

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Council held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 16 July 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 10.07 pm

7 Apologies

Apologies for absence are set out at the end of the minutes.

8 Declarations of interest

Agenda Item 14:

Councillor Jessica Bailey declared an Affects NRI as a Devon County Councillor serving on the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority.

Councillor Steve Gazzard declared an ANRI as Unison member and former employee of Devon Ambulance Service

Agenda Item 15:

Councillor Jessica Bailey declared an Affects NRI as a Devon County Councillor serving on the South West Regional Flood & Coastal Committee.

Agenda Item 16:

Councillor Steve Gazzard declared an Affects NRI as a Unison member and former employee of Devon Ambulance Service.

Councillor Sarah Jackson declared an Affects NRI as their partner is a CWU member.

9 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 April 2025 and the extraordinary meeting held on 18 June 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.

10 Public speaking

Two members of the public had registered to speak at the meeting.

Agenda Item 10 – Combe Raleigh Parish Meeting: Mr Dezell, Chair of Combe Raleigh Parish Meeting.

Mr Dezell advised Council that Combe Raleigh Parish Meeting were seeking powers to enable certain works in the area to be carried out. These works included highway improvements, tree planting and maintenance of verges and would ensure significant improvements were made for the benefit of local residents.

Agenda Item 16 – Motion on Notice: Communication Workers Union – design and positioning of letterboxes: Mr Darren Robotham on behalf of the Communication Workers Union.

Mr Robotham spoke in support of the motion calling for the banning of low level letterboxes in doors and request that Government is asked to introduce legislation to support this.

11 **Matters of urgency**

There were no matters of urgency.

12 **Announcements from the Chair and Leader**

None.

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

The Chair of Council confirmed that there was one item of confidential/exempt business that would be dealt with under Agenda Item 22.

14 **To answer questions asked by Members of the Council pursuant to Procedure Rules No. 9.2 and 9.5**

The following Questions on Notice had been submitted and the responses to those questions were submitted to Council. The table below includes any follow-up questions submitted at the meeting.

Question	Question from	Question	Response
1	Cllr Stuart Hughes	Question to Portfolio Holder Environment – Operations Given that the Sidmouth Esplanade railings—an iconic feature of our town’s Regency-era seafront—have only been repainted twice in the past 15 years, most recently through a £16,000 restoration effort, and considering they now show visible signs of deterioration, can the Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Spaces confirm whether there are plans to repaint them in the near future? Furthermore, could this form part of a longer-term, proactive maintenance programme to preserve the historic	We have a programme of annual inspection and maintenance across all our public realm assets, but with our capital programme limited due to government budget pressures, we have to focus repair and maintenance on priority health and safety issues. We don’t have enough in our capital programme to actively invest in asset improvements across all our estate. We bring budget submissions to the annual BSCAP meeting for Members to decide on the priorities against the available and affordable capital. Our Engineers are inspecting the railings at Sidmouth every 6

		character and visual appeal of Sidmouth's seafront as a whole—particularly in light of the important role the Esplanade plays in shaping visitor impressions and supporting the town's tourism economy?	months, and on each occasion areas of rust which are affecting the structure are being repaired and painted. The overall paint condition is not great but does not present a health and safety hazard. The railings' structure is now at a point that re-painting alone won't be enough and replacement should be considered. However Members will need to decide on the affordability of this given it isn't currently a health and safety hazard. Engineers will submit a capital bid for 26/27 for ELT, Cabinet and BSCAP to consider replacement, against other identified capital requests.
As a follow up to the question Councillor Stuart Hughes asked the Portfolio for Environment – Operations to investigate whether there was any scope for a community led group to undertake decoration works to the railings. In response the Portfolio Holder agreed to refer the request to officers for a response.			
2	Cllr Stuart Hughes	Question to Portfolio Holder for Finance: In light of the ongoing cost-of-living pressures on East Devon residents, would the Portfolio Holder consider reviewing our current council tax debt recovery procedures to ensure greater leniency—specifically by introducing a minimum 28-day grace period between the granting of a liability order and the instruction of enforcement agents/bailiffs, during	In light of the ongoing cost-of-living pressures on East Devon residents, would the Portfolio Holder consider reviewing our current council tax debt recovery procedures to ensure greater leniency—specifically by introducing a minimum 28-day grace period between the granting of a liability order and the instruction of enforcement agents/bailiffs, during which a personalised repayment plan could be explored?

		which a personalised repayment plan could be explored?	In relation to the specific question: Prior to a liability order being granted we have statutory recovery documents that we have to issue as a minimum when a council taxpayer falls behind with their instalment plan: • 1st reminder • 2nd reminder (sent where a resident pays on a 1st reminder but falls behind again) • Final notice • Summons • Liability order notice (once issued by the Court) At all of these stages we encourage council taxpayers to engage with us if they are struggling to pay in order to set up repayment plans. Once a liability order notice is issued and we receive no contact, or payment is made then after at least 14 days each case is looked at by a Council Tax officer. They will carry out further attempts to contact the resident this will including phone, text, email or letter. Where there is no engagement from the resident, we will also consider alternative recovery options such as attachment of earnings/benefits or a charging order or passing the case to the Enforcement Agent. The majority of cases do
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			have at least a 28-day grace period before being passed to an Enforcement Agent. From our data since April 2024 until May 2025 only 1% (7 cases) were sent to an Enforcement Agent in less than 28 days with the earliest being on day 27. We therefore don't consider there is a need to review our current recovery procedures to build in a minimum 28-day grace period as there will be instances where residents refuse to pay council tax rather than being unable to pay and it's important that we retain that flexibility if required. The Council is very aware of the cost-of-living crisis and the impact that it is having upon our residents including paying their council tax. Residents falling into arrears with their Council Tax can be a key indicator of someone who is struggling financially, and we therefore recognise the importance of supporting our residents by making sure we take into account the council's anti-poverty strategy in the collection of council tax. Some of the key measures that we have implemented as part of our anti-poverty work are: • Providing up to 100% Council Tax Reduction
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			(CTR) for our lowest income households. The Council made the scheme more generous from April 2023 for those on low incomes which included increasing support up to 100%. This means our lowest income working age households have been lifted out of paying altogether. We reported to Cabinet in January 2025 the reduction in arrears for those claiming CTR had fallen from 19.7% in July 2022 to 13.69% in December 2024. This demonstrates how the Council has delivered real help with Council Tax to some of our lowest income households in East Devon. • We have a dedicated Financial Resilience team within our Revenues & Benefits Service where Council Tax staff will often refer cases in for wider financial help. Along with providing
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			emergency financial help they will work with residents who are struggling to afford paying essential bills by reviewing their income and expenditure and identifying ways this can be improved along with working with other partner agencies. In 2024, 291 referrals for more in-depth work were made and this achieved average weekly savings of £148. • As part of our corporate debt policy, we are also implementing the Vulnerable debt toolkit so that Council Tax staff can be better trained in identifying residents with vulnerabilities enabling them to provide the appropriate support including better tailored repayment plans, referral for debt advice, etc. This a government backed toolkit and is recognised as good practice for debt management. The Council made a
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			commitment to implement the toolkit, and training is currently underway with the aim to be live across Revenues and Benefits by August 2025. We are not aware that any of the other Devon authorities have implemented this. • One of the areas the Revenues and Benefits team are working on is to implement is e-notifications and this will include text messaging and emailing prompts to pay when payments are late or missed to supplement the statutory recovery processes. The aim of this is to help reduce the number of residents falling into arrears which will in turn reduce the number of enforcement cases. I hope that the above provides the reassurance that cases are not automatically referred to an enforcement agent and that there is support in place to help our residents who are struggling to pay and that we are continually exploring additional ways to increase
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			engagement.
As a follow up Councillor Stuart Hughes asked the Portfolio Holder for Finance to provide the details/data around referral timings along with outcomes to show cases under 28 days, to promote transparency in our approach. In reply the Portfolio Holder for Finance agreed to provide a written response.			
3	Cllr Mike Goodman	Question to Portfolio Holder Culture, Sport, Leisure & Tourism/Economy & Assets Given that EDDC's leisure policy actively encourages participation in sport for all age groups, how does the Council justify the proposed increase of up to 50% in football and rugby pitch fees in light of its commitment to residents' health and wellbeing?	Feedback on this was provided in response to Cllr Goodman's question at budget setting, and information added to the fees papers. Sports facilities are essential to supporting physical activity and wider health and wellbeing outcomes. This is reflected in the Council's Leisure Strategy for quality sports facilities and the need to ensure the right sport facilities are provided in the right places and they are well used and managed. The Strategy does not propose actual prices for each facility; this is done as part of the annual fees and charges process in line with the wider policy principles and proposed subsidy levels and concessions policy. The rationale is as follows: All our fees were reviewed as part of budget setting and either followed 1) roughly 3% inflation rounded, 2) Increases above inflation where there was a specific rationale, such as with

			bulky waste where we needed to cover costs of new legislation or services, or 3) Where benchmarking demonstrated we were not at market rate or comparable to neighbouring authorities. For these sports pitch fees no. 3 applies. Benchmarking has shown that other councils do not charge different rates for weekday/weekend matches. Therefore, the pricing for weekday/weekend matches has been aligned. Benchmarking shows that individual matches are priced suitably for the adults and therefore a 3% increase is deemed acceptable to cover increasing maintenance costs. However benchmarking has shown that the pricing for individual youth matches should be decreased to be in-line with other local authorities (Bournemouth Youth - £54.00 per match, Teignbridge Youth - £43.00 per match). Youth pricing has increased by a nominal 3% to cover increasing costs. Adult pricing for both full and half season tickets has increased by 50% more than the proposed youth season ticket costs as a result of this benchmarking.
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			Although other local authorities do not provide an option for season tickets making this impossible to benchmark, when broken down to a per-game price, the proposed pricing is lower than benchmarked areas to provide value for money and an incentive to purchase a full or half season ticket. Per match costs as part of a full season ticket will equate to £29.61 for youth matches and £44.42 for adult matches. Per match costs as part of a half season ticket will equate to £35.61 for youth matches and £53.44 for adult matches. Even with the proposed increase in season ticket pricing for adults this year, EDDC will still be providing excellent value for money compared to other local authorities. Benchmarking per match: Bournemouth £92.50. Lympstone Marine Camp £59. Teignbridge £90. Charges for youth football matches in these areas are in line with our proposed 2025/2026 charges as outlined above. Our staff, servicing and admin costs are all rising, and given wider budget pressures and the need to set a balanced budget it was felt reasonable to make these increases, given are prices are still
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			significantly lower than others. Our Leisure Manager is currently drafting a policy for sports clubs and associations as part of the Playing Pitch Strategy to provide some form of discount if they show that they are providing community based activities. This will require consensus internally before putting in as an action in a new Playing Pitch Strategy action plan being developed for 2026/27 onwards. The PFH Cllr Hookway is supportive of a wider review as part of the strategy as a way forward.
As a follow up Councillor Mike Goodman asked why discounts to clubs had not been made for the current season. In response the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Sport Leisure & Tourism advised that the discounts had only recently been introduced.			
4	Cllr Mike Goodman	Question to Portfolio Holder Culture, Sport, Leisure & Tourism/Portfolio Holder Economy & Assets At the joint budget meeting, officers were requested to review the proposed increases in pitch fees. Why were no adjustments made when the budget was presented to Council on 26th February, and what was the outcome of the review?	The fees were reviewed, but as set out above felt to be reasonable given the comparison with other providers and the need to balance provision and costs in the context of setting a balanced budget. With CSR and further budget pressures next year, this sort of prudent balancing will become even more necessary.
As a follow up Councillor Goodman queried why pitch fees were increasing by up to 50% and in response the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Sport, Leisure & Tourism confirmed that this increase had not been challenged by the Overview & Scrutiny Committees and had been supported by the Cabinet.			

5	Cllr Mike Goodman	Question to Portfolio Holder Culture, Sport, Leisure & Tourism/Portfolio Holder Economy & Assets Can the Council explain why, despite general annual fee increases of approximately 3%, certain sports pitch fees rose disproportionately—for example, a full-season fee for adult rugby and football increasing from £1,035 to £1,599 and a half-season from £622 to £960?	Please see answer for question 3 which explains, this is in relation to benchmarking per match comparisons.
In are answer to a follow up question from Councillor Mike Goodman the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Sport, Leisure & Tourism confirmed that it was unlikely that fees would increase in 2026/2027.			
6	Cllr Mike Goodman	Question to Portfolio Holder Culture, Sport, Leisure & Tourism/Portfolio Holder Economy & Assets In recognition of the value that community sport provides, is the Council willing to commit to revising these fees for the 2025/26 season—specifically to £1,065 for a full season and £640 for a half season?	The fees are felt to be reasonable given the comparison with other providers and the need to balance provision and costs in the context of setting a balanced budget. With CSR and further budget pressures next year, this sort of prudent balancing will become even more necessary, and further increases may be required.
7	Cllr Mike Goodman	Question to Portfolio Holder Sustainable Homes and Communities Given that this Council recognises the importance of providing high-quality housing for its residents and acknowledges the significant challenges East Devon District Council housing has faced in recent years, why has the Stock	As previously explained at Council on 4th December, Cabinet on 5th March and again of 4th June, and at HRB on multiple occasions, the stock condition survey does not take the form of a single document but rather comprises a substantial dataset—over one million lines of information. This dataset covers our entire housing stock and

		Condition Survey—originally proposed in 2020 but only completed in October 2025—not yet been made public?	includes details on the condition of key components, energy performance ratings, projected lifespan of building elements, and other relevant metrics. Given that the surveys were conducted over a two-year period, some properties have undergone works in the interim. As a result, the dataset requires thorough validation and cross-referencing with records of completed works to ensure its accuracy and relevance. This process is essential to ensure that the data accurately reflects the current condition of our housing stock and aligns with officers' local knowledge and asset records. Council officers have been undertaking this complex task alongside their regular duties. In addition, further quality checks have been necessary, including discussions with the contractor regarding their quality assurance procedures and how the data has been compiled and presented. As previously stated, a report on the Stock Condition Survey and an update to the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan are scheduled to be presented to the Housing Review Board on 31st July 2025.
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As a follow up Councillor Mike Goodman queried the accuracy of the response. In reply the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes and Communities confirmed that the information provided was accurate and that a full report would be made available at the next meeting of the Housing Review Board on 31 July 2025.			
8	Cllr Mike Goodman	Question to Portfolio Holder Sustainable Homes and Communities Can the Council confirm its commitment to transparency by agreeing to publish the results of the Stock Condition Survey as a public record, ensuring the data is anonymised to prevent identification of individual properties?	As stated previously, the stock condition survey is a data file of over one million lines of data which even if redacted would not provide the public with useful information. A report on the findings of the stock condition survey will be published and therefore available to the public as part of the HRB on 31st July 2025.
As a follow up Councillor Mike Goodman queried whether the response had been influenced by recent coverage of the issue by the local MP. In reply the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes and Communities confirmed that it had not. The Portfolio Holder further confirmed that the work around the stock condition survey had required a huge amount of work from officers in order to bring a report to the Housing Review Board. The Portfolio Holder further commented that it was important to ensure the Council had a good standard of homes in the district.			
9	Cllr Jess Bailey	Question to Portfolio Holder for Communications and Democracy 1/ what amount has Eddc spent on the technology to make meetings Hybrid, meaning that members of the public and councillors can speak remotely? 2/when was this money spent? 3/who signed off this expenditure? 4/why is it still not operational? 5/what date can you commit to being operational? Please can I politely request the answer is not 'very soon' as we have been told	1 – 3 A written response will be given. 4 – 5 the protocol is drafted but will not be agreed until testing is complete. There have been changes in project leads including long periods without a project lead that has stalled the project. Democratic Services are now leading on the project and testing of the hybrid technology has commenced including reviewing how the hybrid element of the system works. Democratic Services have now been issued with additional IT kit to enable operation of the

		'very soon' for months/years.	hybrid system and further testing is planned to take place during July and August. The testing work has identified some issues with the system and we are working with our contractor to ensure the hybrid solution is fit for purpose. Once the testing is complete and any issues rectified with our contractor it is proposed that councillor testing will be undertaken before going live. A protocol for access to hybrid meetings has been drafted and once testing is complete will be shared with councillors. The Government recently announced (5 June 2025) that local authorities will be able to hold remote and hybrid meetings (with voting rights) but has not given any indication of a timeframe for introducing legislation to support this. In the meantime, work will continue to test the hybrid option with a view for implementation/going live in October 2025. This will provide the opportunity for councillors to access meetings and participate remotely but will not allow members who serve on a committee to be able to vote remotely, until legislation provides.
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As a follow up Councillor Jess Bailey requested a response to the first part of the question. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that a written response

would be provided.			
10	Cllr Ian Barlow	Question to Portfolio Holder for Communications & Democracy Can the PFH explain why it has taken over 6 weeks for new committee seats to be allocated following Cllr Bonetta joining the independent group of councillors. This is surely a simple mathematical calculation that should take 30 minutes to do and an hour at most. By the time this gets to be ratified at council over 5 months will have passed. This should surely be one of the top priorities to make sure that our democratic system is seen to work effectively.	Officers were asked to conduct a review of the political proportionality figures following the last Council meeting, which we duly started. However, we were then advised that there was to be a change to the Independent Group, which means that we need to revise the figures again. Work on these figures is ongoing but unfortunately there has not been sufficient time to complete this work and consult with Group Leaders on the proposed figures in time for this meeting. Whilst urgency of this is acknowledged there is a process that we need to go through and in light of the concerns raised last time, we need to ensure that the work is done thoroughly and with full consultation with the Group Leaders. Officers apologise for the delay and will complete the review by the end of July and circulate the figures to Group Leaders in early August 2025.

15 **Reports from the Cabinet and the Council's Committees and questions on those reports**

The Council noted the minutes from meetings of the Cabinet and other committees, including:

- Cabinet – 2 April, 30 April and 4 June 2025
- Housing Review Board – 24 April 2025
- Licensing and Enforcement Committee – 2 April and 3 June 2025
- Licensing and Enforcement Sub Committee – 2 April 2025

- Personnel Committee – 15 April 2025 Planning Committee – 22 April, 13 May and 10 June 2025
- Strategic Planning Committee – 19 May 2025
- Arts and Culture Forum – 16 April 2025
- Asset Management Forum – 16 June 2025
- Cranbrook Placemaking Group – 9 June 2025
- Leisure Strategy Delivery Forum – 8 April and 11 June 2025.

RESOLVED: That the minutes from the meetings listed be noted.

16

Request for powers - Combe Raleigh Parish Meeting

The Council received a report setting out a request from the Combe Raleigh Parish Meeting to make an order conferring on it powers of a parish council.

The Council noted that under Section 109 of the Local Government Act 1972, that on the application of a parish meeting not having a separate parish council, the district council may by order confer on the parish meeting any functions of a parish council.

The Chair of the Parish Meeting explained the need of the powers to carry out certain works in Combe Raleigh, including planting trees and maintaining trees and verges to improve the quality of life for local residents.

In consideration of the request councillors raised the following issues:

- Concern around powers of last resort and powers to do anything (including incurring expenditure)
- Important that any powers conferred on the parish meeting are use responsibly and allows them to carry out sufficient activities in their area
- Consideration should be given to formation of a parish council
- Powers support the ability to use funds they hold

The Council recognised the need for the parish meeting to have the powers to be able to carry out works for the benefits of the local community but felt that powers of last resort to incur expenditure, not otherwise authorised and subsidiary powers to do anything which was calculated to facilitate, or was conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions under s111 should be considered at a later date.

Councillor Dan Ledger proposed the recommendation to make an order under Section 109(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to confer on the Combe Raleigh Parish Meeting the powers listed in a – h. The motion having been seconded by Councillor Ian Barlow was carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED: That the Council makes an order under Section 109(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to confer on the Combe Raleigh Parish Meeting the following powers:

- a. Clock maintenance – Parish Councils Act 1957 s.2
- b. Road widening – Highways Act 1980 s.s.30,72
- c. Roadside seats and shelters- Parish Councils Act 1957 s.1
- d. Certain traffic signs and other notices – Road Traffic Regulations Act 1972 s.72
- e. Plant trees and shrubs and to maintain roadside verges – Highways Act 1980 s.96
- f. Newsletter to provide information in relation to matters affecting local government – Local Government Act 1972 s.142
- g. Acquire and provide buildings for public meetings and assemblies – Local Government Act 1972 s.133

- h. Allowing a contribution by way of a grant or loan towards the expenses incurred by a voluntary organisation in providing any recreational facilities - Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s.19

17 **Executive Leadership Team structural review**

The Chief Executive presented a report setting out details of the Executive Leadership team review of 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 also 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.

The report also set out the out of hours arrangements for the authority which had been enhanced and addressed funding proposals arising from the changes to the out of hours arrangements.

The recommendation was moved by Councillor John Loudoun and seconded by Councillor Richard Jefferies and having been put to the vote was carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED:

1. That Council approve a budget of £338,000 to be met from the Transformation Fund to support temporary funding requirements as detailed in the report.
2. That Council approve a budget of £75,000 due to proposed changes to out of hours arrangements.

18 **Natural Seaton Interpretive Masterplan**

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism presented a report seeking agreement to fund various elements of the Seaton Wetlands project.

The Council noted that funding for the interpretive masterplan would come from the sales receipts of the former Seaton Jurassic building.

Councillor Nick Hookway proposed the recommendation which having been seconded by Councillor Todd Olive was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED: That Council approves that the residual budget of £80,000 from the sales receipts of the former Seaton Jurassic building are ringfenced for delivering outputs of this interpretive masterplan.

19 **Recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel**

The Council received a report setting out the recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel following their review of the Councillor Scheme of Allowances, Parish/Town Council Scheme of Allowances and a review of Special Responsibility Allowances.

During discussion of this report the following comments were made:

- Vice Chair of Strategic Planning Committee should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance in recognition of the increased workload, particularly around the preparation of the local plan.

- The Scheme of Allowances should include details to reflect the availability of a range of railcards to be used and arrangements in place covering compassionate leave.
- Whether consideration should be given to a cap on the number of Special Responsibility Allowances that are payable to Assistant Portfolio Holders and Councillor Champions.

Councillor Todd Olive proposed the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Ian Barlow and having been put to the vote were carried by a majority show of hands.

That Council:

1. Adopt the revised Councillors Allowance Scheme (attached as Appendix 2).
2. Approve that a parish basic allowance should be available to all parish chairs and members in accordance with the Panels recommendations.
3. Approve that the HMRC agreed travel rates for parish members should continue to be aligned to those of East Devon District Council staff and members.
4. Approve that where it is considered necessary by the Council to introduce assistants within portfolio areas the level of remuneration should be set at 25% of the Basic Allowance (£1,347.87). To be backdated to 1 June 2025.
5. Approve that where it is considered necessary by the Council to nominate Champions the level of remuneration should be set at 15% of the Basic Allowance (£808.73). To be backdated to 1 June 2025.
6. Approve that the Vice Chair of the Licensing and Enforcement Committee SRA is paid at 50% of the Licensing and Enforcement Committee Chairs allowance (£1,754.28). To be backdated to 1 June 2025.
7. Approves that the Independent Person appointed to the Audit and Governance Committee is paid an annual SRA of £400. To be backdated to 1 June 2025.
8. Adopts the same approach for council and parish members as that applied to employees, for Family Friendly Policies (incorporating maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave) and to include reference to these policies in the Councillor Scheme of Allowances for East Devon District Council.
9. Request that the Independent Remuneration Panel review whether a Special Responsibility Allowance should be payable to the Vice Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee in recognition of the increased workload.

20 **Motion on Notice - Emergency Services**

Councillor Stuart Hughes proposed the motion on notice relating to fire service co-responders, which was seconded by Councillor Colin Brown and supported by Councillors Aurora Bailey, Brain Bailey, Iain Chubb, Mike Goodman and Jenny Brown.

In speaking to the motion Councillor Hughes stated that for nearly three decades, trained firefighters have worked alongside ambulance services to provide critical, lifesaving assistance to patients experiencing medical emergencies. Their swift intervention has saved countless lives, ensuring communities receive prompt professional care when ambulance crews are delayed or unavailable.

Councillor Hughes called on the Council to:

1. Recognise the vital role fire service co-responders have played in supporting emergency medical incidents, especially in isolated areas.
2. Acknowledge widespread concerns from fire stations, emergency personnel, and residents regarding the impact of this decision on community safety.
3. Call on SWAST and Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service to reconsider this phase-out and explore alternative solutions that preserve co-responders' role alongside Community First Responders.

4. Request that the Chief Fire Officer and SWAST leadership provide a full assessment of how this change will affect response times and public safety.
5. Urge the relevant authorities to engage with councils and local communities to ensure transparency and accountability in future emergency response planning.
6. Support the recent Devon County Council Adult and Care Committee's decisions to formally request a review of the SWAST decision and to write to SWAST seeking clarity on how emergency response standards will be maintained following the removal of fire service co-responders.

In conclusion Councillor Hughes asked that:

This Council formally requests a review of the decision and will write to SWAST, Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, and Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service, in a similar vein to Devon County Council Adult and Care Committee, to seek clarity from SWAST on how emergency response standards will be maintained following the removal of fire service co-responders.

In seconding the motion on notice Councillor Colin Brown supported the comments from Councillor Hughes.

Having been put and seconded the motion on notice was put to the vote and carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED: That the Council formally requests a review of the decision and will write to SWAST, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, and Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service, in a similar vein to Devon County Council Adult and Care Committee, to seek clarity from SWAST on how emergency response standards will be maintained following removal of fire service co-responders.

21 **Motion on Notice - Inclusion of care homes and hotel accommodation in flood risk assessments**

Councillor Stuart Hughes proposed a motion on notice which was seconded by Councillor Geoff Jung and supported by Councillors Aurora Bailey, Brian Bailey, Iain Chubb, Mike Goodman, Jenny Brown, Colin Brown, Paul Hayward, Yehudi Levine, Tim Dumper, Del Haggerty, Bethany Collins, Charlotte Fitzgerald, Matt Hall, Anne Hall, Olly Davey, Paula Fernley, Marcus Hartnell and Joe Whibley.

In speaking to the motion Councillor Hughes stated that as part of East Devon's work on Coastal Protection Schemes, care homes housing a significant number of vulnerable residents, plus important hotel accommodation are assessed as commercial properties. Unfortunately, the current flood risk assessment models' classification means only individual dwellings count towards substantial grant funding yet care homes and hotel accommodation are classed as commercial properties and are subject to far less beneficial funding.

Councillor Hughes further stated that to ensure a comprehensive and a more accurate assessment, the Council urge the Government, through Defra & the Environment Agency, to formally classify both care homes and hotels as dwellings in calculations for flood defence funding and coastal protection schemes. This adjustment would better reflect community vulnerability, improve resource allocation, and strengthen long-term resilience planning for East Devon and beyond.

Councillor Hughes requested that the Council calls on Defra and the Environment Agency to review this oversight and incorporate care homes and hotels as a distinct category in future flood risk strategies.

In seconding the motion on notice Councillor Geoff Jung supported the comments from Councillor Stuart Hughes.

Having been put and seconded the motion was put to the vote and unanimously carried.

RESOLVED: That the Council calls on Defra and the Environment Agency to review this oversight and incorporate care homes and hotels as a distinct category in future flood risk strategies.

22 **Motion on Notice - Communication Workers Union - design and positioning of letterboxes**

Councillor Peter Faithfull proposed the motion on notice which was seconded by Councillor John Heath and supported by Councillors Bethany Collins, Jenny Brown, Geoff Jung and Chris Burhop.

In speaking to the motion on notice Councillor Peter Faithfull requested that this Council actively support the work of the Communication Workers Union in relation to the design and positioning of letterboxes.

Councillor Faithfull stated that as a planning authority we are in a unique position to influence the fitting of letterboxes to reduce the risk of harm to our postal and delivery workers. The CWU have, for a long time, been campaigning for a ban on low-level letterboxes. The two main causes of injury in relation to low-level letterboxes are back injuries and dog bites.

Councillor Faithfull requested that this council work in a number of ways to support the campaign of the CWU.

1. That we actively discourage low-level letterboxes on new build homes.
2. We actively promote discouraging low-level letterboxes on replacement doors.
3. That we will show our support of the CWU campaign to our two Members of Parliament.

Along with the main campaign about low-level letterboxes, we will discourage the use of poorly designed letterboxes that can often include sharp edges and overly powerful springs, that can often cause minor injuries in the form of cuts and bruises.

In seconding the motion on notice Councillor John Heath supported the comments from Councillor Faithfull.

Having been proposed and seconded the motion on notice was put to the vote and unanimously carried.

RESOLVED: That this Council work in a number of ways to support the campaign of the CWU.

1. That the Council actively discourage low level letterboxes on new build homes.
2. That the Council actively promote discouraging low level letterboxes on replacement doors.
3. That the Council will show its support of the CWU campaign to our two local MPs.

23 **Motion on Notice - Newton Poppleford Settlement Boundary**

Councillor Cllr Chris Burhop proposed the motion on notice which was seconded by Cllr Paul Hayward and was supported by Councillors Stuart Hughes, Colin Brown, Yehudi Levine, Ben Ingham, Ian Barlow and Jess Bailey.

In speaking to the motion on notice Councillor Burhop stated that at the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) meeting of 22nd November 2024 when settlement boundaries were discussed, the SPC minutes record the following in relation to Newton Poppleford's proposed settlement boundary;

"Newton Poppleford – raising the issue of consistency, concern was raised on the proposed Settlement Boundary in that the area described as excluded in stage 2 on the map should be included. Road safety concerns were also raised. A proposal to support the report recommendation failed. Therefore, a proposal to have the settlement boundary as the area shown as Stage 2 with the inclusion of area adjacent to Exmouth Road was supported."

Recommendation (f) of that minute went on to state "Newton Poppleford – that the Settlement Boundary be drawn as including Stage 2 plus area adjacent to Exmouth Road, with the exact boundary to be drawn by officers for delegated approval by the Assistant Director and the Chair of Strategic Planning Committee."

Councillor Burhop further stated that whilst the thought process given at the time of expanding the settlement boundary to "make the settlement boundary more even over the geographical area of the village" was on the face of it understandable, the discussion, which excluded the District Councillor for the village, ignored the fact that all of the village's amenities are located to the Eastern end of the village, which is why historically the settlement boundary was set to expand only to include the two proposed development sites Newt 04 and Newt 05 to the East of Exmouth Road, per officers' recommendation.

The revised boundary, attached as a file to this motion, was presented at the subsequent SPC on 11th December at which Councillor Burhop spoke in respect of the errors in the thoughts about expanding the settlement boundary to the West of Exmouth Road, namely that the lack of footpath provision makes expansion on the Western side of Exmouth Road inaccessible. This debate is covered in pages 6 & 7 of the minutes (minute 249). They record that "During discussions some members concurred that unless the footpath was installed the western side of the village would be unsafe and there was nothing to confirm at this stage that the footpath would happen. It was suggested that a condition could be imposed to ensure that no development could take place until there was a suitable footpath".

However legal advice obtained at that meeting confirmed that no decision taken by a committee of the council could be moved within 6 months of the original decision unless the motion to amend is signed by 15 or more councillors. In other words errors identified in any council condition need 25% of the council to sign up to an amendment at full council in order to be corrected. Councillor Burhop resolved to draw up such a motion to propose a correction.

Subsequent to the meeting Councillor Burhop was told by the Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee that, as the plans had now been submitted for Regulation 19 consultation, then again they could not be amended until the consultation ended.

Councillor Burhop requested that the proposed amendment be included in the agenda of the Strategic Planning Committee of 8th July however the published agenda did not include this proposal.

In conclusion Councillor Burhop requested that the settlement boundary for Newton Poppleford submitted in the Regulation 19 Consultation in the Draft Local Plan contained a material error and should now be amended per the proposed map, being officers' original recommendation.

In seconding the motion on notice Councillor Paul Hayward supported the comments from Councillor Burhop.

Councillor Todd Olive, Chair of Strategic Planning Committee proposed an amendment to the motion to refer the matter back to the Strategic Planning Committee and the following wording was supported by the proposer and seconder to the motion on notice: *That the Council instructs the Strategic Planning Committee to revisit the decision taken in respect of the Newton Poppleford settlement boundary submitted in the Regulation 19 consultation at their meeting on 2 September 2025.*

Having been put and seconded the motion on notice was put to the vote and carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED: That the Council instructs the Strategic Planning Committee to revisit the decision taken in respect of the Newton Poppleford settlement boundary submitted in the Regulation 19 consultation at their meeting on 2 September 2025.

24 **Planning Committee - Appointment of Vice Chair**

The Council received a nomination to change the Vice Chair of the Planning Committee from Councillor Sarah Chamberlain and to appoint Councillor Eileen Wragg, following a request from the Democratic Alliance Group.

A number of councillors expressed concerns that the appointment was not in line with the requirements of the Constitution as the Chair and Vice Chair represented the same ward and this was contrary to the Constitution. In response, the Monitoring Officer advised that whilst the Chair and proposed Vice Chair represented the same ward they did not both live in the same ward and the appointment having been proposed by Councillor Richard Jefferies and seconded by Councillor Olly Davey was put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED: To appoint Councillor Eileen Wragg as the Vice Chair of the Planning Committee.

25 **Outside Body - Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London Adjudication Joint Committee**

The Council considered a request to include the Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London Adjudication Joint Committee (PATROLAJC) to the list of outside bodies and the nomination of a councillor on the outside body.

Council supported that PATROLAJC should be included as an outside body and Councillor Tim Dumper was nominated to serve on the outside body.

Councillor John Loudoun proposed and Councillor Chris Burhop seconded the recommendation and having been put to the vote was carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London Adjudication Joint Committee is included on the list of outside bodies.
2. That Councillor Tim Dumper is appointed to serve on the Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London Adjudication Joint Committee as the council's representative.

26 Appointment of Independent Community Representative to serve on the Housing Review Board

The Council received a report seeking the appointment of an Independent Community Representative to serve on the Housing Review Board.

Council noted that following a recruitment process for the selection of an independent person and following an interview of the candidate one candidate was selected for their suitability to serve on the Housing Review Board.

The Chair moved the recommendation which was unanimously supported.

RESOLVED: That Wang Tain is appointed as an Independent Person on the Housing Review Board until 30 April 2029.

27 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 - Exclusion of Press and Public

Councillor Charlotte Fitzgerald moved a motion to pass a resolution under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and public from the meeting, on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, Paragraph 3 (Information relating to the finance or business affairs of any particular person).

The motion was seconded by Councillor Eleanor Rylance and having been put to the vote was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, Paragraph 3 (Information relating to the finance or business affairs of any particular person).

28 Leisure Review including final Options Appraisal of the preferred Leisure Contract Arrangements

Councillor Nick Hookway proposed a recommendation that the preferred option, as set out in the exempt report, in respect of the strategic leisure review was supported

alongside agreeing a budget, for the amount as set out in the exempt report, to meet the expected costs to be met from the Council's Transformation Reserve.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Todd Olive and having put to the vote was carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED: That Council approved a budget, as set out in the exempt report, to meet expected costs from the Council's Transformation Reserve.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

P Arnott	P Fernley	F King
A Bailey	C Fitzgerald	D Ledger
B Bailey	S Gazzard	Y Levine
J Bailey	M Goodman	J Loudoun
I Barlow	A Hall	D Mackinder
K Blakey	M Hall	M Martin
K Bloxham	S Hawkins	T McCollum
C Brown	P Hayward	T Olive
J Brown	J Heath	H Riddell
A Bruce	N Hookway	M Rixson
C Burhop	M Howe	E Rylance
B Collins	S Hughes	A Toye
R Collins	B Ingham	S Westerman
O Davey	S Jackson	J Whibley
T Dumper	R Jefferies	D Wilson
P Faithfull	G Jung	E Wragg

Officers in attendance:

Mark Barrow, Interim Director Place
Simon Davey, Director of Finance
Tracy Hendren, Chief Executive
Andrew Melhuish, Democratic Services Manager
Catrin Stark, Director of Housing and Health
Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)

Councillor apologies:

V Bonetta
S Chamberlain
M Chapman
I Chubb
D Haggerty
M Hartnell
V Johns
C Nicholas
J O'Leary
H Parr
S Richards
S Smith

Chair

Date: