbourhood Area;
3. That Cabinet note the effect of (1) and (2) to be the subdivision of the existing joint Ottery St Mary and West Hill Neighbourhood Area into two separate Neighbourhood Areas ('West Hill' and 'Ottery St Mary'), each covering the whole of their individual administrative parish area.

**REASON:**

To enable West Hill Parish Council (and Ottery St Mary Town Council should they wish to do so) to prepare a new neighbourhood plan for their parish under the auspices of the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended).

Also, to comply with these Regulations and the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) (as amended) which do not permit designated Neighbourhood Areas to overlap and provide for a pre-existing Neighbourhood Area to be amended as part of a decision to designate a new one, including by separation into two or more Neighbourhood Areas.

97 **Consultation on draft Cemetery Regulations**

The Cabinet considered a report seeking approval to undertake a consultation process introducing combined Regulations for the Management and Control of East Devon District Council Cemeteries.

Members noted that the Council currently managed Seaton, Sidmouth and Sidbury cemeteries and controlled all matters relating to notice of burials, selection of grave space, interment fees, rights of burial exhumations, cemeteries' registers, permissions for monuments and inscriptions and security and maintenance.

Members supported the consultation process noting that the consultation would run for an 8 week period.

**RESOLVED:**

That a consultation on the introduction of Regulations for the Management and Control of East Devon District Council Cemeteries, be agreed.

**REASON:**

To meet the requirements to carry out a consultation before introducing the new regulations.

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

Resolved:

That under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting as exempt and private information (as set out against each Part B agenda item), is likely to be disclosed and on balance the public interest is in discussing the items in private session (Part B).

99 **Discretionary Rate Relief (Broadclyst Ward)**

Cllr Matt Hall left the room during consideration of this item.

The Cabinet received a request for discretionary rate relief as set out in the Part B report. Members noted that this highlighted wider challenges around the financial sustainability of the company in a post-pandemic environment. This had prompted a commission to a strategic review of the purpose and future development of the site.

The Cabinet unanimously supported the recommendations.

**RESOLVED:**

1. Approve discretionary rate relief for a period of up to 12 months subject to;
  - a. A start date of September 2023
  - b. A review to be undertaken at the end of the current financial year
  - c. A maximum value of £159k
  - d. Confirmation of the Subsidy Control position
2. Receives a further report on the future development of the site when the strategic review had been completed.

**REASON:**

To ensure that Exeter Science Park Ltd remains a going concern and to establish a clear foundation for future decision making.

100 **Site Acquisition Opportunity**

The Cabinet received a report setting out details of an opportunity to acquire a key placemaking site of in Axminster town centre, which would include a small retail investment with an annual income of approximately £80,000 on part of the site.

Members unanimously supported that the Council investigates the opportunity to acquire the site in accordance with the Place and Prosperity Investment Framework and if this was unsuitable that another funding source be investigated to acquire the site.

**RESOLVED:**

That the council should investigate the opportunity to acquire this site using the Place & Prosperity Investment Framework or if this is unsuitable, that another means of funding and acquiring the site is investigated.

**RECOMMENDED to Council:**

That a budget of up to £40,000 be allocated for due diligence work to be undertaken to inform the council's decision on acquiring this site and for future feasibility studies.

**REASON:**

To enable the council to consider the acquisition of this important vacant site in Axminster town centre, using the Place & Prosperity Investment Framework.

**Attendance List**

**Present:**

**Portfolio Holders**

M Rixson	Portfolio Holder Climate Action & Emergency Response
G Jung	Portfolio Holder Coast, Country and Environment
M Hall	Portfolio Holder Economy
O Davey	Portfolio Holder Strategic Planning
S Jackson	Portfolio Holder Communications and Democracy
J Loudoun	Portfolio Holder Council and Corporate Co-ordination
N Hookway	Portfolio Holder Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
P Arnott	Leader of the Council
P Hayward	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder Finance (Assets)

**Cabinet apologies:**

D Ledger	Portfolio Holder Sustainable Homes & Communities
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**Also present (for some or all the meeting)**

Councillor Brian Bailey  
Councillor Jessica Bailey  
Councillor Ian Barlow  
Councillor Kevin Blakey  
Councillor Kim Bloxham  
Councillor Colin Brown  
Councillor Jenny Brown  
Councillor Roy Collins  
Councillor Steve Gazzard  
Councillor Mike Goodman  
Councillor Richard Jefferies  
Councillor Tony McCollum  
Councillor Todd Olive

**Also present:**

**Officers:**

Tom Buxton-Smith, Engineering Projects Manager  
Richard Easthope, Parking Services Manager  
Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance & Licensing (Monitoring Officer)  
Andrew Melhuish, Democratic Services Manager  
Matthew Blythe, Assistant Director Environmental Health  
Tim Child, Assistant Director Place, Assets & Commercialisation  
Sharon Church, Benefits Manager  
Simon Davey, Director of Finance

Andrew Hancock, Assistant Director StreetScene  
Alison Hayward, Project Manager Place & Prosperity  
Tracy Hendren, Director of Housing, Health and Environment  
Phillippa Norsworthy, Licensing Officer  
John Symes, Finance Manager

Chair .....

Date: .....