

Report to: Council



Date of Meeting 15 July 2026

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

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 six 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 Peter Faithfull	Portfolio Holder for Place, Infrastructure & Strategic Planning/Homes & Communities Can the portfolio holder please explain to me, in detail, how the off-site funds for affordable housing is supposed to be used in relation to the number of houses stated on planning applications.	Portfolio Holder for Place, Infrastructure & Strategic Planning/Homes & Communities A written response will be provided.
2	Cllr Peter Faithfull	Portfolio Holder for Council, Corporate Co-ordination and External Engagement & Communications & Democracy To the Chair - with all the development across our district and the substantial increase in the numbers of electors, along with the expected increase in workloads placed on town and parish councils, when will we have a review of the number of councillors on town and parish councils?	Response from Portfolio Holder for Council, Corporate Co-ordination and External Engagement & Communications & Democracy A written response will be provided.
3	Cllr Mike Goodman	Portfolio Holder for Place, Infrastructure & Strategic Planning Enforcement remains a key issue for many of our residents. Can the portfolio holder confirm the average number of days it takes to investigate enforcement issues and resolve complaints. Comparing this to five years ago.	Response from Portfolio Holder for Place, Infrastructure & Strategic Planning A written response will be provided.
4	Cllr Mike Goodman	Cabinet agreed with the Overview that toilets would be a priority to transfer to Town and Parish councils wishing to take on toilets in their area and the transfer would include a dowry. Can the Portfolio Holder give Council an update on progress.	Response from Portfolio Holder for Assets & Economy Cabinet resolved in February for a focussed programme of Community Asset Transfers to include public toilets along with a proportional amount of residual capital funding. Delivering this

			was subject to securing additional service capacity and a budget was secured to support this. Subsequently March Overview Committee supported this approach. Continuing staffing pressures across StreetScene and Estates teams has impacted on ability to bring this project forward. Officers are aware of the importance of this programme of asset transfers and through the established Portfolio Holder Working Group will be proposing a way forward for a focussed and phased programme deliverable within the resources available and this will then be shared with those Parish and Town Councils.
5	Cllr Mike Goodman	Portfolio Holder Council, Corporate Co-ordination & External Engagement AI is being extensively being used by businesses and Councils, what plans have the Council to use AI to assist EDDC.	Response from Portfolio Holder Council, Corporate Co-ordination & External Engagement The Council has adopted Microsoft's AI engine, Co-Pilot. Co-Pilot is available to all staff at EDDC with a Microsoft 365 account. The majority of staff have the free/basic version. 67 members of staff have paid licenses which offer more in terms of AI usage and ability. Those officers have the facility/ opportunity/ capacity to use AI for research, to assist in writing reports and documents, preparing presentations, summarising information, summarising survey outcomes etc. With any AI, it is important that the results are carefully reviewed by our officers for accuracy. In addition, a number of our 3rd party systems utilise AI tools within their products. Co-Pilot training is also available to staff. The Council has also adopted AI usage and Co-Pilot policies.

			The Council embraces the use of AI technology due to the value it can bring to the organisation and are monitoring developments in AI in terms of potential efficiency and service improvements
6	Cllr Mike Goodman	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Council, Corporate Co-ordination and External Engagement On the 30th June at the Personal Committee meeting members were informed that the total salary cost had increased from £10.2m in 2019 to just under £17m in 2025/26. Although some of these costs are outside the control of the Council it represents a 60% increase at a time when finances are challenging, would the portfolio explain this increase.	Response from Portfolio Holder for Finance and Council, Corporate Co-ordination and External Engagement The table presented to the Personal Committee is the actual direct salary costs paid in that year. A comparison and explanation have been prepared based on salaries paid in 2019 /20 compared with the position in 2025/26. The increase between these years is £6.7m; the main cost drivers and variations between the years are set out below:

The comparison made in the table is actual direct salary costs. A comparison and explanation has been prepared based on 2025/26 to 2019/20	
	£m
Increase between 2019/20 and 2025/26 is £6.7m; main cost drivers and variation between the years.	
Annual Local Government Pay Award, based on average % increase applied to 2019/20 base	2.6
Additional Resources in corporate capacity (Legal, IT, Comms, HR, ELT Support, Projects & Programmes) & additional director. Some of these costs met through savings in other areas and specific approval for resource through Council approval.	1.1
Teams transferred from Housing Revenue Account into General Fund with appropriate recharges made back where required - Accounting Amendment no overall impact.	0.9
Additional Resources in StreetScene areas	0.9
Additional resources in Planning (Development Management & Policy) - some of this met through higher income	0.6
2022 PWC pay benchmark review - 85% of staff received additional grade increase and 98% were given additional future pay increments. This was initial cost but would have effect on future years	0.5
Countryside - Habitat & Nutrient Mitigation Externally Funded	0.4