

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 4 June 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.02 pm and ended at 7.57 pm

1 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meetings of Cabinet held on 30 April 2025 were agreed.

2 Declarations of interest

Min 10. Seaton Coast Protection Scheme.
Councillor Dan Ledger, Other Registerable Interest, Is a Seaton Town Councillor.

Min 10. Seaton Coast Protection Scheme.
Councillor Nick Hookway, Other Registerable Interest, Is a County Councillor.

Min 10. Seaton Coast Protection Scheme.
Councillor Paul Arnott, Other Registerable Interest, Is a County Councillor for Seaton.

Min 10. Seaton Coast Protection Scheme.
Councillor Paul Hayward, Other Registerable Interest, Is a County Councillor.

Min 10. Seaton Coast Protection Scheme.
Councillor Richard Jefferies, Other Registerable Interest, Is a County Councillor.

Min 17. Planning and Infrastructure Bill Update.
Councillor Nick Hookway, Other Registerable Interest, Member of Exmouth Town Council.

3 Public speaking

Cllr Melanie Martin spoke on behalf of Cllr Alasdair Bruce Ward member for Feniton regarding the felling of many mature trees to widen an access near Roebuck Farm, between Weston and Gittisham without planning permission and within the bird breeding season. The incident had been reported to the Police but to date had not heard anything back. He had been inundated with emails and phone calls regarding this and asked the Council if anything could be done to stop this destructive act happening in the future.

In response the Chair stated he would ask officers to what stage any complaints were at regarding this matter and would get back to Cllrs Bruce and Martin and thanked them for bringing this to light.

The Monitoring Officer read out the following statement.

‘Cllr Goodman can’t be here this evening but has asked for some questions to be raised at this meeting. As Cabinet will recall, at the Cabinet meeting on 5th March Councillor Goodman asked questions about when the public would be given access to the results of the Housing Stock Condition Survey and concerning the provision of leisure facilities and specifically pitch increases. A written response has been provided to those questions in

accordance with the constitution. Cllr Goodman has repeated those questions for tonight's meeting and has also asked for our practice of written answers to questions not being published in the minutes, to be reviewed. As Cllr Goodman has already been provided with answers to the 5th March Cabinet questions, and with the answers being long and detailed, we will not be repeating those answers tonight. However, we will of course conduct a review of our practice, as Cllr Goodman has asked, as to how we deal with answers to questions. It is important to note, however that, minutes are a written record of what happens in a meeting and a summary only but we will happily review our practice and report back to Cllr Goodman on our conclusions by way of written response.'

4 **Matters of urgency**

There were none.

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

There was one item which officers recommended should be dealt with in this way recorded at Minute 19.

6 **Minutes of Arts and Culture Forum held on 16 April 2025**

Members noted the Minutes of the Arts and Culture Forum held on 16 April 2025.

7 **Minutes of Housing Review Board held on 24 April 2025**

Members noted the Minutes and recommendations of the Housing Review Board held on 24 April 2025.

Minute 48 Housing policy review – Succession Policy

That Cabinet approve the updated Housing Succession Policy.

Minute 50 Annual report of the Housing Review Board

That Cabinet and Council note the work that the Housing Review Board has undertaken during the 2024-25 civic year.

8 **Minutes of Recycling and Waste Partnership Board held on 23 April 2025**

Members noted the Minutes of the Recycling and Waste Partnership Board held on 23 April 2025.

9 **Adoption of the Blackdown Hills National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030**

EDDC together with other local authorities had previously authorised the Blackdown Hills National Landscape Partnership to undertake a review of the current AONB Management Plan on their behalf, as required under Section IV of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Public consultation on the reviewed management plan took place in January to March 2025, and now adoption of the Blackdown Hills National Landscape Management Plan by EDDC and the other relevant local authorities was required before publishing the management plan and lodging it with Defra.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

Agree to the adoption of the Blackdown Hills National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030.

REASON:

Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 relevant local authorities were required to prepare and publish a plan which formulates their policy for the management of their area of outstanding natural beauty and review the Management Plan at intervals of not more than 5 years. East Devon District Council with other local authorities had authorised the Blackdown Hills National Landscape Partnership to review the Management Plan for the Blackdown Hills National Landscape on their behalf. The review had been completed and the plan was ready to be published.

10 **Seaton Coast Protection Scheme**

Cllr Paul Hayward chaired this item as Acting-Chair.

The report was to update and to seek approval to spend up to £673,500 at risk to enable the project to start within the desired time frame before external grant confirmation and payment was received. The reasons for the administrative delay in grant confirmation and payment and highlights the risks to the council were included in the report.

RECOMMENDED to Council;

That up to £673,000 of the works budget is spent at risk before external funding can be confirmed and claimed in late summer for the scheme to be completed with the required timescale.

REASON:

To enable the project to proceed. Deferring the project by a year would likely lead to prices increasing further, so this was the last chance to proceed with the current scheme. There was a small chance the scheme could proceed this year without this upfront spend, however the window was small.

11 **Exemption to Standing Orders - Purchase of Election Booths**

The report outlined the reasons that an exemption to standing orders had been approved for the purchase of elections booths.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

Support for the action taken be noted.

REASON:

As per the Council's Contract Standing Orders, Rule 3.2 outlines that where an exemption to standing orders had been granted, and the value of the exemption exceeded £20,001, a report was brought to Cabinet to note their support for the action taken.

12 **Executive Leadership Team structural review**

The Executive Leadership team had reviewed the current staffing structure to ensure that the authority was fit for purpose and had the capacity and resilience required both in terms of the ongoing plans for transformation and ensuring the authority was a fit for

purpose organisation that was able to appropriately respond to the Government's proposals in relation to devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

The structural requirements outlined in the report should come as no surprise to members as both the Chief Executive and the 2025/26 budget report have already highlighted the fact that we have a gap in staff resources in terms of capacity and skills in some key areas. A new structure had been developed to address this including the introduction of additional posts, this was under the premise that any associated costs would be met within the overall approved establishment budget of the Council. To be achieved mainly by not replacing vacant posts which were of a less priority at the current time than the new posts identified. As this was immediate and only temporary funding required, a request was being made for an additional budget of £338k to be met from the Transformation Fund.

Finally, as part of the structural review, the out of hours arrangements for the authority had been enhanced, the report addressed funding proposals arising from the changes required to the out of hours arrangements.

During discussion it was requested that Climate needed to be written into a title to make it clear where it sat within the overall structure.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

1. Note and endorse the proposed structure shown in Appendix B.

RECOMMENDED to Council:

2. Approval of a £338k budget to be met from the Transformation Fund to support temporary funding requirements as detailed in the report.
3. Approval of a budget of £75K due to proposed changes to out of hours arrangements.

REASON:

It was essential that the Council had the necessary resources to continue the authority's transformation journey, to meet the demands of devolution and the local government reorganisation agendas, whilst ensuring that EDDC had the capacity and resilience to provide quality services to its residents.

13 Update on the Council Plan delivery plan

The report provided an overview of the progress made on the Council Plan delivery plan up to the end of the fourth 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 the objectives from the Council Plan were being actioned and delivered appropriately.

14 Peer Challenge recommendations and delivery plan update

The report provided an overview of the Peer Challenge recommendations and the delivery plan to implement the recommendations.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

1. Receive the Peer Challenge recommendations and delivery plan and note the progress of the actions to date.
2. Due to the progress of the delivery plan actions that Cabinet agree that this is the last dedicated progress report of this delivery plan.

REASON:

To ensure that the recommendations from the Peer Challenge were actioned and delivered appropriately.

15 **S106 funding to support delivery of affordable housing alongside the Local Authority Housing Fund**

The report provided an overview of the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) and set out a proposal to use £760,497 of S106 monies alongside funding from the LAHF to deliver additional affordable homes for rent in the district.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

1. Approve the proposal to use LAHF funding to acquire a minimum of four properties for initial use as temporary accommodation (3 properties) and Afghan refugee resettlement (1 property).
2. Approve the use of £760,497 of S106 fundings held from Green Close, Drakes Avenue, Sidford (application number 18/1779/MFUL) alongside LAHF funding to support delivery of new affordable council homes for rent across the district.

REASON:

1. Combining S106 funds with the LAHF grant would enable EDDC to deliver a greater number of high-quality, energy efficient homes than would be possible using S106 monies in isolation.
2. The proposal would deliver additional good quality council housing for local people.
3. If EDDC did not spend S106 receipts within the required timescale it may have to pay them back to the developer with interest.

16 **Contract standing orders exemption Global City Futures final business case**

To support the delivery of the updated business case to allow a final decision on the future service delivery model for provision of the recycling & waste collection services, it was proposed to appoint Global City Futures (GCF). They had completed the Outline Business Case and understood the service and the review work undertaken to date. To deliver the final business case without delay there was a need to continue to engage Global City Futures, failure to do so would risk delivery of this critical project.

The exemption to standing orders was to continue that engagement and for delivery of the final business case, GCF's proposal for this works was due to cost £23k. The request would be within budget framework, since Council had approved the implementation and mobilisation fund.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

Note the Request for Exemption to Standing Orders Report in respect of the appointment of Global City Futures, to produce the final business case referenced in the 17 February 2025 Extraordinary Cabinet report and debate. The budget for which was then approved at Full Council on the 26 February 2025.

REASON:

To produce the required business case and additional information for final decision on future delivery model within the necessary timescale.

17 **Planning and Infrastructure Bill Update**

The Planning and Infrastructure Bill was introduced to parliament on the 11 March 2025 and included several provisions that would impact on the delivery of the planning service and its work moving forward. Many of these measures had been the subject of working papers or previous consultations that the Council had responded to in the past as appropriate. This report updated Members on the proposals placed before Parliament and their potential implications for Members to consider. This report was considered by Strategic Planning Committee on the 19 May 2025 with the provisions of the bill and the implications to the Council noted.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

1. Note the provisions of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill and their potential implications for the delivery of the planning service and strategic planning.
2. That the Leader in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holders and officers, would draft a letter to the Secretary of State and the MPs for East Devon expressing their concerns on certain proposals within the Bill.

REASON:

To ensure that Members were aware of potential changes to the planning system.

18 **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).

19 **Minutes of Leisure Strategy Delivery Forum held on 8 April 2025**

Members noted the Minutes and recommendations of the Leisure Strategy Delivery Forum held on 8 April 2025.

Attendance List

Present:

Portfolio Holders

P Arnott	Leader of the Council
S Hawkins	Portfolio Holder Finance
P Hayward	Portfolio Holder Assets and Economy
N Hookway	Portfolio Holder Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
G Jung	Portfolio Holder Environment - Operations
D Ledger	Portfolio Holder Sustainable Homes & Communities
T Olive	Portfolio Holder Place, Infrastructure & Strategic Planning
R Jefferies	Portfolio Holder Environment - Nature & Climate

Cabinet apologies:

S Jackson	Portfolio Holder Communications and Democracy
J Loudoun	Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder Corporate, Council & External Engagement

Also present (for some or all the meeting)

Councillor Ian Barlow
Councillor Bethany Collins
Councillor Peter Faithfull
Councillor Matt Hall
Councillor Melanie Martin
Councillor Marianne Rixson

Also present:

Officers:

Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer
Tom Buxton-Smith, Engineering Projects Manager
Tim Laurence-Othen, Housing Projects Officer
Jo Avery, Management Information Officer
Simon Davey, Director of Finance
Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)
Andrew Wood, Director of Place
Tim Youngs, Blackdown Hills National Landscape Manager
Charles Plowden, Assistant Director Countryside and Leisure

Chair

Date: