

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 9 July 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.55 pm

20 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meetings of Cabinet held on 4 June 2025 were agreed.

21 Declarations of interest

Min 37. Natural Seaton Interpretive Masterplan.

Councillor Paul Arnott, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Is the Seaton County Councillor.

22 Public speaking

The Portfolio Holder Environment Operations spoke on the emergency to the high-pressure sewage main just yards from Exmouth Beach being dealt with by South West Water (SWW) utilising the Maer Road car park. He was surprised that this incident had taken place due to SWW confirming recently they had no issues to providing future services for a large planning application for further houses in Exmouth. Cllr Hookway expressed his displeasure stating that this could not have happened at a worse time with several public events taking place over the coming weekend, with another sewage spill being catastrophic to the reputation of the town. Councillors asked that SWW be held accountable and that the company were on hand over the weekend to react immediately if a further incident occurred.

Cllr Ian Barlow asked that the political proportionality for committee seats be looked into immediately, as recently joined members were having to wait until the October Council meeting for this to be allocated.

23 Matters of urgency

There were two items that has been agreed to be dealt with in this way recorded at Minute 28 Minutes of Leisure Strategy Delivery Forum held on 19 June 2025 and Minute 25 – Extension to the contract of procuring digital call handling platform.

24 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There was three items which officers recommended should be dealt with in this way recorded at Minutes 27 – 29.

25 Extension to the contract of procuring digital call handling platform

The report was presented for an urgent decision to improve services within Home Safeguard by extending the contract length for the procurement of the new digital call handling platform which differs to what was agreed with Cabinet on 4 September 2024.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

Agree to the increased length of the contract, which differs to the agreed length of contract previously approved by Cabinet.

REASON:

A decision was made by Cabinet on 4 September 2024 to give authority to enter into a contract for £252,900 over a 4-year period for the digital platform that enabled Home Safeguard to respond to new technologies. The featured cost and duration of the contract was based on a previous quote sought from a previous lead officer, from leading healthcare tech company called Enovation (provided in February 2024).

To comply with procurement guidelines, EDDC approached Enovation for a new quote as part of the award process; this was a direct award with Enovation a preferred supplier on the TEL framework, LOT 1 via the Northern Housing Consortium. Costs had increased (£3,508 per year) since the previous quote and contract were discussed, and after negotiation with Enovation, the most cost-effective option is a contract for £333,666 over 5 years and on that basis, the Director of Housing and Health in consultation with colleagues and ELT, recommends to cabinet that the contract is awarded on this basis.

The financial provision had been confirmed by Finance for the additional amount, however as the contract length still differed from that agreed by Cabinet and was required to be reflected as five years in duration, Cabinet are asked to endorse the above decision.

26 **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).

27 **Recycling & Waste Future Services model business case**

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations as set out in the report were agreed.

28 **Minutes of Leisure Strategy Delivery Forum held on 19 June 2025**

Members noted the Minutes and recommendations of the Leisure Strategy Delivery Forum held on 19 June 2025.

29 **Leisure Review findings including final Options Appraisal of the preferred Leisure Contract Arrangements**

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations as set out in the report were agreed.

30 **Minutes of Strategic Planning Committee held on 19 May 2025**

Members noted the Minutes and recommendations of the Strategic Planning Committee held on 19 May 2025.

Minute 266: South East Devon Wildlife – Joint Habitats Site Mitigation Strategy 2025 to 2030

That Strategic Planning Committee recommend to Cabinet that the South East Devon Wildlife Joint Habitats Site Mitigation Strategy 2025 to 2030 be adopted.

31 Minutes of Leisure Strategy Delivery Forum held on 11 June 2025

Members noted the Minutes of the Leisure Strategy Delivery Forum held on 11 June 2025.

32 Enterprise Zone Implementation Plan

The Exeter & East Devon Enterprise Zone (EEDEZ) designation had been in operation since April 2017. The Enterprise Zone (EZ) comprises four sites covering almost 90 hectares in East Devon. The focus of the EZ programme had been on addressing barriers to delivery and bringing forward catalytic investment to sustain economic recovery and achieve longer-term objectives. This Implementation Plan provided an update on what the designation had achieved to date and areas for future investment.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

Note the strategic direction, project delivery, and financial planning outlined in the 2024 EEDEZ Implementation Plan and approve the proposed actions to support economic recovery and achieve long-term objectives.

REASON:

The EEDEZ Implementation Plan provided an overview of the strategic direction, project delivery, and financial planning necessary to support economic recovery and achieve long-term objectives.

33 Procurement of Legal, Financial and Commercial Advisors for Cranbrook District Heating Expansion Areas Project

The report notified Cabinet of two contracts that would both exceed £100,000:

- 1) Contract for consultant support for a Legal Advisor. The advisor would play a vital role in developing the legal aspects of the project, negotiating terms with counterparties and ensuring both the project and EDDC were protected from legal risks. The maximum expenditure on the contract will be £200,000. This represents 20% of the Commercialisation grant awarded by the Green Heat Network Fund.
- 2) Contract for consultant support for a Financial and Commercial Advisor. The advisor would play a critical role in developing scheme's financial model as well as updating the business case to ensure robust and justified financial and commercial structuring. The maximum expenditure on the contract would be £128,000. This represents 13% of the Commercialisation grant awarded by the Green Heat Network Fund.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approves:

1. The letting of the contract to Bevan Brittan, to provide legal advice, with a total contract value of up to £200,000.

2. The letting of the contract to Global City Futures, to provide financial and commercial support, with a total contract value of £128,000.

REASON:

To support the delivery of Cranbrook District Heating Expansion Project.

34 **Annual complaint monitoring and service improvement report 2024/25**

The council's annual complaint monitoring and service improvement report for 2024/25 was presented to Members.

In answer to questions the Monitoring Officer said the report was a summary and that there was a significant amount of work going on with regular information going to the Housing Review Board. It was acknowledged the pressures on the Housing team and that lessons learnt were ways of showing what had been taken onboard to improve the service.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

Note the numbers and trends in terms of formal complaints dealt with during the year; the learning points which have been identified; and actions taken to address these.

REASON:

The council was required by the Housing Ombudsman to publish its self-assessment against the complaint handling code, on an annual basis, as part of the complaint performance and service improvement report. This should be accompanied by Cabinet's response to the report.

The purpose of publishing the Council's response to the self-assessment and to the report was to provide assurance that it was a true reflection of the council's complaint handling.

35 **Jurassic Coast Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management Mitigation Study**

Along the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site (WHS), there were many locations where existing coastal flood and erosion defences were adjacent to undefended sections of cliff and coast that form part of the WHS. As sea levels rise and these natural lengths of coast continue to erode landwards, the existing coastal defences will be at risk of outflanking. To manage these risks, the Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) that set out the long-term policy for Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) along the coast identify the need to modify and/or build new defences to manage the transitions between defended and undefended sections of coast.

The project was estimated to cost £495k and full funding had been secured via joint funding-bids submitted at the same time in late 2024 to South West RFCC (£120k Local Levy), Wessex RFCC (£345k Local Levy) and the Environment Agency (£150k FCERM Grant in Aid) to deliver the project over the next 3 years (from April 2025 to March 2028). It has been confirmed with the Environment Agency that the full project budget (£495k) would be claimed and administered by BCP Council, with South West Flood & Coastal managing the income/expenditure for the duration of the project.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

Note the commencement of the project and support EDDC officer involvement in its development.

REASON:

Supporting the project would help reduce the risk of adverse impact on the World Heritage Site from future coastal defence works along the Jurassic Coast, including East Devon and the forthcoming Sidmouth Beach Management Scheme.

36 **Budleigh Salterton Beach & Cliff Management Plan**

A new Budleigh Salterton Beach and Cliff Management Plan was to be developed to set-out sustainable approaches to managing the risk of coastal erosion at Budleigh Salterton over the short and long-term. The project was estimated to cost £195k with £165k of Local Levy having been secured from the South West RFCC and £30k from EDDC, to deliver the project over the next 2 years (from April 2025 to March 2027).

To guide the project, a Project Board and BCMP Advisory Group would be formed. The BCMP Advisory Group would comprise representatives of the diverse range of stakeholders representing the community of Budleigh Salterton as well as statutory bodies and would have a remit of advising the project team and Project Board as the project develops. The Project Board would comprise of senior officers (Director of Place, Assistant Director StreetScene and Engineering Projects Manager) and Portfolio Holder for Environment – Operational from EDDC to ultimately oversee and direct the project, including making final decisions having considered feedback from the advisory group. The final BCMP would be brought to Cabinet for approval and adoption in due course.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

Note the commencement of the project and authorise the establishment of both the Project Board and Advisory Group, and grants delegated authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the portfolio holder for Environment – Operational, to agree representation on both the Project Board and Advisory Group.

REASON:

Supporting the project would ensure development of the Budleigh Salterton BCMP had the appropriate governance and oversight and input from key stakeholders.

37 **Natural Seaton Interpretive Masterplan**

The Natural Seaton Masterplan had been drafted by consultant, Dominic Acland and engaged various stakeholders in its development. The resulting plan was ready for adoption with the authorisation of ELT and sought to use funds held from the sale of the Seaton Jurassic building to deliver the various outputs of the masterplan.

Following on from this piece of work, the Countryside Team would be looking to use this strategic document as the foundations of a major grant application from National Lottery Heritage Fund, for funding work at the southern end of the wetlands site to deliver habitat creation, access and interpretive work to “complete” the Seaton Wetlands project.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Approve the direction of travel in relation to the current version of the masterplan; a working document to guide project work relating to the natural world in and around the town of Seaton.

2. Delegates authority to the Director of Place to convene the proposed stakeholder group.
3. Agree that the Countryside Team Manager seeks funding from a National Lottery Grants for Heritage application later this year.

RECOMMENDED to Council:

4. 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 as detailed in table 3 of the report.

REASON:

To develop the Natural Tourism offer within the town of Seaton, with the input of partner stakeholders.

38 **The Reform of Planning Committees: Technical Consultation**

The Government was consulting on a working paper setting out how proposals to reform planning committees and introduce a national scheme of delegation would be implemented off the back of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill which was currently being considered by Parliament. These proposals included enabling greater levels of officer delegation, mandatory training for committee members and to have consistency across the country on delegation.

Members expressed their concerns and disappointment that the Government was taking this stance. They stated people need to engage at a local level and that these proposals were not democratic with a lack of understanding to the importance of local plans.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

Consider the proposed changes in the Reform of Planning Committee Technical Consultation and agree the proposed response for submission.

REASON:

To ensure that members were aware of proposals that will affect the Council's constitution and decision-making processes and had the opportunity to submit comments for government consideration.

Attendance List

Present:

Portfolio Holders

P Arnott	Leader of the Council
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

Cabinet apologies:

S Hawkins	Portfolio Holder Finance
S Jackson	Portfolio Holder Communications and Democracy
J Loudoun	Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder Corporate, Council & External Engagement
R Jefferies	Portfolio Holder Environment - Nature & Climate

Also present (for some or all the meeting)

Councillor Aurora Bailey
Councillor Brian Bailey
Councillor Ian Barlow
Councillor Kevin Blakey
Councillor Colin Brown
Councillor Roy Collins
Councillor Peter Faithfull
Councillor Paula Fernley
Councillor Steve Gazzard
Councillor Mike Goodman
Councillor Matt Hall
Councillor Marianne Rixson
Councillor Eleanor Rylance
Councillor Kim Bloxham

Also present:

Officers:

Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)
Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer
Tom Buxton-Smith, Engineering Projects Manager
Tim Child, Assistant Director Place, Assets & Commercialisation
Simon Davey, Director of Finance
Ed Freeman, Assistant Director Planning Strategy and Development Management
Andrew Hancock, Assistant Director StreetScene
Naomi Harnett, Corporate Lead (Interim) – Major Projects & Programmes
Rebecca Heal, Solicitor
Tracy Hendren, Chief Executive
David Robertson, Project Manager Recycling and Waste
Lynsey Williams, Housing Sustainment and Resettlement Service Manager
Andrew Wood, Director of Place

Chair

Date: