

Report to: Council



Date of Meeting 15 April 2026

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

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Questions on Notice

Report summary:

The constitution provides that members of Council may ask: the Chair, the Leader or a Portfolio Holder Member of the Cabinet; or the Chair of any Committee or Sub Committee a question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the district.

A member may only ask a question if either:

(a) they have given at least 3 working days' notice in writing of the question to the Chief Executive; or

(b) the question relates to urgent matters, they have the consent of the Chair to whom the question is to be put and the content of the question is given to the Chief Executive by noon on the day of the meeting.

In response to a question on notice an answer may take the form of:

(a) A direct oral answer;

(b) Where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or

(c) Where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner.

In accordance with the Constitution seven questions on notice have been received and they are set out in the report with the responses.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

To note the responses to the questions on notice.

Reason for recommendation:

In accordance with the Council's Constitution Rules Part 4, 9.2 Questions on notice at full Council; 9.3 Notice of questions.

Officer: Andrew Melhuish, Democratic Services Manager (andrew.melhuish@eastdevon.gov.uk)

Question	Question from	Question	Response
1	Cllr Stuart Hughes	<p>Question to Portfolio Holder for Finance</p> <p>Annual Car Parking Permit Renewals and Lack of Reminder Notices</p> <p>A Sidmouth resident, (aged 86), recently renewed their annual car parking permit but received no reminder from the council prior to its expiry on 17 March. They were subsequently informed that EDDC no longer issues renewal reminders and that the process is now entirely computer-based. The resident is concerned that, had they received a penalty during the period of unintentional lapse, it would have caused them significant financial hardship. They also highlight that many older residents in Sidmouth do not use computers and have not been informed that reminders have been discontinued.</p> <p>Can the Portfolio Holder outline the rationale for ending reminder notices, what assessment has been made of the impact on non-digital residents, and whether the council will review this policy to ensure that older and digitally-excluded residents are not unfairly disadvantaged?</p>	<p>Response from Portfolio Holder for Finance</p> <p>Most of our car parking permit interactions are digital, with permit holders managing their account online, and receiving reminders of their permit expiry by email. We do also provide a phone service for those who do not have access to the internet and prefer to buy their permit by speaking with one of our call centre team. For those who buy a permit over the phone and do not have access to an online account, written courtesy reminders of permit expiry are sent out via post. Following a recent digital upgrade in February, there was a short period of disruption to some parking services, which affected the permit reminder function amongst other services.</p> <p>I am pleased to confirm that this temporary issue has been resolved, and we will continue to send out postal reminders to those who do not have access to our online services.</p> <p>We apologise for any inconvenience to customers who were affected during this short period, and we would ask that customers contact our parking team directly should they have any questions regarding their permit.</p>
2	Cllr Mike Goodman	<p>Question to Leader of Council</p> <p>At the full council on February 26th a motion proposed by the Leader and agreed by this council asked the Leader to</p>	<p>Response from Leader of Council</p> <p>The motion was did not involve a letter being written from EDDC to DCC. It stated:</p>

		<p>a. Urgently review the value and efficiency of its existing outsourced highway maintenance contract,</p> <p>b. Urgently reconsider its decision to continue with “business as usual” at the earliest possible opportunity, inviting genuine consultation with partner authorities and communities through that process.</p> <p>This was to be a letter to Devon County Council can the Leader confirm what the answers were and what progress has been made on the state of our roads.</p>	<p>At Council on 26 February 2025 Council in respect of the Motion on Highways resolved:</p> <p>That Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asks that the Leader call on Devon County Council to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Urgently review the value and efficiency of its existing outsourced highway maintenance contract, b. Urgently reconsider its decision to continue with “business as usual” at the earliest possible opportunity, inviting genuine consultation with partner authorities and communities through that process; 2. Requests that the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Invite the relevant Director at Devon County Council to attend a discussion with East Devon District Councillors to air concerns regarding Highways’ input into the planning process, and to raise these concerns with the relevant Devon County Council Scrutiny Committee following that meeting, b. Invite relevant Devon Highways officers to provide a briefing for East Devon District Councillors and Town & Parish Councillors regarding how they assess planning applications and provide consultation responses, and c. Following the requested briefing session, to invite East Devon District Council’s Development Management team to consult with members regarding how the information provided in Devon Highways’ responses to consultation requests could be improved to provide additional reassurance to Members and the public; and 3. Recommends that East Devon District Council’s Scrutiny Committee consider undertaking an investigation of these issues
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			<p>in support of and in addition to the above measures.</p> <p>As far as I am aware this work has not yet been discussed at Cllr Goodman's Scrutiny committee</p>
3	Cllr Mike Goodman	<p>Question to Leader of Council</p> <p>At the full Council meeting on the 25th of February having asked a question on potholes the Leader replied to my supplementary question of how many road schemes had been delayed or stopped in Devon and he suggested that I write to the Portfolio Holder for Highways at Devon County Council. On the 26th February I took his advice and emailed the Portfolio Holder and copied him in. Despite several follow up emails I have not had a reply to this question which directly relates to the motion by the Leader in 2025.</p> <p>Would the Leader confirm that the only way I will receive a reply is via a freedom of information request.</p>	<p>Response from Leader of Council</p> <p>As Cllr Goodman knows this is a matter for the County Council. This remains the case.</p>
4	Cllr Mike Goodman	<p>Question to Leader of Council</p> <p>At the full council on the 25th of February I asked if the Leader in proposing to write to the secretary of state asking for LGR to be postponed and not to happen in 2027 was he aware of the effect this would have on services in East Devon. This council were not given an answer could I ask him again. A simple answer was he aware or not.</p>	<p>Response from Leader of Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I answered this question fully as is recorded in the minutes • Since then through parliamentary statements from the Sec of State, and published correspondence in the FT from the "cathedral cities", the risk that for Devon the enlarged Exeter proposal will be chosen in July is existential, leaving the majority of East Devon residents in a non-viable "Rural & Coastal" devised

			<p>by Labour Exeter and Plymouth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Sec of State has also stated he is minded to take the powers of the boundaries commission unto himself. Many perceive this as reckless, akin to the cancellation and uncancellation of local elections in Exeter <p>As Cllr Goodman will know, many other councils in England have joined Norfolk in questioning the entire project, including Sussex and Kent. All three are in the "Devo Priority" cohort running a year ahead of us. The likelihood of legal challenge and consequentially delay is high as of today. If there is to be a delay, it will be up to government to make financial provision for services.</p>
5	Cllr Mike Goodman	<p>Question to Leader of Council</p> <p>When the Leader wrote to the Secretary of State requesting postponing the election what was the answer from the Secretary of State.</p>	<p>Response from Leader of Council</p> <p>No letter has been sent from Devon councils yet as the context following recent announcements from the Sec of State and challenges arising is evolving weekly.</p>
6	Cllr Mike Goodman	<p>Question to Leader of Council</p> <p>Is the Leader of Council aware of the devastating affect the implementation of a tourist tax as had on Scotland and the damage a similar tax if introduced in East Devon would have on tourism trade and other business in East Devon. Is the Leader of Council aware of the devastating affect the implementation of a tourist tax as had on Scotland and the damage a similar tax if introduced in East Devon would have on tourism trade and other business in East Devon.</p>	<p>Response from Leader of Council</p> <p>A "tourism tax" has not to the best of my knowledge been discussed at either EDDC or DCC.</p>
7	Cllr Mike Goodman	<p>Question to Leader of Council</p> <p>In late 2025 the government allowed councils to introduce a tourist tax, Cornwall Council are actively</p>	<p>Response from Leader of Council</p> <p>As above, this is not being considered. If any suggestion came forward, it would be a</p>

		considering introducing a tourist tax. Will the Leader and the administration agree with me that no such tax should be imposed in East Devon.	matter for the new unitaries or a possible Strategic Mayoral Authority. Cllr Goodman's personal view against is noted.
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