

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 4 September 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.31 pm

11 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 July 2025 were agreed and signed as a true record.

12 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

13 Public speaking

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

14 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

15 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There were no confidential or exempt items.

16 Decisions made by Cabinet called in by Members for scrutiny in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules

There were no decisions made by Cabinet called in by Members for scrutiny in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure rules.

17 East Devon Safeguarding annual review 2024-25

The Portfolio Holder for Council, Corporate and External Engagement introduced this item, commended the report to the Committee and thanked staff for their vigilance in safeguarding work.

The Assistant Director Environmental Health introduced the report which outlined the safeguarding work undertaken by the Council in 2024-25. Key points in the report were highlighted.

Discussion and responses to questions included the following points:

- Councillors with concerns regarding anti-social behaviour were advised to contact the Anti-social Behaviour and Community Safety Lead Officer. Community Safety Groups [formerly Local Action Groups] had started to meet again recently and bring together various local agencies to tackle issues such as anti-social behaviour;
- It was estimated that the number of referrals which proceed as safeguarding cases was approximately 1/5th, which was in line with the national average;

- Regarding training for Councillors, Officers were working with the Democratic Services Manager to improve take up of mandatory safeguarding training;
- It was noted and agreed that it would be desirable and appropriate to update Councillor training by June 2026 to bring this in line with the requirement for staff to undertake safeguarding training every three years;
- It would be beneficial to identify the level at which Councillors had been trained through external providers to ensure that Council training was appropriate;
- Councillors who had not undertaken training would be followed up to either complete mandatory safeguarding training, or provide evidence of training undertaken elsewhere;
- It was noted that work undertaken by the Anti-social Behaviour and Community Safety Lead had assisted with improved staff awareness and confidence to report safeguarding concerns;
- The report demonstrated the importance of safeguarding to the Council.

The Chair thanked Officers for the report and the Committee noted the activity that had taken place with regards to safeguarding delivery for 2024-25.

18 **Review of emergency planning and responses 2024-25**

The Portfolio Holder for Council, Corporate and External Engagement introduced this item and commended the report to the Committee.

The Assistant Director Environmental Health introduced the report which outlined emergency planning and response work undertaken in the year 2024-25. Key points were highlighted and it was emphasised that capacity within teams would need to be considered in the near future to ensure that teams are appropriately resourced going forward.

Discussion and responses to questions included the following points:

- It was suggested that the Councillor newsletter would be an appropriate place to raise awareness among Ward Members of the need for Town and Parish Councils to plan for emergencies;
- Town and Parish Clerks could be asked to add emergency planning to their council agendas to increase preparedness;
- Concern was raised with regard to the likelihood of a terrorist attack. Officers assured Members that the Council is aware of such issues and that the Emergency Duty Officer would receive notifications in the event of malicious or harmful threats;
- With regard to Martyn's Law, now enacted as the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, further work with various teams is required to understand how EDDC's public buildings and spaces will be affected by the legislation;
- A number of learning points had emerged from the Newton Poppleford flood event in 2023 and there is a review process built into the Local Resilience Forum work which provides feedback;
- It was welcomed that some parishes are working together to build resilience;
- It was suggested that an emergency planning pack or training video could be produced for Town and Parish Councils, and attention was drawn to the Devon Communities Together website which holds details of current live emergency plans;
- It was noted that the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Officer is regularly in contact with East Devon Parish Clerks to raise awareness of emergency planning and support and resources available.

It was agreed to recommend to Officers that regular updates are included in the Councillors' newsletter.

The Chair thanked Officers for their informative report and details of the work being undertaken behind the scenes.

The Committee noted the activity that has been taken with regards to Emergency Planning and response delivery for 2024 – 25.

19 **Scoping document - impact of the ban on the use of glyphosate**

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the scoping document and drew Councillors' attention to the proposed timescale which allowed for consultation with Ward Members to understand fully any specific problem areas.

Discussion and responses to questions included the following points:

- If the review proceeds, it would be preferable to consider the report in February 2026 ahead of the year's growing season;
- The impact on biodiversity should be included when considering glyphosate use;
- Consideration should be given to the distinction between weed growth which is causing damage in certain areas or is viewed by residents as unsightly;
- The report should include the effectiveness of alternative methods of weed control;
- There should be clarity regarding land which is the responsibility of Devon County Council rather than EDDC land;
- Undeveloped EDDC land would be included in the review subject to Officer capacity;
- The duty of care to employees when using glyphosate should be recognised;
- The management of wildlife improvement areas requires a high level of staff resource;
- The review should include the Cabinet report of March 2022 and the agreed points from that meeting.

It was agreed to proceed with the review on the basis of the scoping document and the above points, with a report to the Committee in February 2026.

The Chair thanked the StreetScene Operations Manager for attending the meeting.

20 **Work Programme**

The work programme was amended to include the report on the impact of the ban on use of glyphosate coming to the February 2026 Committee. The work programme was then agreed.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

I Barlow
K Blakey
O Davey
M Goodman (Chair)
D Mackinder (Vice-Chair)

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

R Collins
R Jefferies
J Loudoun
M Rixson

Officers in attendance:

Matthew Blythe, Assistant Director Environmental Health

Sarah Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer

Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)

David Whelan, Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Officer

Julia Woodbridge, StreetScene Operations Manager

Councillor apologies:

J Brown

B Collins

A Hall

M Hall

M Hartnell

V Johns

Y Levine

Chair

Date: