

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 7 January 2026

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.01 pm and ended at 7.15 pm

127 Minutes of the previous meetings

The minutes of the previous meetings from Cabinet held on 26 November 2025 and 3 December 2025 were agreed.

128 Declarations of interest

Min 138. Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation.
Councillor Nick Hookway, Affects Non-registerable Interest, has been given a dispensation as a Devon County Councillor.

Min 138. Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation.
Councillor Paul Arnott, Affects Non-registerable Interest, has been given a dispensation as a Devon County Councillor involved in LGR.

Min 138. Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation.
Councillor Paul Hayward, Affects Non-registerable Interest, has been given a dispensation as a Devon County Councillor.

Min 138. Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation.
Councillor Richard Jefferies, Affects Non-registerable Interest, has been given a dispensation as a Devon County Councillor.

129 Public speaking

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

130 Matters of urgency

There were none.

131 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There was one item dealt with in this way recorded at Minute 141.

132 Minutes of Housing Review Board held on 13 November 2025

The minutes were discussed confidentially in Part B of the meeting, they are recorded at Minute 141.

133 Minutes of Recycling and Waste Partnership Board held on 12 November 2025

Members noted the minutes of the Recycling and Waste Partnership Board held on 12 November 2025.

134 Minutes of Poverty Working Panel held on 24 November 2025

Members noted the Minutes of the Poverty Working Panel held on 24 November 2025.

135 Minutes of Arts and Culture Forum held on 26 November 2025

Members noted the Minutes and recommendations of the Arts and Culture Forum held on 26 November 2025.

Minute 8 East Devon Cultural Strategy progress and budget request (this was discussed under Minute 137 Draft Revenue and Capital Budgets 2026/27)

**Minute 9 Thelma Hulbert Gallery update,
RESOLVED THAT CABINET**

Note and support a funding bid to the Arts Council to support the Thelma Hulbert Gallery to:

- Enrich the Exhibition Programme by delivering an ambitious engagement programme that benefits the wider East Devon community — including local schools and our expanding Youth Network.
- Develop the Youth Network into a region-wide platform that extends beyond the gallery, engaging young people who may not otherwise have access to creative opportunities — such as those with school-related anxiety and young people leaving care.
- Reframe opportunities for young people by introducing live projects and creative briefs designed to build skills, confidence, and pathways into the creative industries.
- Expand internship opportunities through partnerships with Exeter College and support for care leavers.
- Continue to focus on the climate emergency by developing Climate Conversations into a Climate Symposium – a day to carve out space and time to inspire creatives to protect and enhance the natural environment through their creative practice, share expertise and network in a participatory, supportive and solutions focused event of interactive workshops and talks.

136 Council Tax Base 2026/2027

The Assistant Director for Revenues, Benefits & Customer Services presented the report which set out the tax base for 2026/2027 and included the breakdown for each parish, expressed in terms of Band D equivalent properties on which the council tax would be based. This was an important component in the Council's budget setting process for 2026/2027.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Agreed the approval of the tax base for 2026/2027 at 65,733.46 Band D equivalent properties.
2. Agreed the amount for each parish as detailed under section 3 of the report.

REASON:

The calculation of the tax base was prescribed in regulations and was a legal requirement. The council tax base was defined as the number of Band D equivalent

properties in a local authority's area. The tax base was necessary to calculate council tax for a given area.

137 **Draft Revenue and Capital Budgets 2026/27**

The Director of Finance and Portfolio Holder Finance presented the draft revenue and capital budgets for 2026/27 for initial approval by the Cabinet before consideration by a joint meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Housing Review Board. Recommendations from these meetings would be presented back to Cabinet on 4 February 2026 when members would finalise budget proposals to recommend to Council.

Members noted Minute 8, and the recommendation of the Arts and Culture Forum held on 26 November 2025.

Minute 8 East Devon Cultural Strategy progress and budget request

that Cabinet approve the request of an internal budget of £37,500 to continue the successful delivery of the Cultural Strategy in 2026/27 as part of the budget-setting process.

RESOLVED:

That the draft revenue and capital estimates including the associated fees and charges schedule are initially approved before forwarding to a joint meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Housing Review Board for consideration. Cabinet would then consider recommendations from these Committees before making their final recommendation to Council on the 4 February 2026.

REASON:

There was a requirement to set a balanced budget and a Council Tax for 2026/27.

138 **Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation**

The Director of Place updated members following the submission of the full proposal for the 4-5-1 model of local government reorganisation in Devon to the Secretary of State in November 2025. This included a summary of the other proposals that were submitted alongside this model. He went on to consider the next stages in terms of the consultation and decision-making process and the transition to implementation planning. Finally, the update provided in relation to devolution proposals and the strategic importance of moving to a Mayoral model.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

- Notes the next steps in relation to proposals for local government reorganisation and the potential establishment of a mayoral strategic authority.
- Further to the letter of 25 July 2025 signed by this and the other ten Devon councils jointly expressing an interest in future Devon devolution opportunities, agrees to liaise with the other Devon Districts, the County Council and Plymouth City and Torbay Councils with the intention of reinvigorating the Team Devon partnership.
- Receives further reports as the proposals evolve and key stages are reached.

REASON:

To ensure that Cabinet was fully informed of the progression of proposals relating to both local government reorganisation and devolution.

139 **Forward Plan**

Members noted the contents of the forward plan for key decisions for the period 1st January 2026 to 30th April 2026.

140 **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 page 7 Cabinet 29 October 2025 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).

141 **Minutes of Housing Review Board held on 13 November 2025**

Cllr Aurora Bailey and Cllr Brian Bailey left the meeting before the start of this item.

Members noted the Minutes and recommendations of the Housing Review Board held on 13 November 2025.

Attendance List

Present:

Portfolio Holders

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

Also present (for some or all the meeting)

Councillor Aurora Bailey
Councillor Brian Bailey
Councillor Christopher Burhop
Councillor Roy Collins
Councillor Peter Faithfull
Councillor Mike Goodman

Also present:

Officers:

Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)

Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer
Simon Davey, Director of Finance
Tracy Hendren, Chief Executive
Libby Jarrett, Assistant Director Revenues, Benefits, Corporate Customer Access, Fraud
& Compliance
Andrew King, Assistant Director for Housing (Regulated Services)
Tom Winters, Interim Economic Development Manager
Andrew Wood, Director of Place

Chair

Date: