

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 5 March 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.03 pm and ended at 9.26 pm

154 Minutes of the previous meetings

The minutes of the previous meetings of Cabinet held on 5 February and 17 February 2025 were agreed.

155 Declarations of interest

Min 165. River Axe SAC Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund governance.
Councillor Paul Hayward, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Employee of Axminster Town Council.

Min 165. River Axe SAC Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund governance.
Councillor Sarah Jackson, Affects Non-registerable Interest, the nature of which I am not required to disclose under section 32 of the Localism act 2011.

Min 168. Discretionary Planning Fees Review.
Councillor Paul Hayward, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Employee of Axminster Town Council.

Min 168. Discretionary Planning Fees Review.
Councillor Sarah Jackson, Affects Non-registerable Interest, the nature of which I am not required to disclose under section 32 of the Localism act 2011.

Min 173. Minutes of Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group held on 10 February 2025.
Councillor Aurora Bailey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, is an Exmouth Town Councillor.

Min 173. Minutes of Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group held on 10 February 2025.
Councillor Brian Bailey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, is an Exmouth Town Councillor.

Min 173. Minutes of Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group held on 10 February 2025.
Councillor Nick Hookway, Affects Non-registerable Interest, is an Exmouth Town Councillor.

Min 173. Minutes of Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group held on 10 February 2025.
Councillor Steve Gazzard, Affects Non-registerable Interest, is an Exmouth Town Councillor.

Min 174. Investment / Placemaking opportunity in Exmouth.
Councillor Aurora Bailey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, is an Exmouth Town Councillor.

Min 174. Investment / Placemaking opportunity in Exmouth.
Councillor Brian Bailey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, is an Exmouth Town Councillor.

Min 174. Investment / Placemaking opportunity in Exmouth.
Councillor Nick Hookway, Affects Non-registerable Interest, is an Exmouth Town Councillor.

Min 174. Investment / Placemaking opportunity in Exmouth.
Councillor Steve Gazzard, Affects Non-registerable Interest, is an Exmouth Town Councillor.

Min 176. Cranbox Modular Space Delivery in Cranbrook Town Centre.
Councillor Kevin Blakey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, is a Cranbrook Town Councillor (changed from previous declaration of Other Registerable Interest).

Min 176. Cranbox Modular Space Delivery in Cranbrook Town Centre.
Councillor Kim Bloxham, Affects Non-registerable Interest, is a Cranbrook Town Councillor (changed from previous declaration of Other Registerable Interest).

Min 176. Cranbox Modular Space Delivery in Cranbrook Town Centre.
Councillor Sam Hawkins, Affects Non-registerable Interest, is a Cranbrook Town Councillor (changed from previous declaration of Other Registerable Interest).

156 **Public speaking**

Councillor Mike Goodman asked the question to when the public would be given access to the results of the Housing Stock Condition Survey? His next question concerned the provision of leisure facilities and why had adult football and rugby pitches increased by 50%? The Chair stated that his questions would be passed onto the relevant officers for their response.

157 **Matters of urgency**

There were two late items which officers recommended should be dealt with in this way recorded at Minutes 163 and 176.

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

There were four items which officers recommended should be dealt with in this way recorded at Minutes 173 – 176.

159 **Minutes of Strata Joint Executive Committee held on 28 January 2025**

Members noted the Minutes of the Strata Joint Executive Committee held on 28 January 2025.

160 **Minutes of Recycling and Waste Partnership Board held on 29 January 2025**

Members noted the Minutes of the Recycling and Waste Partnership Board held on 29 January 2025.

161 Minutes of Housing Review Board held on 30 January 2025

Members noted the Minutes and recommendations of the Housing Review Board held on 30 January 2025.

Minute 36 Housing finance report

that Cabinet approve the draft revenue and capital estimates and the financial modelling element presented is noted, subject to suitable key performance indicators being introduced for the Housing Review Board to be able to monitor major capital repair expenditure.

Minute 37 Electrical compliance audit

that Cabinet approve that the Housing Review Board receive a progress report on the nine actions referred to in the SWAP housing electrical safety report at the July meeting Housing Review Board.

162 Minutes of Scrutiny Committee held on 30 January 2025

Members noted the Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 30 January 2025.

163 Minutes of Overview Committee held on 20 February 2025

Members noted the Minutes and recommendations of the Overview Committee held on 20 February 2025.

Minute 21 Revisions to Street Naming and Numbering Policy

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

Minute 22 Wildlife Improvement Policy

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

Minute 23 Coach Tourism in East Devon

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.

The Chair expressed his thanks to Cllr Haggerty for working closely with officers to get the council to this stage.

164 UK Shared Prosperity Fund Plan 2025-26

The report updated Members that an additional year of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) had been announced by the government, with management of the fund in Devon transferring from district and unitary councils to the new Combined County Authority (CCA). EDDC had been allocated £465,588 from the CCA to continue funding

UKSPF projects linked to communities, business and skills. An indicative Project Plan for 2025/26 was endorsed by the UKSPF Panel and submitted to the CCA.

Members thanked Tom Winters and his team for their successful efforts in securing this funding.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Approves and adopts the 2025/26 UKSPF Programme Plan, including the indicative budgets and target outputs and outcomes as shown in Appendix 1 of the report, and grants delegated authority to the Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Economy and Assets to agree any necessary changes to the Programme.
2. Approves the updated terms of reference for the UKSPF Programme Management Panel as shown in Appendix 2 of the report and delegates authority to the Director of Place in agreement with the Panel to:
 - a. Authorise and approve the grant awards for all competitive grant schemes funded through the UKSPF and any top-up funds in accordance with the provisions of the Programme.
 - b. Approve any adjustments to or the cancellation of any projects programmes and activities identified in the 2025/26 UKSPF Programme Plan including grant schemes and discretionary grant payments, and any internal UKSPF budget transfers above £10,000.
 - c. Approve any new projects, programmes and activities, including new grant schemes and discretionary grant payments, funded through the UKSPF and any top-up funds.
 - d. Approve any changes necessary to the terms of reference during the life of the Programme which may be necessary.
3. Delegates authority to the Director of Place in consultation with Director of Finance and Director of Governance to agree terms and conditions for any grant funding agreements with the CCA, or any body acting on its behalf, to unlock UKSPF funding, including any top-up funds.
4. Delegates authority to the Assistant Director for Planning Strategy and Development Management to:
 - a. Sign off all grant funding agreements related to any activity funded through the UKSPF and any top-up funds in consultation with the Director of Governance, up to £200,000.
 - b. Authorise procurement activity and approve any new or amended contracts and terms and conditions for procured goods and services funded through the UKSPF and any top-up funds in consultation with EDDC's Legal team, up to £200,000.
 - c. Authorise amendments to any policy documents for grant schemes funded through the UKSPF and any top-up funds in consultation with the UKSPF Panel.
 - d. Authorise any internal UKSPF budget transfers at or below £10,000.

REASON:

The reason for recommendations 1 and 3 was to ensure EDDC had a clear and achievable plan to draw down further funding through the UKSPF in a timely and transparent manner. Recommendations 2 and 4 were designed to ensure flexibility was maintained in the delivery of the fund and clear roles and responsibilities were set out in the drafting and signing of contracts and grant funding agreements.

The water quality of the River Axe Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) had been a concern for a long time. The River Axe SAC was in unfavourable and declining status owing to nutrient enrichment and sediment pollution. East Devon District Council (EDDC), as the Competent Authority under the Habitat Regulations 2017, was required to consider the implications of these matters on the River Axe SAC before permitting any further development which had the potential to result in additional phosphate loads entering the catchment. This applied to all development of any scale and for any purpose if it potentially increased phosphate loading.

The allocation of £4.3 million by Government to EDDC to address these issues required the creation of an agreed governance framework that could provide advice, monitoring, and support to enable the delivery of the programme scheme.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agreed:

1. To approve the proposed governance arrangement to provide the formal reporting framework and oversight for the administration of the River Axe Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund and grants delegated authority to the Director of Place in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer to agree terms and to enter into such agreements as are necessary for the good governance of the project.
2. To commit to spend the Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund on the delivery of nutrient mitigation with the indicative programme of spend as detailed in Appendix 2 to this Cabinet report and grants delegated authority to the Director of Place in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Monitoring Officer and the Portfolio Holders for Coast, Country and Environment, Strategic Planning, and Communications and Democracy to agree terms and vary the indicative programme of spend and arrangement as is needed to ensure the delivery of the project.
3. That authority be delegated to the Director for Place, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Monitoring Officer and the Portfolio Holders for Coast, Country and Environment, Strategic Planning, and Communications and Democracy, to agree terms to secure and deliver strategic mitigations including the purchase of land for the purposes of creating a nature-based solution where such purchase falls within the funding obtained from Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund. Where this involves asset acquisition, endorsement from the Assistant Director for Place, Assets and Commercialisation shall also be obtained.
4. That delegated authority is granted to the Director of Place in consultation with S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer to make any variations or alterations to the project, to make any decisions and carry out any actions to ensure that the aims of the project are delivered within the required timescales.
5. That the Leader agrees the democratic input with the Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Coast, Country and Environment, Strategic Planning, and Communications and Democracy.

REASON:

To enable the setting up of the appropriate governance and oversight arrangements by EDDC to facilitate the delivery of the River Axe SAC Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund programme. To formally commit to spend the Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund on nutrient mitigation measures in the River Axe SAC catchment.

The Tree, Hedgerow & Woodland Strategy (THaWS) for EDDC was approved for development by Overview Committee in March 2024 and following the Devon Procurement process. Treeconomics Ltd were appointed in July 2024 to start the process of leading the consultation and shaping of an EDDC THaWS.

The Strategy had ensured it was closely aligned with the recently published Devon Tree & Woodland Strategy 2024 as well as other core Council Strategies on climate change, health and wellbeing and our existing Local Plan to ensure there was synergy

RESOLVED that Cabinet approves:

The adoption of the Tree, Hedgerow & Woodland Strategy for East Devon 2024 -2034 which reflects the ambitions and opportunities to protect East Devon's trees, hedges and woodland and create new opportunities for tree planting working in partnership with key stakeholders.

REASON:

To enable the draft Strategy to be presented to Cabinet for approval as its formal Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy for EDDC.

167 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) – Habitat banks, monitoring, and fees

The report informed members that all relevant developments must achieve at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) mandated by the Environment Act 2021. New habitats created or enhanced through BNG must be maintained for at least 30 years.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director Planning Strategy and Development Management to enter into S106 legal agreements with landowners, habitat bank providers, and other persons with an interest in the land to secure a habitat bank based on the outlined framework.
2. Approves the principle and proposed method fee structure for BNG monitoring and reporting based on full cost recovery subject to the Portfolio Holders for Coast, Country and Environment and Strategic Planning being included as consultees on all applications for habitat banks prior to Phase 3 assessment.
3. Notes that the fees will be reviewed at least annually in relation to inflation, pay awards, and considering emerging data and/or policy or guidance.

REASON:

Facilitating habitat banks would contribute to the Council's statutory duty regarding biodiversity and demonstrate its commitments in the Nature Recovery Declaration, facilitate the delivery of the Local Plan, and the Council Plan. The Council must establish a transparent process and consistent approach to determine the appropriateness of third-party proposals, prioritise them, and decide why it was willing to enter into legal agreements. It required a transparent framework to recover reasonable fees with the council's costs associated with BNG.

168 Discretionary Planning Fees Review

The report explained the reasons for reviewing and increasing discretionary planning fees, focusing on enhancing service delivery, covering rising operational costs, and ensuring the sustainability of the Planning Service. The fee review aimed to enhance the Planning Service's capacity, efficiency, and sustainability. Aligning fees with operational costs and regional benchmarks ensured competitiveness and met community needs.

RECOMMENDED to Council;

that the revised schedule of fees for discretionary planning fees be adopted.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

Endorses the schedule of discretionary planning fees being reviewed on an annual basis as part of the wider review of fees and charges in principle.

REASON:

The recommendation to revise discretionary planning fees and the level of service offered was driven by several key factors, including the need to enhance service delivery, cover rising operational costs, and ensure the sustainability of the Planning Service.

169 **Council Plan delivery plan update**

The report provided with an overview of the progress made on the Council Plan delivery plan up to the end of the third quarter of 2024/25.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

Receive the progress report of the delivery plan and note the progress of the actions to date.

REASON:

To ensure that the objectives from the Council Plan were being actioned and delivered appropriately.

170 **Strata Business Plan 2025/2026**

The report set out the Strata Joint Executive recommendation to EDDC arising from their consideration of a report on the Strata Business Plan for 2025/2026 at their meeting on 28 January 2025.

RECOMMENDED to Council;

That the Strata Business Plan for 2025/2026 be approved.

REASON:

The business plan for 2025/26 was a vital framework, guiding both financial allocations and strategic initiatives essential to achieving the council's objectives which align with those set out by East Devon, Exeter City and Teignbridge Councils in their ambitious plans detailed in their digital strategies which formed the bedrock of the 2024/25 plan.

171 **Clyst Honiton Neighbourhood Plan ('the Plan') to be formally 'made'**

The Clyst Honiton Neighbourhood Plan had successfully passed referendum and must be formally 'made' (adopted) by EDDC in order to form part of the development plan.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

1. Agree that the Clyst Honiton Neighbourhood Plan be 'made'.
2. Note that once made the Plan will carry full weight in the planning decision making process as part of the statutory development plan for this Neighbourhood Plan Area (the majority of the parish of Clyst Honiton).

3. Congratulate Clyst Honiton Parish Council and their Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on this culmination of their hard work in developing the Plan.

REASON:

The Plan received a majority 'yes' vote in the neighbourhood area referendum, as required by the Regulations, and there was no substantive reason not to make the Plan. In addition, to recognise the significant work over several years by Clyst Honiton Parish Council and dedicated volunteers to prepare the Plan.

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

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

That under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting as exempt information, of the description set out on the agenda, is likely to be disclosed and on balance the public interest is in discussing this item in private session (Part B).

173 Minutes of Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group held on 10 February 2025

Members noted the Minutes and amended recommendations of the Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group held on 10 February 2025.

174 Investment / Placemaking opportunity in Exmouth

RESOLVED:

The recommendations were agreed.

175 Review of Leisure Subsidy for 2025/26

RESOLVED:

The recommendations as set out in the report were agreed.

The Chair express his thanks to the LED Monitoring Forum (now the Leisure Delivery Forum) and officers for their dedicated hard work in getting EDDC to this worthwhile position.

176 Cranbox Modular Space Delivery in Cranbrook Town Centre

RESOLVED:

The amended recommendations were agreed.

Attendance List

Present:

Portfolio Holders

M Rixson
G Jung

Portfolio Holder Climate Action & Emergency Response
Portfolio Holder Coast, Country and Environment

S Jackson	Portfolio Holder Communications and Democracy
N Hookway	Portfolio Holder Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
P Arnott	Leader of the Council
P Hayward	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder Economy and Assets
S Hawkins	Portfolio Holder Finance
T Olive	Portfolio Holder Strategic Planning

Cabinet apologies:

D Ledger	Portfolio Holder Sustainable Homes & Communities
J Loudoun	Portfolio Holder Council and Corporate Co-ordination

Also present (for some or all the meeting)

Councillor Aurora Bailey
Councillor Brian Bailey
Councillor Ian Barlow
Councillor Kevin Blakey
Councillor Kim Bloxham
Councillor Colin Brown
Councillor Jenny Brown
Councillor Roy Collins
Councillor Peter Faithfull
Councillor Steve Gazzard
Councillor Mike Goodman
Councillor Richard Jefferies

Also present:

Officers:

Jo Avery, Management Information Officer
Tim Child, Assistant Director Place, Assets & Commercialisation
Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer
Will Dommett, District Ecologist
Ed Freeman, Assistant Director Planning Strategy and Development Management
Naomi Harnett, Corporate Lead (Interim) – Major Projects & Programmes
Tracy Hendren, Chief Executive
Alistair Jeans, Arboricultural Team Manager
Mike O'Mahony, Senior Leisure Officer
Charles Plowden, Assistant Director Countryside and Leisure
Zoe Smith, Economy Projects Assistant
Doug Stanton, Project Manager Estates
Catrin Stark, Director of Housing and Health
John Symes, Finance Manager
Frances Wadsley, Project Manager, Planning, Growth, Development & Prosperity
Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Tom Winters, Interim Economic Development Manager
Andrew Wood, Director of Place

Chair

Date: