

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Overview Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 20 February 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.31 pm

16 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 October 2024

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 October 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record.

17 Declarations of interest

Minute 23, Coach Tourism in East Devon

Cllr Aurora Bailey, Affects Non-Registerable Interest, Member of Exmouth Town Council.

Minute 23, Coach Tourism in East Devon

Cllr Brian Bailey, Affects Non-Registerable Interest, Member of Exmouth Town Council.

Minute 23, Coach Tourism in East Devon

Cllr Ian Barlow, Affects Non-Registerable Interest, Member of Sidmouth Town Council.

Minute 23, Coach Tourism in East Devon

Cllr Jenny Brown, Affects Non-Registerable Interest, Member of Honiton Town Council.

Minute 23, Coach Tourism in East Devon

Cllr Olly Davey, Affects Non-Registerable Interest, Member of Exmouth Town Council.

Minute 23, Coach Tourism in East Devon

Cllr Tim Dumper, Affects Non-Registerable Interest, Member of Exmouth Town Council and member of the Coach Working Party.

Minute 23, Coach Tourism in East Devon

Cllr Del Haggerty, Affects Non-Registerable Interest, Member of Seaton Town Council.

Minute 23, Coach Tourism in East Devon

Cllr John Heath, Affects Non-Registerable Interest, Member of Beer Parish Council.

Minute 23, Coach Tourism in East Devon

Cllr Vicky Johns, Affects Non-Registerable Interest, Member of Ottery St Mary Town Council.

18 Public Speaking

No members of the public had registered to speak at the meeting.

19 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

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

There were no confidential/exempt items.

21 **Revisions to Street Naming and Numbering Policy**

The Economy Practice Manager presented this report which set out proposed revisions to the Street Naming and Numbering Policy, to clarify the Council's position on street naming and numbering and to ensure effective implementation.

Discussion and clarification included the following points:

- It was permissible for houses to be numbered '13' although historically there was a reluctance to use this number due to superstitions of it being unlucky.
- Each individual property in the UK had a Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) which was provided to emergency services when an address was created. This ensured that emergency services did not have problems locating addresses.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet

To approve the proposed revisions to the Council's Street Naming and Numbering Policy.

22 **Wildlife Improvement Policy**

The Director for Place introduced this item and asked Members to consider the Wildlife Improvement Policy and make recommendations, before it was presented to Cabinet for approval.

The proposed Policy would ensure that the StreetScene department's current and future Wildlife Improvement areas were managed, maintained and improved to a high standard whilst also supporting the Countryside department's role in meeting new legislative targets for Nature Recovery. It would also help to increase residents' understanding of the gravity and consequences of both climate change and biodiversity loss, and the urgency of putting in place mitigations to these crises.

The Horticultural Technical Officer invited comments and questions.

Discussion and clarification included the following points:

- The Council banned the use of glyphosate in 2022, and selective herbicides only killed broad leaf plants but left grasses. It was difficult to kill grasses naturally.
- The Equalities Impact Assessment appended to the report aligned with the authority's statutory duty to have regard to protected characteristics, and was key to informing decisions made during the life of the project.
- If the proposed policy was adopted, the Countryside team would look to introduce key performance indicators with regards to key species which were more likely to be in wildlife improvement areas.
- Sites identified for wildlife improvement potential were carefully assessed against the needs of the community to access green spaces, and a lot of the Streetscene managed land that was not designated for wildlife improvement had been deemed necessary for public use and enjoyment.
- Neat and tidy spaces could be death to wildlife, and some wildness was necessary. The Council could be bolder in its approach given that it had declared a wildlife emergency, and it was argued that residents needed to revise their ideas of what public spaces needed to look like.

- Communications were important, to inform people of the reasons for the wildlife improvement and rewilding work and to help to identify the challenges and how to solve them. The Horticultural Technical Officer outlined intentions to make signage more accessible and less wordy and summarised a 3-stage consultation process involving StreetScene staff, councillors, town and parish clerks and residents, results from which would inform the second and third year communications plan.
- It was suggested to involve local wildlife groups in stages of consultation, given that they often worked closely with towns and parishes.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet

To adopt the Wildlife Improvement Policy as an official EDDC policy.

23 Coach Tourism in East Devon

The Economic Development Manager introduced this report which outlined the work of the Coach Tourism Task and Finish Forum (TAFF) set up in April 2024, which aimed to explore opportunities around coach tourism development in East Devon and help increase coach passenger visitors to the district. The report detailed the achievements of the TAFF to date, and its recommendation for the Overview Committee to consider.

Discussion and clarification included the following points:

- Of the Coach Friendly audits carried out to date by the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT) in Honiton, Sidmouth and Exmouth, coach parking facilities had been deemed to be sufficient.
- Coach tourism involved a lot of stakeholders and was quite a complex operation but coaches were a traditional form of travel, itineraries were in place, and individual players would not engage if the whole machine did not operate well.
- There was an aspiration to encourage coach tourists to visit other parts of East Devon and not just the seaside towns, and the Coach Friendly initiative would support this objective.
- There was a climate emergency and the Coach Friendly initiative would facilitate tourism to the district in the most climate friendly way.
- Towns and parishes should liaise with their named Highways Officer for advice and guidance around signage, which would in turn facilitate engagement with Devon County Council.
- The Economic Development Manager confirmed that the Senior Economic Development Officer could support the ongoing Coach Friendly initiative as part of their time spent on delivery of the Tourism Strategy.
- Members were supportive of the TAFF's recommendation that the Council funded 50% of the cost of signage required for towns and parishes to meet the criteria for CPT Coach Friendly accreditation. It would be necessary to ensure the agreement of the towns and parishes.
- It was suggested to consider revising the proposed recommendation so that funds could be used to address any issues identified in the CPT audit to meet the criteria for Coach Friendly accreditation, and not just for signage.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet:

That EDDC fund 50% of the costs of signage required for East Devon towns to satisfy the criteria for Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT) Coach Friendly accreditation as identified through the formal CPT audit process, up to £1,500 per town and an overall maximum for the district of £12,000, subject to individual towns and parish councils meeting the remaining 50% of the costs.

24 E-Petitions report

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

25 **Work Programme 2024 - 2025**

The Committee considered the Cabinet Forward Plan and noted the Work Programme for 2024-2025.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

A Bailey
B Bailey
K Blakey
O Davey
T Dumper (Vice-Chair)
P Fernley
D Haggerty
A Hall (Chair)
J Heath
Y Levine
M Martin
H Riddell

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

I Barlow
C Brown
J Brown
R Collins
V Johns
G Jung
M Rixson

Officers in attendance:

Simon Davey, Director of Finance
Paul Fealey, Horticultural Technical Officer
Sarah James, Democratic Services Officer
Geri Panteva, Senior Economic Development Officer
Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Tom Winters, Economic Development Officer (interim)
Andrew Wood, Director of Place
Nick Wright, Economy Practice Manager

Chair:

Date: