

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 30 July 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.45 pm

39 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meetings of Cabinet held on 9 July 2025 were agreed.

40 Declarations of interest

Min 44 Adoption of East Devon National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030
Cllr R Jefferies, Affects Non-registerable Interest: Chair East Devon National Landscape Partnership

Min 46 Exmouth Motorhome Parking – Overnight stopovers
Cllr N Hookway, Affects Non-registerable Interest: Member of Exmouth Town Council and Devon County Council
Cllr S Gazzard, Affects Non-registerable Interest: Member of Exmouth Town Council and Exmouth Motorhome Task and Finish Forum
Cllr B Bailey, Affects Non-registerable Interest: Member Exmouth Town Council
Cllr A Bailey, Affects Non-registerable Interest: Member Exmouth Town Council

Min 50 Clyst St Mary and Sowton (Bishops Clyst) Neighbourhood Plan
Cllr M Howe, Affects Non-registerable Interest: Parish Councillor of Bishops Clyst
Cllr M Hall, Other registerable Interest: Strategic implications to the neighbouring authority for which Cllr Hall works (and left the meeting for the item)

Min 51 Recommendation from Strategic Planning Committee
Cllr M Hall, Other registerable Interest: Strategic implications to the neighbouring authority for which Cllr Hall works (and left the meeting for the item)

Min 53 Delivery of second new Community
Cllr M Hall, Other registerable Interest: Strategic implications to the neighbouring authority for which Cllr Hall works (and left the meeting for the item)

41 Public speaking

Mr Whitely thanked the Leader for the opportunity to raise concerns about East Devon's Local Plan. He argued the plan must be based on correct principles, but believe it relies on flawed data and assumptions, particularly from the ORS report used to determine housing needs.

His key concerns included:

- No fixed Government target exists for East Devon, and alternative housing calculation methods are allowed under national policy if properly justified.
- ORS followed the standard method but failed to consider that 60% of the district lies within National Landscapes (NLs), which have different demographics and legal protections.
- The use of uniform data across the district skews housing need calculations, leading to an inflated housing target of 21,000 homes instead of a more accurate estimate of around 16,000.

- As a result, housing is being disproportionately allocated outside the NL and even within protected areas, potentially violating laws like the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and National Planning Policy Framework provisions.
- 700 homes in the plan may be illegal, as they serve communities outside the NL, effectively redrawing protected boundaries without Parliamentary approval.
- The speaker emphasises that this is a national issue, not one that should be borne by East Devon alone, and criticises the lack of scrutiny over the ORS report and absence of public consultation on these statistical and legal issues.

He urged the council to reconsider and properly assess the plan's foundation.

In response, Cllr Olive informed the Cabinet that correspondence with Mr Whiteley had already been exchanged on this issue. The Chair thanked Mr Whitely for his contribution.

Cllr Kevin Blakey informed Cabinet that, at its meeting on 9 June 2025, the Cranbrook Placemaking Group discussed the future of Wellbeing Cranbrook, the successor to Sport England's local pilot. The East Devon New Community Manager had committed to providing key information and updates—specifically:

1. The job description for the Community Wellbeing and Activity Organiser,
2. Clarification from the NHS on funding for a Community Connector role, and
3. A discussion with Cranbrook Town Council about potentially hosting Wellbeing Cranbrook.

However, none of these actions have been completed.

Cranbrook Town Council (CTC) was eager to develop youth-focused services, given the town's young and socio-economically challenged population. For instance, 29% of pupils at Cranbrook Education Campus are eligible for pupil premium, above the national average. CTC believes investment in youth services would have wider community benefits.

A social housing provider has shown interest in contributing funding toward a youth role, but progress is stalled due to uncertainty over the future of Wellbeing Cranbrook and potential funding from the Place Partnership or East Devon District Council.

Cllr Blakey asked Cabinet to:

- Ensure the previously promised information is shared with the Placemaking Group immediately, and
- Request that the overdue report on Wellbeing Cranbrook be prepared in time for the next Cabinet meeting on 3 September.

Cllr Blakey requested a written response to his concerns.

Cllr S Gazzard spoke of his learning of a decision to dispose of Radcliffe House community hall, being sold to a charity to run it. The two Ward Members were not consulted, nor were the regular users of the facility. Cllr Gazzard requested a written response on the issue.

42 **Matters of urgency**

One matter of urgency listed under minute 51.

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

Two items were considered, listed under minute 53 and 54.

44 **Adoption of the East Devon National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030**

Daniel Wynn, East Devon National Landscape Manager updated Members on the review of the current AONB Management Plan, as required under Section IV of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Public consultation on the reviewed management plan took place in February to April 2025, and now adoption of the East Devon National Landscape Management Plan by EDDC and the other relevant local authorities was required before publishing the management plan and lodging it with Defra.

The plan had been adopted by Devon County Council the previous week; therefore the Chair, in light of being present and voting at that meeting, left the meeting for this item.

The work involved in bringing the Plan to this point in a short period of time after previous staff exits was acknowledged and the EDNL Manager was thanked for his hard work.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

Agree to adopt the East Devon 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. EDDC with other local authorities had authorised the East Devon National Landscape Partnership to review the Management Plan for the East Devon National Landscape (formerly known as AONB) on their behalf. The review had been completed, and the plan was ready to be published.

45 **Stewardship of Public Amenities**

The report highlighted that the population of East Devon was increasing at more than twice the national average, driven in part by new housing developments. Prompted by financial pressures, the council took a decision around 15 years ago to stop adopting public amenities in such developments. In the intervening period a private management model has emerged, part of a wider national trend. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has recently concluded that the proliferation of such models was leading to significant customer detriment.

The report set out the need for a new approach to the stewardship of community assets in East Devon's new housing-led developments, including strategic scale new communities, that focuses on creating social value for the lasting benefit of residents. This included:

- A Stewardship Strategy targeted at new developments;
- A Charter Mark for community friendly developments;
- Annual quality of life survey in new developments
- Establish a Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning Portfolio Holder Group to consider the Council's approach and report to Cabinet

Cllr Kim Bloxham welcomed the report and its recommendations, especially the creation of a Portfolio Holder group; and expressed a desire to join the group. She stressed the importance of including input from the *Cranbrook Placemaking Group*, which she felt was currently underrepresented in the report.

Key concerns she raised included:

- **Service Disparities:** A significant and complex disparity between “Old” and “New” East Devon. Residents in new developments like Cranbrook pay for services through both council tax and estate rent charges, while those in older areas receive more services from East Devon District Council (EDDC) without extra charges. This inequality is especially noticeable within parishes like Broadclyst.
- **Estate Rent Charges & Management Companies:** She strongly criticised the use of private Management Companies funded by estate rent charges, citing high fees, lack of accountability, and poor service quality. Cranbrook’s experience in 2018 showed that transitioning services to the Town Council reduced costs for residents and improved transparency.
- **Lack of Clarity and Risks in Governance:** There is confusion between the roles of Management Companies and Management Agents. The current model is hard to unwind once established, and some developers resist handing over public open spaces to councils. She warned against the formation of interim Management Companies while waiting for Community Governance Reviews, which risk locking communities into costly and unaccountable arrangements.
- **Need for Local Accountability:** She argued that Town and Parish Councils were best placed to manage local services. If they don’t take on these responsibilities, residents will continue to pay more. Cranbrook has shown this model works and could serve as a template for other towns.
- **Future Governance & LGR:** With the potential shift toward a unitary authority, the role of Town and Parish Councils should be re-evaluated. A clear, sustainable stewardship model for Cranbrook depends on a boundary review and avoiding new management company setups in future developments.
- **Urgency and Opportunity:** She asked Cabinet to act decisively, adopt the report’s recommendations, and lead a national example in addressing the problems associated with estate rent charges and management companies, which are increasingly seen as a source of customer harm by bodies like the Competition and Markets Authority.

She concluded by emphasising that East Devon has a unique opportunity to lead on this issue and push for meaningful change.

Other comments included:

- Timescale for developing and bringing forward the stewardship was tight, in light of local government review;
- Concern that discretionary assets such as parks and gardens would be lost once a unitary authority was in place;
- Pressures on local councils who were not best placed to take on and manage assets; and the timing of calculating precepts for them was tight;
- Examples of experiences of estate charges and their value;

- Opportunity to link with emerging local plan to be genuinely transformative in approach.

Cllr Mike Howe also expressed his desire to be a member of the Portfolio Holder group recommended.

The Chair explained that Government directive was currently not to push liability down to town and parish level. Local Government Reorganisation should give the opportunity to look at a new “year zero”. This was an opportunity to set the standard for future developments.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

1. Recognised the vital role that the effective stewardship of public amenities plays in supporting the establishment of sustainable communities.
2. Supported the commissioning of a Stewardship Strategy targeted at new developments coming forward in the District, alongside the formulation of a Charter Mark for community-friendly developments.
3. Supported an annual quality of life survey being undertaken across all new developments in the district in order to monitor progress.
4. Supported the establishment of a Place, Infrastructure & Strategic Planning Portfolio Holder Group to consider the Council's approach to the stewardship of public amenities in new developments across the district, and an Assets & Economy Portfolio Holder Group to consider the future of the Council's existing assets in the community in light of Local Government Reorganisation, with both groups to bring an initial report back to Cabinet within six months

REASON:

To ensure that new housing-led developments in the district were supported by high quality community infrastructure and public services through a management regime that was predicated upon the creation of social value.

To ensure that the Council's approach to the stewardship of public amenities more widely remained in step with the changing context of future local government reorganisation and expected budgetary pressures.

Exmouth Motorhome Parking - Overnight stopovers

A statement was read out on behalf of Mr R Kathro, an Exmouth resident, who could not be present at the meeting.

His statement raised concerns about ongoing, unregulated camping in Exmouth's car parks and highways, which he felt stemmed from a poorly managed trial initially meant to last two years, but now ongoing for eight. He criticised a biased consultation process that favoured expanding camping despite factual and data errors.

He urged East Devon District Council (EDDC), Devon County Council (DCC), and Exmouth Town Council (ETC) to take action to address persistent poor behaviour by some campers, as reported by residents. A document titled “*To car park manager vF.docx*”, based on input from about 95 residents, outlined suggested steps for improvement and had been circulated to Cabinet members. The statement stressed that, without proper management, issues will continue to be exploited by irresponsible campers, and called on the councils to act responsibly and effectively.

Cllr Anne Hall, Chair of Overview Committee, informed the Cabinet of their previous meeting where the proposed improvements to overnight stopover arrangements were debated. She felt that the debate had added value to a derisive subject, and the committee had tried to mitigate to the best solution possible. As a result the proposed recommendations had been amended before presentation to Cabinet.

Discussion on the proposals included:

- Differentiating between a managed camp site and the proposals, particularly relating to the fee and how that may impact on nearby campsites;
- Emergency works by South West Water could not be halted as they had legal power of entry to the site to carry out such work; Members were informed that relations with SWW had improved in that proactive liaison is now in place;
- Impact of motor homes on highways both in Exmouth and other areas;
- Welcomed the previous debate at Overview Committee;
- Suggestion to add in a recommendation to include a safety fence at the eastern end of the site to prevent pollution of the brook, with the design and installation aspects to be delegated to the appropriate Portfolio Holder and officers.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

Approve the improvements to the overnight stopover arrangements as follows;

- a) Install a drive-over grey wastewater (shower & dishwater) disposal point in Maer Road Car Park
- b) Install a chemical toilet waste disposal point in Maer Road car park – connected directly to the sewerage network
- c) Install a fresh water tap in Maer Road car park.
- d) Reduce the maximum permitted number of consecutive overnight stays to 2 nights, with no return within 72 hours. This is in line with other authorities and prevents the risk of paid habitation within the car parks.
- e) Improve the signage stating the rules and restrictions for overnight stays within both car parks – including ground markings along Queen's Drive Echelon to designate bays suitable for overnight parking, stipulating a safe distance between vehicles.
- f) Trial RingGo only payment for overnight parking sessions to prevent vehicles remaining on site for longer than the maximum permitted number of nights.
- g) Increase the overnight stopover fee to £20.00 (currently £11.00) per night in recognition of the additional costs incurred in managing, maintaining and installing the physical improvements to the overnight parking arrangements.
- h) Ring-fence £5.00 (25%) from each overnight parking stay to fund enforcement activity specifically related to overnight parking;
- i) A yearly review to be carried out by the appropriate scrutiny committee;
- j) Explore the costs and feasibility of erecting a fence at the eastern end of the Maer Road car park; with a budget limit of £6k that can be met from the current capital programme (with delegated authority to the PH Finance and the Director Finance); the design and installation to be delegated to PH Environment Operational in conjunction with officers; for reasons of safety, and to prevent pollution of the Littleham Brook on the site.

REASON:

The recommendations of the Exmouth Motorhome TAFF were first reviewed by Cabinet in January 2024. At that point it was determined that public consultation should be carried out to gather further feedback and provide assurance on the recommendations. The consultation has now been carried out with most respondents supportive of the proposed improvements. These recommendations have also been formally endorsed by Exmouth Town Council in April 2025. The recommendations were reviewed and

amended to their current iteration by the EDDC Overview Committee on the 17th July 2025.

47 **Winter Parking Offer Review - 2025**

A review of the Winter Parking Offer, first introduced in 2016, was presented to Cabinet. This sought approval for changes to the winter parking tariffs and an end to the £2.00 promotional offer.

The varying charges for car parks in Sidmouth was queried; local Ward Members explained that the variances were to encourage a shorter stay for a shoppers car park to encourage the turnover. Members were also reminded of the good value that car parking permits offered.

Cllr Matt Hall called for care in communicating any changes to parking charges, as they were open to misinterpretation and may be perceived as an additional cost burden to local businesses and the public. The Chair informed Members that, subject to their approval, a press statement had already been prepared to mitigate against that.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approved the changes to the winter parking tariffs and the subsequent end to the £2.00 promotional offer which had been available since 2016.

REASON

Considering inflation, the £2.00 winter parking offer introduced in 2016 is effectively the £1.33 winter offer in 2025. Unlike the cost of maintaining our car parks and providing other services, the winter offer had not increased for 9 years. Initially introduced to encourage seasonal exploration and shopping, the winter offer had become a permanent overlay to the standard parking tariffs, with most sites now offering this promotion as the standard rate for winter parking.

The proposal to replace the winter offer is a blanket promotion of -50% of summer charges across all sites during the winter. This will better reflect the demand and use of each site, and the maximum stay restrictions that are present during the summer, will remain in the winter. The -50% winter tariff will provide cohesion between the summer and winter charges and simplify future tariff changes.

It should be noted that most authorities are moving to a single tariff model, with no variance between summer and winter charges, so this will continue to be an enticing promotion for East Devon and meet the objectives of the original offer.

48 **Financial Outturn for 2024/25 and Quarter 1 monitoring update**

The revenue budget and capital outturn positions at the end of the financial year 2024/25, and a summary of the Council's financial position for quarter one of 2025/26 were presented to Cabinet.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

1. The variances identified as part of the Revenue and Capital Monitoring process up to Quarter one be acknowledged.

RECOMMENDED to Council:

2. The outturn position for 2024/25 including the implications and proposals relating to the Balances and Reserves held by the Council.

3. The proposed reserve transfers contained within the report and give delegated authority to the Director Finance in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder for any amendments to these transfers as any additional year end data becomes available.

REASON:

To accord with the Council's financial regulations, the report presented the outturn position for the Council's approved budgets for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Expenditure.

The report updated Members on the overall financial position of the Authority and included recommendations to reserve transfers and for corrective action, when required, for the remainder of the current financial year.

49 **Risk Report quarter one 2025/26**

Risk information for the first quarter of 2025/26 financial year was supplied to allow Cabinet to have oversight of the strategic risk register. This followed the full review of risks by responsible officers during May/June 2025. Most of the reviews were completed by the responsible officers with the Interim Performance & Risk Team Leader.

The format of the report had also been improved to assist Members.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

Note the current status of the strategic risks following the full risk review undertaken in May/June 2025.

REASON:

To ensure that Cabinet had oversight of the strategic risks that were currently being monitored and managed by directorates across the council.

50 **Clyst St Mary and Sowton (Bishops Clyst) Neighbourhood Plan (First Review) - Examiner's Report**

The purpose of the report was to provide feedback on the outcome of the independent examination of the first review of the Clyst St Mary and Sowton (Bishops Clyst) Neighbourhood Plan and secure formal decision on the findings.

The Examiner had found that, with proposed modifications, the Plan proposal met the necessary 'basic conditions' and recommended to the District Council that it could go forward to referendum.

Cllr Mike Howe expressed his thanks to the Neighbourhood Planning Team and the Parish Council for their work in reaching a good compromise.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

1. Endorse the Examiner's recommendations on the Clyst St Mary and Sowton (Bishops Clyst) Neighbourhood Plan (First Review).
2. Agree a 'referendum version' of the Plan be produced (incorporating the Examiner's modifications with minor amends for corrections where stated, as set out in Annex 1 of this report) and proceed to referendum, and that a decision notice to this effect be published.

3. Congratulate Bishops Clyst Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on their hard work.

REASON:

The legislation required a decision notice to be produced at this stage in the process. The Plan was the product of significant local consultation and has been recommended to proceed to referendum by the Examiner subject to modifications which were accepted by the Parish Council.

51 **Recommendation for Cabinet's consideration from the meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee on 8 July 2025**

The work programme for planning policy production in East Devon was recommended from the Strategic Planning Committee meeting held on 8th July 2025.

RECOMMENDED to Council to adopt the proposed new Local Development Scheme – work programme for planning policy production.

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

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

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).

53 **Delivery of second new Community**

RESOLVED: To approve the recommendations set out in the report.

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
S Jackson	Portfolio Holder Communications and Democracy
R Jefferies	Portfolio Holder Environment - Nature & Climate
G Jung	Portfolio Holder Environment - Operations
D Ledger	Portfolio Holder Sustainable Homes & Communities
T Olive	Portfolio Holder Place, Infrastructure & Strategic Planning

Cabinet apologies:

J Loudoun	Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder Corporate, Council & External Engagement
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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 Christopher Burhop
Councillor Roy Collins
Councillor Steve Gazzard
Councillor Mike Goodman
Councillor Anne Hall
Councillor Matt Hall
Councillor Mike Howe
Councillor Sophie Richards
Councillor Marianne Rixson

Also present:

Officers:

Mark Barrow, Interim Director Place
Simon Davey, Director of Finance
Richard Easthope, Parking Services Manager
Ed Freeman, Assistant Director Planning Strategy and Development Management
Tracy Hendren, Chief Executive
Charles Plowden, Assistant Director Countryside and Leisure
Catrin Stark, Director of Housing and Health
John Symes, Finance Manager
Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)
Andrew Wood, Director of Place
Daniel Wynn, East Devon National Landscape Manager
Debbie Meakin, DSO

Chair

Date: