

Date: 17 September 2012
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To:

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Mike Allen, Peter Bowden, Graham Brown, Peter Burrows, Derek Button, David Chapman, Deborah Custance Baker, Vivien Duval Steer, Roger Giles, Tony Howard, Stuart Hughes, John Humphreys, Sheila Kerridge, David Key, John O'Leary, Brenda Taylor, Graham Troman, Tim Wood, Eileen Wragg, Claire Wright, Tom Wright)
Portfolio Holders
Chief Executive; Deputy Chief Executives

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday 27 September 2012 at 6.30pm

Council Chamber, Knowle, Sidmouth

Members of the Council who do not sit on this Committee are welcome to attend as observers. Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting.

- There is a period of 15 minutes at the beginning of the meeting to allow members of the public to ask questions.
- In addition, the public may speak on items listed on the agenda. After a report has been introduced, the Chairman (Leader of the Council) will ask if any member of the public wishes to speak and/or ask questions.
- All individual contributions will be limited to a period of 3 minutes – where there is an interest group of objectors or supporters, a spokesperson should be appointed to speak on behalf of the group.
- The Chairman has the right and discretion to control questions to avoid disruption, repetition and to make best use of the meeting time.

Should anyone have any special needs or require any reasonable adjustments to assist them in making individual contributions, please contact Debbie Meakin (contact details at top of page).

A hearing loop system will be in operation in the Council Chamber. Councillors and members of the public are reminded to switch off mobile phones during the meeting.

AGENDA

Page/s

1. **Public question time** – standard agenda item (15 minutes)
Members of the public are invited to put questions to the Committee through the Chairman. Councillors also have the opportunity to ask questions of the Leader and/or Portfolio Holders during this time slot whilst giving priority at this part of the agenda to members of the public
2. To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 26 July 2012. 5 - 14

3. To receive any apologies for absence.
4. To receive any declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda.
5. To consider any items which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be dealt with as matters of urgency because of special circumstances.
(Note: Councillors please notify the Chief Executive in advance of the meeting if you wish to raise a matter under this item, who will then consult the Chairman).
6. To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the press) have been excluded. There are **no** items that the officers recommend should be dealt with in this way.
7. Decisions made by the Cabinet called in by Members for scrutiny in accordance with the Overview Procedure Rules under Part 4.5 of the Constitution. There are **no** items identified.
8. **Cabinet Agenda**
Members are asked to notify in advance the Chairman or the Democratic Services Officer any Cabinet items they wish to debate.
Members to debate any issues of concern on the current Cabinet agenda in order for the Chairman to feed this back to the Cabinet at its meeting on the 3 October 2012. The website link to the Cabinet agenda will be e-mailed to Members on 24 September 2012.
Please refer to Cabinet agenda
9. **The Rolle Centre – Managing the project**
15 - 16
Roy Pryke, Chairman of the Board of Rolle Exmouth Limited, will present to the Committee the vision for the Rolle Centre and progress to date.
10. **East Devon Business Forum**
17
Discussion on the Forum as requested by Councillor Graham Troman. Councillor Graham Brown, as current Chairman of the Forum, and Nigel Harrison, Economic Development Manager, will be present for questions.
11. **Final report of the Vitality of High Streets and Town Centres Task and Finish Forum**
18 - 35
Councillor Tim Wood will present his Forum's final report and recommendations.
12. **Progress on Ward Member Satisfaction with Planning Task and Finish Forum resolutions**
Ed Freeman, Development Manager
36 - 41
An update for the Committee on progress since the completion of this Forum.

13. **Planning Enforcement Resource and Workload Update** 42 - 45
Ed Freeman, Development Manager
- An update for the Committee as required by the resolution of the Ward Member Satisfaction with Planning Task and Finish Forum.
14. **Update on Arts and Culture Task and Finish Forum** 46 - 47
- An extract from the minutes of Cabinet on 5 September 2012 is included in the papers to inform the Committee of the decisions taken on the nine recommendations made by the Forum.
15. **Quarterly Monitoring of Performance - First Quarter 2012/13** 48 - 60
- Members are asked to consider the performance information against the Council Plan for the first quarter. Provided in the agenda papers is the summary report showing progress of the Council promises taken from the Council Plan 2012-16; and the specific objectives and performance indicators that show concern. The full report on all objectives and performance indicators can be viewed online at http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/os_pq1_all_services_barcharts_270912.pdf
15. **Forward Plan** 61
- Members are asked to note the Forward Plan.

Decision making and equality duties

- The Council will give due regard under the Equality Act 2010 to the equality impact of its decisions.
- An appropriate level of analysis of equality issues, assessment of equalities impact and any mitigation and/or monitoring of impact will be addressed in committee reports.
- Consultation on major policy changes will take place in line with any legal requirements and with what is appropriate and fair for the decisions being taken.
- Members will be expected to give reasons for decisions which demonstrate they have addressed equality issues.

Members and co-opted members remember!

- ❑ You must declare the nature of any disclosable pecuniary interests. [Under the Localism Act 2011, this means the interests of your spouse, or civil partner, a person with whom you are living with as husband and wife or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners]. You must also disclose any personal interest.
- ❑ You must disclose your interest in an item whenever it becomes apparent that you have an interest in the business being considered.
 Make sure you say what your interest is as this has to be included in the minutes. [For example, 'I have a disclosable pecuniary interest because this planning application is made by my husband's employer'.]
- ❑ If your interest is a disclosable pecuniary interest you cannot participate in the discussion, cannot vote and must leave the room unless you have obtained a dispensation from the Council's Monitoring Officer or Standards Committee.

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From Exeter – 52A, 52B

From Honiton – 52B

From Seaton – 52A

From Ottery St Mary – 379, 387

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EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting of the
Overview and Scrutiny Committee held
at Knowle, Sidmouth on 26 July 2012

Present:	Councillors: Stuart Hughes (Chairman) John Humphreys (Vice Chairman) Mike Allen Peter Burrows David Chapman Vivien Duval Steer Roger Giles Tony Howard Sheila Kerridge	David Key John O'Leary Brenda Taylor Graham Troman Tim Wood Eileen Wragg Claire Wright Tom Wright
	Officers: Richard Cohen – Deputy Chief Executive John Golding – Head of Housing Steve Pratten – Senior Project Manager Debbie Meakin – Democratic Services Officer	
Also Present	Councillors: Ray Bloxham Paul Diviani Jill Elson Steve Gazzard Graham Godbeer	Peter Halse Stephanie Jones Andrew Moulding Frances Newth Ken Potter
	Committee Members: Deborah Custance Baker Peter Bowden Graham Brown Derek Button	Councillors: Alan Dent Phil Twiss

The meeting started at 6.31pm and ended at 9.45pm.

- *8 Public Question Time
There were no questions from the public at this point in the meeting.

- *9 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7 June 2012 were signed and confirmed as a true record. A further report on recording of meetings would be presented to the Committee towards the end of the year.

*10 Declarations of Interest

Councillor/ Officer	Minute number	Type of interest	Nature of interest
Stuart Hughes	11	Personal	Devon County Council Cabinet Member responsible for Highways and Transportation
Vivien Duval Steer	11	Personal	Member of Development Management Committee
John O'Leary	14	Personal	Member of Thelma Hulbert Gallery Advisory Forum
Tom Wright	14	Personal	Member of Budleigh Literary Festival Organisation Committee; Friend of local museum
Peter Burrows	12	Personal	Recently received training for a post office counter
Frances Newth	15	Personal	EDDC representative on Manor Pavilion Theatre Management Steering Committee

11 Office relocation project update

In light of the public interest in this item, the Chairman brought the item forward with the agreement of the Committee.

He reminded the Committee that the report presented was an update on the relocation project, and therefore debate on the outline planning application that was yet to be submitted, was not appropriate. Members and the public were reminded that there was the opportunity to comment on that application once submitted in August.

Michael Temple, a Sidmouth resident, outlined the geographical layout of the Knowle site in detail to the Committee. He highlighted the south facing gardens and told the committee that the outline proposal for the Knowle site would take up 70% of the gardens, stating that the proposal plans were misleading as they suggested that the arena field is on the same level as the south facing gardens. He asked why the Council had voted to destroy a beautiful park and public open space; was ready to endanger wildlife and remove trees, impacting on the recreational grounds and weekend car park for the town. He also asked why the Council was ignoring its own draft strategies to permit development on the Knowle site; why no energy audit had been carried out since 2009 and not retained levels of maintenance; and why Honiton was claimed as a central point for the District.

Helen Crackston, a Sidmouth resident, outlined the definition of consultation to the Committee and recounted her recent visit to the public consultation held in the town. She asked for the publication of the cost of the refurbishment of the Knowle building to bring it to a standard suitable for current office use to aid transparency. She also requested more information on the feasibility of both the Knowle and Honiton site for the location of the council offices.

11 Office relocation project update (continued)

Robin Fuller, a Sidmouth resident, asked if the Council was aware of the current energy rating of the Council offices being at a good rating of “C” despite the age of the building; and what actions had been taken following an advisory report for energy conservation. He also asked that the Council consider moving core activities into the newer section of the building, employing hot desking. This would allow the vacated older section of the building to be let out, and bring in further income to pay for energy efficiency work required. He asked if the Display Energy Certificate had been updated as he informed the Committee that the current certificate had expired on 30 September 2009. He also advised the Committee that it takes 50 years before the carbon used in constructing a new building is repaid by subsequent carbon saving in its use; and asked if the Council was aware of the review dated 2008 entitled “Does demolition or refurbishment of old and inefficient homes help to increase our environment, social and economic viability” and quoted a section from that review that referred to refurbishment as a better value option.

Barry Curwen, a Sidmouth resident, informed the Committee that he still awaited a reply to an e-mail sent on the 17 July that had received no acknowledgement and contained a number of questions. He asked for a detailed breakdown of the cost of refurbishment of the existing Council offices to be published. He also referred to risk assessment in the update report before Members and felt that it was unusual not to have a risk review carried out at the outset of the project. He felt that risk reviews should be regularly carried out over the term of the project.

Richard Eley, a proprietor in the town, asked the Committee to exercise their scrutiny function in reviewing the relocation project. He suggested that an initial figure he had previously been told for building a new office in Honiton at £3.5m had now changed to £6m or £7m and asked if the project was now out of control. He felt that there was no clear definition of the cost neutral element of the project and asked for more detailed costs to be published, including the value of the capital assets. He told the Committee that Sidmouth would lose their valued parkland because the Council would have to sell assets in Sidmouth to fund the increase in costs. He asked the Council to look at other options and preserve the current parkland.

Kelvin Dent, a member of the public, quoted from a report on the agenda in reference to Councils actively listening to their local communities. He informed the Committee about an independent survey about the relocation proposal and quoted several statistics from it, stating that 95% asked were opposed to the proposal and 75% asked felt they were not properly informed about it. He asked if the Council was aware of this independent survey; if they were aware of the strength of feeling of local residents; and asked if they would reconsider the proposal. He also commented that there was no direct reference to the public open space in the update report before Members.

Richard Cohen, Deputy Chief Executive, informed the Committee that the Council was in regular correspondence with many of the public speakers. He advised Members of a Frequently Asked Questions webpage on the relocation project. This is regularly updated with answers to the common questions received.

11 Office relocation project update (continued)

Richard Cohen responded to the issues and questions raised by the public speakers:

- The 70% loss of gardens in the site proposals is not accurate. The suggested development proposal is slightly larger than the current building footprint of the site;
- Cabinet made the decision to explore the possible relocation of the main offices to Honiton and as a result the focus has been to take forward that ambition. In relation to the various proposals to keep the council on its present site, the current estimate is £13m to redevelop and refurbish the existing offices into a modern working environment that would meet the Council's and District's present and future needs;
- To date there have not been any formal Risk Workshops, but it is anticipated that the first one will take place following receipt of the Commercial Land Agent's report during September. Project Risk has been continually reviewed and analysed since Davis Langdon commenced their role, and taken into consideration as the Project has proceeded;
- Currently the projected cost for the viability phase of the project is £300k. This is factored as an element of the cost neutral commitment of the project; the Cabinet are aware and agree that there are front end costs to the project that will not be recovered if the relocation is not viable;
- The Council has an asset management strategy to review all assets across the District and is progressively developing and/or disposing of some in a strategic manner ;
- In relation to the question of a 1973 decision of the council regarding preserving the Knowle as public open space and permitted public usage, the council's legal advice is that this is not a barrier to development, especially since the council maintains the commitment to retain a significant public open space as part of any future development.

The Committee discussed some elements of the project, including:

- Keeping the Committee informed of replies to correspondence. Due to the volume, Members may prefer to keep updated by viewing the FAQ webpage which will be updated with answers to questions raised at this committee;
- Concern that Sidmouth Town Council have not had adequate consultation prior to the outline application being submitted;
- Need for an independent review of both the relocation and retaining the offices in the current location, covering costs and viability;
- Viability exercise will be complete by 30 November 2012;
- Consulting with the wider electorate to establish their views on the relocation;
- Acceptance that Sidmouth has a parking issue and look at solutions to provide parking, particularly if the weekend "park and walk" facility is lost. A traffic and transport assessment is underway as part of the outline planning process;
- Commitment to a significant presence in Exmouth for the District Council; and consideration needed on how best to service the District in making services as accessible as possible; such as mobile working and shared service locations;
- Questionnaires are still being received and a report will be prepared to outline the responses as part of the outline application process; the process also includes the production of an economic impact assessment which completes on 10 August;
- Members wanted a more accurate quote for a new office building.

11 Office relocation project update (continued)

The Committee also discussed how the timing of the submission of the outline application impacted on the overall project. Some Members were concerned that a great deal of information needed studying first, and that a deferral of the outline application to September would be preferred.

The Leader reminded Members that the outline application is needed to establish the value of the site, in order to assess if the relocation project is viable. Delay on the outline application being submitted would adversely impact on the viability decision. Richard Cohen reminded the Committee of the length of time for an application to be considered – 18 August to 16 November was a reasonable period to consider all the elements of the outline application. The related assessments could not be carried out too early, or they may be challenged at the application stage for being out of date.

The Committee was reminded that no decision had been taken on relocation yet. The Chairman of the Council advised Members that the decision was not about Sidmouth, but about the Council, and advised Members not to delay the process.

RESOLVED

- 1 that the update on the office relocation project is noted and further updates be received by the Committee as the project progresses.

RECOMMENDED

- 1 that the DCEO, Richard Cohen attend a meeting of Sidmouth Town Council to discuss the relocation project at the earliest, appropriate time;
- 2 that Cabinet is asked to consider consulting the electorate of the District on the proposed relocation of the main office to Honiton and significant presence in Exmouth;
- 3 that an independent assessment be carried out as soon as possible on the costs and viability of retaining the Council Offices at the Knowle site; simultaneously with an independent assessment of the costs and viability of relocating the offices to Honiton.

*12 Update on Post Office pilot scheme

Councillor Ken Potter updated the Committee on the Post Office pilot scheme for introducing Post Office “Locals”. The pilot scheme ended in June.

Councillor Potter had attended a Pathfinder Councils meeting in Birmingham on the 27 June. He voiced his disgust to the Committee about that meeting, which he felt had been biased towards the Post Office plans. As a result, he had written to the LGA outlining his concerns.

*12 Update on Post Office pilot scheme (continued)

He had received what he described as a “chink of light” in the response, in that the District Council is invited to set the agenda for the next Pathfinder Councils meeting. His next step is to get involvement of the local MPs. He continues to have the support of the County Council.

The Leader informed the Committee that he had received a reply from the LGA on the request for a conference and would get a copy to Councillor Potter. He also highlighted the outreach service at Payhembury.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Councillor Potter for his continued work, especially for rural post offices. The Committee expressed their thanks with a round of applause.

13 Blackdown Hills Community Plan

The Committee received a report outlining the Blackdown Hills Community Plan. The plan covered:

- The social and economic profile of the area
- What makes the area distinctive and valued
- What issues face local people in that area
- Locally agreed action and projects to address those issues.

John Golding, Head of Housing, highlighted particular aspects of the Plan that related to the East Devon parishes within the Blackdown Hills. The plan is distinctive due to the collection of parishes working together across District boundaries. The plan seeks the following from the District Council:

- Endorsement and support of the plan recommendations
- Take the plan into account for planning purposes at the relevant committees
- Assistance to access financial support where possible.

Many priorities set out in the plan are consistent with the District Council's Plan. The request for the plan to be taken into account for planning purposes will be put to Development Management Committee.

The Committee discussed some elements of the Plan and received helpful illustrations from the Leader.

RECOMMENDATION to record the aspirations of the Blackdown Hills as set out in their Community Plan and assist in meeting the stated priorities where these are consistent with the District Council's remit and adopted plans.

*14 Portfolio Holder Update – Corporate Business

Councillor Ray Bloxham, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Business, reminded the Committee of his remit. He also outlined his current work since his last report to them, including:

- Production of the Council Plan, linked with the supporting plans that had been reduced to short, focussed versions;
- Equalities in light of new legislation, being a member of the Corporate Equalities Group and representative on the Equality South West Board;

*14 Portfolio Holder Update – Corporate Business (continued)

- Revised performance indicators to match the new Council Plan, including a new “snapshot” report published on the Cabinet agenda for 11 July;
- Work of the Think Tank in refining the committee report structure to provide clear, brief information to help Members make informed decisions;
- Portfolio Holders “blog” concept, awaiting input from the newly appointed Communications post;
- Revision of section 106 agreement format currently with the Legal Team;
- Change to licensing application notification to Members to provide an e-mail alert to the submission of a licensing application in their Ward;
- Continuing towards a “paper light” approach;
- Review of hard copy production of the Year Book and Minute Book.

Councillor Bloxham thanked his Think Tank Members for their work in finding solutions.

The Committee welcomed the update and debated specific issues, including:

- Public perception of the Council being poor and in some cases justified; more work was needed to promote the valuable work carried out by the Council which was rarely reported in the press;
- The review of the minute book would lead to a way to handle the minutes more effectively at Council, and reduce print costs;
- Detailed demographic information of the district was needed to help inform all areas of service delivery; the Council is aspiring to produce a “who we are” document that would cover a clear profile of the District;
- Employees should be given more public credit for the work they have accomplished. An example quoted was a recent press article on one incident during the flooding in July with no reference to the hard work by officers in dealing with residents in urgent need of accommodation.

The Chairman thanked the Portfolio Holder for his useful update.

15 Arts and Culture Task and Finish Forum

Councillor John O’Leary, Chairman of the Arts and Culture Task and Finish Forum, presented to the Committee the final report. It includes a number of recommendations relating to the delivery of arts and culture for the benefit of both residents and visitors.

The Forum operated under a very short timescale in order to inform the draft budget process, which begins in September 2012. The Forum received presentations from each element currently receiving subsidy from the Council. The Forum also heard from the World Heritage Site team on their options for helping facilitate art and culture within the theme of the Jurassic Coast.

Councillor O’Leary thanked the Forum Members and officers for their hard work during a very tight schedule.

15 Arts and Culture Task and Finish Forum (continued)

The Vice Chairman of the Council, Councillor Frances Newth, recounted her experience on the Manor Pavilion Theatre Management Steering Committee. She spoke of the dramatic improvement to the Theatre and thanked Graham Whitlock, Theatre Manager, for his hard work in turning the fortunes of the Theatre around.

The Chairman of the Council, Councillor Peter Halse, spoke of the valued work of Angela Blackwell as the Thelma Hulbert Gallery Curator. He felt that promotion of the Gallery to improve footfall was key to help increase income and drive down the current deficit.

The Committee debated the recommendations set out in the report, including:

- More detailed financial breakdown of running costs and capital costs to be included for the report presentation to Cabinet;
- Merits of employing an Arts Development Officer in light of cost, and concern at the overall staffing costs for the Gallery element of the service. It was suggested that, if agreed, the newly formed Arts and Culture Forum could discuss in detail staffing costs and effective use of staffing resources;
- The high esteem that the Arts Council held for the Thelma Hulbert Gallery;
- The need to assess work on a project basis to help attract further funding from the Arts Council;
- Looking at other successful galleries and sourcing local artist work to help boost income from the Gallery;
- The recommended increase to the Villages in Action budget is offset by the recommendation for a year on year reduction in the Gallery subsidy.

RECOMMENDED

- 1a that the Manor Pavilion Theatre Manager be congratulated for his drive and enthusiasm in turning around the financial performance of the venue so that it has now become a highly successful Theatre that the Council is proud to support;
- 1b that the Council recognises that management support for the Manor Pavilion Theatre may be better met by a trust mechanism in the future and that this option be explored;
- 2a that the Council strengthens its association with the Jurassic Coast through targeted support of its arts based programme that could provide significant benefits for local communities along the East Devon coastline;
- 2b that the Council, through the relevant Ward Members, help promote the work of the World Heritage Site Team in attracting people to become Jurassic Coast Ambassadors in each coastal parish;
- 3a that Villages in Action be congratulated for its excellent work within the District's rural communities by bringing a diverse range of performance art into these communities, in many cases ensuring the continued viability of village halls;

15 Arts and Culture Task and Finish Forum (continued)

- 3b the continued support of the Council for Villages in Action is crucial and that an increase in Council support from £10,000 to £15,000 for 2013/14 be agreed to meet the growing demand for the work that the organisation delivers in East Devon;
- 4a that the Thelma Hulbert Gallery Curator be congratulated on the high quality of exhibitions that enable residents and visitors to East Devon to have the opportunity to experience contemporary art from regionally and nationally acclaimed artists ;
- 4b that the Gallery be retained in the current location for the present time, with a priority to review and change the current internal layout, and reduce outside plant screening and improve visibility, to maximise income opportunities;
- 4c that the Council is made aware of the report of the South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) and the difficulties facing the Gallery in meeting the income targets set by its Feasibility Study 2009 and the current financial costs of supporting the Gallery;
- 4d that the Gallery implements the SWAP recommendations and be given a three year timeline to improve its business, marketing and income performance reducing the amount of Council subsidy by 10% each year;
- 5 that the governance roles of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery Advisory Group and Manor Pavilion Theatre Advisory Group be reviewed as recommended by the SWAP report to become Management Groups, with changes made to the membership of each to obtain the necessary skill sets of business, funding and marketing to drive both Council assets forward; to be operational by February 2013; and for THG Management Group to examine the best use of staff resource;
- 6 that the Council encourages greater engagement of Honiton Town Council with the Thelma Hulbert Gallery, and allocates representation of Honiton Town Council on the reformed THG Management Group;
- 7 that the Council sets up an Arts & Culture Forum that meets quarterly and reports regularly to Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet on all arts based activities supported by East Devon DC, its membership being made up of District Councillors, Funding Partners and two independents sought by advertisement; to be set up by February 2013 to plan for the next financial year;

15 Arts and Culture Task and Finish Forum (continued)

- 8 that the currently vacant Arts Development Officer post be advertised, extending the role to include partnership working with the World Heritage Site and its arts programme; and assist in implementing operational changes outlined by the SWAP report for the THG; and reports directly to the Arts and Culture Forum;
- 9 that an Arts Directory be reinstated in an online format, populated from information on the District's arts, sports and culture scene through existing channels, local Ward Member knowledge, and from contacting Town and Parish Councils.

*16 Forward Plan

The Committee received an update on the plan. Cabinet had requested a review of fees and charges to be placed on the forward plan of the Committee. Advice will be sought from officers on the best means of accomplishing the review, looking to provide a report to the Committee initially, but likely to be best handled by a Task and Finish Forum because of the wide spectrum of fees and charges.

Council had also agreed for the review of the Local Plan production method to start in March 2013. Councillor Jill Elson suggested that discussion on the Health and Wellbeing Board could be added to the forward plan.

Councillor Graham Troman updated the Committee on progress of the Community Infrastructure Levy TaFF. He raised concern over non-attendance by two Councillors to the meetings so far. The Chairman agreed that contact would be made with those individuals to determine their role on the Forum and if alternative Members need to be sought. The Committee recognised the complexities of the CIL TaFF and debate took place on linking in discussion on other funding streams for the Forum.

Chairman Date



www.rollecentre.org

Managing The Rolle Project

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, EDDC on 27th September 2012

1. The Rolle project is about living, learning and working in Exmouth – potentially an outstanding town in an outstanding district. It is a complex project for the medium and long term, with major short term challenges. Those challenges have to be overcome or there will be no medium and long term for Rolle and a once-only opportunity will have been lost.
2. Following the closure of the Rolle campus by the University of Plymouth in 2008 and DCC's decision not to purchase the main site for Exmouth Community College, a public meeting was called in November 2009. As a result, a small group was formed to establish an investment vehicle and negotiate with the University of Plymouth to secure an option to buy most of the main site and buildings. These objectives have been secured.
3. Rolle Exmouth Ltd, an industrial and provident society, was formed in March 2010. At that time the University had offered the whole site for development on the open market. REL's attempts to reach a satisfactory accord with the 'preferred bidder' were rebuffed. In the event the sale to the bidder did not proceed and in the spring of 2011 the University offered REL a lease and an option to buy. Those terms were initially onerous and unacceptable, but they have been moderated through negotiation to an acceptable level.
4. REL's detailed business plan of early 2010 has evolved in response to new information, negotiations with the University and other developments. Exmouth Community College was included as the key user until November 2011 but dropped out as a partner for financial reasons, to be replaced in March 2012 by Bickton College. It became apparent that the scale of the site and the nature of the buildings available offered wider opportunities than originally envisaged. The business plan and REL's strategy has therefore focussed on three key sectors: post 16 education and training, community and arts, and business support through managed workspace and incubation. These support skills development, community cohesion and economic regeneration, which have been identified as key needs in Exmouth and the surrounding area by EDDC, DCC and the LEP.
5. The business plan, which formed the basis for management of the project until recently, assumed significant expenditure on refurbishment, firm and major commitment from education and training users, medium term contracts for managed workspace, rental from community organisations and substantial finance from other sources.
6. The purchase price of £3m agreed with the University is broadly in line with a valuation provided by a respected Exmouth based valuer, particularly when the lease charges provisionally agreed with the University are taken into account.
7. It was recognised from the outset that refurbishment work would be needed on buildings that predominantly date from the early 1960s. For planning purposes the indicative costs of £500,000 provided by a short survey were included in the business plan.
8. In April/May 2012 REL invited applications for community shares. Together with donations, this raised over £117,000. Although less than the sum of £350,000 budgeted for the whole of the first year from shares and grants, it was a strong indication of community support to carry the project forward.

9. In May 2012 Rolle Exmouth Ltd commissioned detailed surveys of the electrical, mechanical and architectural condition of the buildings. These show that the likely costs of refurbishment are more than four times the anticipated sum. In practical terms an investment of approximately £2.5m is required before the revenue flow can be established to secure the business plan.
10. The Board has investigated the possibility of a reduced project, for example using just the Owen and the adjacent Daw buildings. However this would eliminate a number of the substantial revenue streams, which would be created by the refurbishment of the large Main Building, without reducing the fixed costs commensurately and is not likely to be viable. Furthermore, while the level of serious interest in managed workspace is good, the income would be much less if the Main Building was not available. Without the Main Building shared use of Daw by businesses and training providers might work, but is not desirable.
11. Post 16 education and training is a central element. The partnership with Bicton College is potentially strong and mutually beneficial, but income will only begin slowly and ultimate volume is not yet clear.
12. Community use would be high, particularly for arts, theatre and indoor sports. This would produce a reasonable level of income but would not make a major contribution to the overall business plan.
13. The first share offer was successful and it is likely that a second, next year, would produce another substantial amount. But this would probably leave the project well short of half way towards the refurbishment costs. Grant funding is available but requires investment to secure and, while helpful, is unlikely to be more than a gap-filler. Donations are being sought but the response is unpredictable. A bid to the Coastal Communities Fund, in conjunction with the Heart of the South West LEP was unsuccessful, although small sums from other sources have been promised and other grant funding possibilities are being explored.
14. All major change requires upfront investment. There are no obvious (approved) public strategic projects that can facilitate the opportunities at Rolle for education and training, community and enterprise. Support and finance is needed to develop the investment case and set out the actions for the subsequent required programme of delivery, fund raising and communication. Without such a project being available to help bear the load of developing the investment plan REL considers it is inappropriate to invest funds from shareholders and donors.
15. It should be noted that the REL Board is composed entirely of volunteers, mostly retired. Although their skill sets and experience are broad and relevant they are insufficient to take the important next step of developing the investment case and planning activities for the subsequent programme of work. Professional support is now needed.
16. The project is an integral whole, combining education and training, community activities and managed workspace: the concept that REL adopted and which has been supported from all sides - community, business, education and councils. The engagement of all three elements, with sustained and increasing support from all sides, is essential for the continuing success of the Rolle project for at least the current decade.
17. Looking beyond that into the 2020s and 2030s, a future for Exmouth can be envisaged, which no-one has yet thought to enunciate in detail. The Rolle project offers a real chance of reaching that future in a unique way. Investment of the kind that other towns have secured, such as an art gallery of national importance, and collaboration with forward looking partners, such as Bicton College, could be engineered to meet not only the immediate needs of school leavers, businesses and people of all ages but eventually to draw into the area new industries engaged in cutting-edge technologies to give Exmouth and East Devon a brighter future.

Agenda Item 10

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

27 September 2012

Information paper



East Devon Business Forum

Background

The East Devon Business Forum originally existed in the form of the East Devon Business Council, set up of representatives from local business for the purpose of consultation on the setting of rates. The EDBC had a paid secretary, funded by EDDC.

In 2005, the organisation was developed to become a Forum, opening up the scope to improve communications between businesses here in East Devon, local government and those external bodies that influence the economic health of the area. Their aim is to foster local economic resilience and sustainable business growth. The constitution is set out below:

- To act as a forum in which business organisations, major employers and the District Council can meet on a regular basis and agree, so far as possible, a common approach and policy on matters relating to the economy, prosperity and well-being of East Devon.
- To facilitate the communication of views and opinions between the business community and the District Council (and any other relevant local government and public bodies) and through an effective partnership with local government to promote the prosperity of the District.
- Specifically, to advise on the preparation, adoption and performance of an Economic Development Strategy for East Devon and the Council's annual service plan for Economic Development; to facilitate development and implementation of the East Devon Community Plan; and identify or promote by other means, issues relevant to the economic well-being of people living and working in East Devon.

Current operation

The Forum is currently chaired by Councillor Graham Brown, with Mr Roy Stuart, a private business man, as Vice Chairman. They set the agenda for meetings, working closely with the Economic Development Manager. The Forum meets eight times each year, minuted by a Democratic Services Officer. The District Council directly funds the administration of the Forum at a budget of £5,250 each year, which covers aspects such as room hire and website hosting.

The Forum has a website, <http://www.eastdevonbusinessforum.org.uk/> which contains links to those businesses and organisations that form its membership; the minutes of the Forum are published on the Council's website and accessible from http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/east_devon_business_forum_minutes

Nigel Harrison
Economic Development Manager

Overview and Scrutiny Committee
27 September 2011



Vitality of High Streets and Town Centres Task and Finish Forum

Final Report
September 2012

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Preface



Councillor Tim Wood

Chairman of the Vitality of High Streets and Town Centres Task and Finish Forum

Members: Graham Brown; Roger Giles; Pat Graham; Steve Hall; Sheila Kerridge; and John O’Leary

There is little doubt that town centres are under increasing pressure from the competition coming from out of town trading. This pressure is certainly not confined to East Devon but nevertheless the shops in the towns of East Devon are, in general, suffering as significantly as those elsewhere.

With the present recession, many shops, that would be barely profitable in better times, are not getting sufficient income to cover their costs. Some are simply surviving because shop owners are relying on the income of a spouse to enable them to carry on and are hoping for better times in the future. Others have gone to their landlord and managed to agree a rent reduction while times are difficult.

It would be foolish to believe that the present problems experienced in our town centres will disappear once our economy begins to recover. Many town centres have been facing steady decline over the last fifty years. Supermarkets have had a big impact, but the problems have been compounded in some areas as older towns were not designed for the car and local authorities have increasingly perceived parking charges as a useful source of income.

The suggestions made in the Portas Report offer ways in which towns can improve their prospects and, for example, town teams may do much to stimulate the attractiveness of town centres. However, the truth is that small town centre shops are facing increasingly difficult prospects. In this district, Tesco has well over 70% of the food market in Exmouth, Otter Nurseries appears to have vastly more shoppers than Ottery St Mary, and the new Tesco in Seaton looks likely to be entirely dominant in Seaton. To a degree Axminster is having success through the attractions of the River Cottage, Sidmouth with its large hotels, its Fields department store also has magnets to attract the shopper and the relatively high income levels of many Budleigh Salterton residents help to support some excellent small shops.

This report identifies some issues that may help town centre vitality but the fundamental matter that needs to be addressed is the lack of competitiveness of town centre shops compared with out of town shopping. Despite the view of valuation officers, we conclude that rate valuations favour large out of town stores. Such stores also provide free convenient parking compared with expensive and sometimes inadequate parking in town. This is an issue that has to be resolved if town centre shopping is to survive.

Tim Wood

August 2012

Recommendations

The Forum recommends the following, based on their interviews, findings and consultation;

- (1) Raise awareness of the right to appeal a rateable value to local businesses, particularly in respect of recent supermarket builds in the Seaton and Ottery St Mary Town areas;
- (2) Promote advice on how businesses can get help with business rates, covering both the appeal process to the Valuation Office, and the business rate reliefs available;
- (3) That the Council pursue with Government the case for either introducing a rateable value increase on the basis of private parking spaces or allowing councils to make an annual charge for such spaces;
- (4) Explore the viability of pay on exit schemes at the Council's car parks located close to town centres; and introduces a pay by phone system as an interim step to offer the choice to users to top up their parking ticket;
- (5) Those town centres with difficulties for very short term parkers should be looked at with a view to providing some extra parking spaces for stops of half an hour;
- (6) Plans should be pursued for the provision of extra parking close to the town centres of Exmouth and Sidmouth, possibly involving the building of multi-storey car parks in those locations;
- (7) In a review of parking charges, consider the provision of periods of much cheaper or free car parking, such as having the first half hour free, to encourage more substantial numbers of shoppers into the town centres; and consider coach parking fees and arrangements to encourage coach operators to bring passengers into towns;
- (8) Lobby Government to permit councils to obtain income either from rating income or more specific charges from out of town shops and retailers providing free parking, with such income being used to reduce town centre parking charges;
- (9) Ensure robust monitoring both of charity shops to ensure the permitted proportion of new goods to second hand goods for sale is not exceeded; and of farm shops to ensure the percentage of local goods sold meets the requirements set out in policy E15 of the Local Plan;

- (10) Work with and stimulate town councils to develop their own vision for the development of shops or activities that might act as a magnet to encourage visitors and shoppers to their town centre;
- (11) Where appropriate, modify planning policies to reduce the size of town centre shopping areas to enable the smaller number of shops to be fully commercially viable;
- (12) Work with the County Council and town councils to prioritise improving signage to and in towns to highlight location of town centres and key attractions;
- (13) Where there are empty premises over shops, it is recommended that the District Council, under its **Empty Homes Strategy** (Sections 10.5 and 10.6), takes a more proactive stance in investigating, where possible, with the owners of premises what possibilities there might be for their empty premises being brought into residential use.

Review Approach

How does the review relate to the Council Plan?

The Council Plan states that the Council is here to accommodate, guide, and work with the local business community across the District. In light of the current economic climate and recent media attention on high streets following the Mary Portas Review, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee felt it was desirable to look at the viability of town centres to see what may be needed to improve the prospects of those businesses located in the centre of our towns.

Scope of the review

The Forum agreed the scope at their first meeting, making clear what was included; but also just as crucially, what was not. The agreed scope of the review is set out below:

Broad topic area:	Vitality of High Streets and Town Centres
Specific area to explore within topic area:	Current health of each of the high streets/town centres in the District; Consideration of current planning policy for shop type location, termed as “primary” and “secondary” and if still relevant for the current high street context; Cost to businesses, such as rent and rates Cost to the customer, such as car parking charges Impact of online shopping and out-of-town shopping centres Suggestions for attracting additional footfall to high streets/town centres that are experiencing a significant downturn.
Areas NOT covered by the review:	General regeneration of wider town areas; Crime and disorder aspects; Location for additional car parking
Desired outcomes of the review:	An understanding of the current “health” of each High Street/Town Centre; Recommended measures to assist areas that are experiencing a significant downturn
Who should be consulted for evidence	Chairman and Town Clerks of main towns Ward Member local knowledge Chamber of Commerce of main towns Landlords of retail premises

What evidence already exists (consultation, good practice examples)	East Devon Retail Needs Study – Original study 2008 and Update 2011 for Local Plan The Portas Review Understanding and supporting the resilience of market towns Number/percentages of vacant premises in retail areas Scrutiny reviews from other authorities – summary of common themes
What experts are needed to help with the review:	Business Champion Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Partnerships Member Champion for Seaton Town Head of Finance Head of Environment Economic Development Manager Planning Policy – Retail needs study/Local Plan Town Managers
What other resources are needed:	Democratic Services to service
Timescale including start date:	Six meetings in total, starting in March 2012 with completion in July/August to report to OS September 2012

Evidence sources

The Forum took into account contributions from:

- Town Councils
- Chambers of Commerce
- Exmouth Town Team
- Local Landlord
- Valuation Office

Existing reports were also considered, including:

- Mary Portas Review
- GVA Grimley Retail Needs Study April 2008 and subsequent update 2011
- Draft Local Plan
- Scrutiny reports from authorities nationally on high street reviews
- Dorchester BID Business Plan

Individual Forum Members visited two towns in the District outside their own Ward, to get a view of the town centre and talk to local traders and shoppers. Each followed criteria on which to evaluate their visit:

- Was the high street/town centre easy to find?
- Was it well signposted?
- Did you park for free or pay for parking (if using a car to visit)
- How easy was it to get to the town centre using public transport (if not using your car)
- What was your overall feel of the area – clean, well kept and welcoming or grubby, in need of repair/repaint and offputting?
- Did you notice a lot of charity shops?
- Did you notice a lot of independent shops?
- How many vacant premises did you see?
- Was it a market day on your visit?
- Was it quiet, ticking over, or very busy with people on the high street?
- Did you find the level of traffic a distraction?
- Did you buy anything?
- Did the town centre appear disabled access friendly?
- Did you talk to any shop staff/owners on your visit about their views on the high street?
- Was there any particular point or area that you felt was the jewel of the high street – that could be its selling point?

Findings

Health of Towns in the District

The Forum was keen to establish, through discussions with the Town Councils and others, the general economic health of each town. Clearly many businesses were remaining open but often not clearing profit; but some towns appeared to be suffering more than others in the current economic climate. Visits by Forum Members also revealed how busy each location was in terms of footfall and the views of local traders and shoppers.

Axminster

The impression left on the Forum, through visits and in discussion in meetings, was a positive one overall. The town benefits from a good selection of independent shops and the added attraction of the “celebrity” factor of River Cottage restaurant. This adds many visitors to the town. Continued positive efforts of the local Tourist Information Centre also help to promote the town as a destination.

The town benefits from good transport links – the train station, bus routes links to both the east and west – and coach parking issues have been resolved locally to provide drop off in town with parking and driver facilities at Millwey Rise. Talking with local traders during visits had confirmed that, despite the current economic climate, traders were positive about the town and how it was being promoted.

The town has clearly suffered from the impact of the Websters site and is anxious to see it developed, to enhance the centre and provide additional attractions and shops, in preparation of the growth of housing. The central car park in that area, offering only a relatively small number of spaces, could be better utilised as development and locate parking on the edge of the main shopping areas instead.

The Forum was impressed with the Town Council’s commitment to continue to work to promote the town, not relying on the River Cottage factor alone to bring in visitors and trade to the town.

Budleigh Salterton

Another town that left a positive impression over all, Budleigh Salterton has a good selection of independent high quality shops and provides a comprehensive range of goods for residents. The traders clearly pride themselves on the quality of service provided and the range and presentation of goods offered that attract both locals and visitors to the town. It perhaps should be noted that the town has quite a high percentage of residents who are both elderly and affluent and who like to patronise the local shops rather than travel further afield.

Parking facilities locally work well and coach parking is adequate and well used. In contrast to other towns, footfall continues to be consistent after midday, with the high street just as busy

in the afternoons. The town does suffer from a fall in trade in the winter months but this appears to be sustained by good trade in the summer and consistent local resident use throughout the year.

The town clearly benefitted from the literary and arts festivals held throughout the year that had increased in reputation and continued to draw in large numbers of visitors year on year. A new Sunday French Market trial has been successful in bringing more footfall to those shops open on that day. The Forum noted the positive work of the local Chamber of Commerce in facilitating events and improvements for the town.

Exmouth

Exmouth is a large town with a population of about 38,000. For a town of that size, the range and size of shops is disappointing. For example, there is only one small shop that can be considered a men's outfitter, there is no shop that can be considered to be even a small department store, and for women's clothes the shops tend to concentrate on the low cost end of the market. A Tesco supermarket, on the edge of the town has over 70% of the retail food market.

Exmouth has taken the step of creating a Town Team, one of the recommendations made by Mary Portas in her review of December 2011. The team consists of representatives from the Town Council, representatives from the Chamber of Commerce and the Exmouth Traders association, and others. Whilst their bid for a Portas Pilot was unsuccessful, the Town Team has started to review the signage around the town, working with the District Council's Streetscene service. They are also working towards the relocation and updating of maps in the area better to direct visitors between seafront and town centre facilities.

The Town Team has a number of creative ideas and impressed the Forum with the enthusiasm and determination to pursue improvements to the town, including marketing the town as a destination for families.

Parking is a key issue for Exmouth and, during the course of their investigation, the Forum considered that more parking close to the shopping centre was required. Pay on exit parking was favoured by the Town Team and indeed this had formed part of the bid for the Portas Pilot.

Visits by the Forum had given the impression of a fairly bustling town and less empty shops than previous years – the redevelopment of the Strand giving the town a fresh look. Exeter Road shopping area appeared considerably quieter. This gave rise to discussion of pulling back the town centre shops to the nucleus of the town, to improve the viability. The Forum is aware of the Exmouth Vision and its goals for preparing for significant investment in the town.

Honiton

Visits by the Forum and a number of recent press articles gave a positive impression of Honiton as a thriving market town. Traders asked gave a positive response to how they felt the level of trade was in light of the current economic climate. The town clearly benefits from the market days with increased footfall drawing visitors into both the market and the town centre shops, but suffers from a significant drop in footfall in the afternoons. The Forum was made aware of possible issues between market stall goods in conflict with retailer products, but the Town Council gave assurances that this was being tackled. Increased footfall on market days may not, however, balance out the drop in footfall on non-market days. There appeared to be some negative impact on some high street shop sales due to two supermarkets on the outskirts of the town – Tesco and Lidl.

Local shoppers reported that there was an issue concerned with the cost of parking and the length of time needed to shop in the town – again raising the issue of the benefit of pay on exit parking to try to retain shoppers for longer in the town.

Themes and festivals are being developed by the Town Council to help further promote the town as a destination. In light of the location on a main route through the District, the lack of accommodation in the town is adversely impacting on the promotion of the town as a destination. The Forum was pleased to learn of the town's Marketing Group, consisting of members from the Chamber of Commerce, the local schools, the Thelma Hulbert Gallery, the Tourist Information Centre and the local library. A town identity had been developed – “the town in the country” – which was used across a number of groups and proving very successful.

Ottery St Mary

Ottery St Mary town centre has been significantly affected by the arrival of Sainsburys in the town. Mixed responses to this were received when Forum members visited the town – some in favour, with increased footfall to financial and other services; some attributing falling trade to the fact that the supermarket offered similar products.

The Town Council has worked closely with the local Chamber of Commerce to improve signage and links between the supermarket site and the town centre, to encourage visitors to patronise both. Such a linkage would be greatly strengthened if there were more shops between the supermarket and the town centre. The Tourist Information Centre was also commended by the Town Council in the excellent promotion work of the town. The Ottery St Mary Heritage Society had also begun work to promote the town to visitors.

The town is severely impacted by the local Garden Centre, effectively operating as an out of town shopping centre, selling, amongst other things, dining room furniture, kitchen hardware, clothes and shoes as well as providing a substantial restaurant/cafe. The Forum also heard how a local farmers' market could be moved from the current car park location to the main

street to encourage footfall into the town centre shops, but this needed consultation with Devon County Council to gain agreement.

A number of traffic related issues were also raised. The coach parking spaces within the town are not used, reportedly due to cost, and so coach operators were stopping at the Garden Centre instead. These spaces could be available as free parking to encourage coaches to stop in the town. The town council felt that there was a need for a second pedestrian crossing to access the Town Hall offices, but this is currently rejected by the County. Another local issue related to the abuse of loading bays by shoppers and the suggestion that awareness is raised of their purpose.

Seaton

The arrival of Tesco, and the scale of the store, has brought shoppers from surrounding areas to the town. However it was apparent to the Forum members visiting the town that those shoppers are not heading into the town shopping centre itself. There were many pleasing aspects to the newly redeveloped part of the town, including the floral displays in the public areas and the new public realm next to the tram station – but more was needed to be done to assist the town. In the shopping centre there are some empty shops, and some premises are in need of maintenance. During visits to the town centre, it was apparent that footfall is very low. The Town Council felt that relaxed street trading laws would permit street trading in more locations and allow retail premises to spill out onto the streets, attracting more footfall.

The Town Council along with the Chamber of Commerce have done considerable work in trying to improve the town – including a new Welcome Team to direct visitors and those that alight from the tram; and new branding of “Natural Seaton”, with a recent festival linking in with the Wetlands attraction and the Jurassic Coast. It perhaps should be noted that these activities are likely to boost the eastern end of the town centre where Tesco is placed rather than the existing shopping centre.

Improved signage is needed to link up the seafront, the town centre and the attractions of the Tramway and the Wetlands. At present it is far from obvious where the shopping centre is to the visitor to the tramway, Tesco or the Wetlands. Seaton Tramway and the Wetlands attract considerable visitors, some via coach operators, who could provide needed footfall in the town centre if directed correctly.

More accommodation is also needed in the town – local bed and breakfasts have consistent bookings, but limited accommodation restricts the town as a place to stay either overnight or for a longer stay. Requests for more accommodation had also been received directly from coach tour operators.

The Forum concluded that, of all the town health checks, Seaton was a priority to help improve viability, needing to increase the offer of personal service and specialist shops to attract visitors into the town centre.

Sidmouth

The town benefits from having a medium sized independent department store (Fields) and this attracts shoppers from a wide area. It also has a number of specialist retailers such as Goviers that have a national following. Shops in the town also benefit from the custom of a substantial number of reasonably affluent visitors who stay at one of the several three and four star hotels in the town.

The Forum concluded that Sidmouth, although to an extent impacted by the recession, was still a busy town. Shoppers enjoyed a range of independent shops (and indeed coffee shops) in an attractive location, but a shortage of parking is a key issue for the town. A summer bus hopper service from the Manor Road car park had proved successful, but better signage was required to get people to that car park initially. The Forum felt a park and ride facility would help ease parking difficulties, but could not offer a solution to a suitable location.

The Chamber of Commerce has a good working relationship with the Tourist Information Centre, undertaking excellent promotion of the town. The town centre has retracted slightly as peripheral retail outlets have closed; however the Town Council did think that a review of the classification of primary and secondary retail units for the town would be helpful to improve the centre. A winter attraction would also help boost footfall in the quieter winter months. The night time economy was vibrant due to the quality of restaurants and public houses in the town.

Business Rates

The level and proportion of outgoings that business rates occupied was raised as an issue for every town – direct from traders, and through the Town Councils and Chamber of Commerce and other trade associations.

In the current economic climate, the Forum was surprised to learn that applications for rate relief remained at a constant level. The Forum did not expect this to continue and felt that clear promotion of relief available would be useful. The rateable value was set by the 2010 Rating List – based on value as at 1 April 2008. With this level being set at a more prosperous economic time, it did not reflect the present reduced value and would not be changed until the 2015 Rating List – based on value as at 1 April 2013.

Discussion with the Valuation Office revealed that they were sympathetic to appeals on rateable value for those areas that had recently been affected by a supermarket built on the edge of town. This will be worth promoting to businesses in the Ottery St Mary and Seaton town centres.

One of the issues discussed at some length was whether the rating system fairly treated town centre shops compared with out of town supermarkets, garden centres, and large warehouse shops. The Valuation Office suggested the valuations were fair and did reflect the level of trade in the various forms of outlet. The Forum, supported by some landlords, shopkeepers and others, doubted that this was true but it was difficult to deduce the cause of the unfairness.

An obvious discrepancy relates to parking. Out of town stores provide parking free to customers and as this parking therefore does not generate income, it does not affect rateable value. However, in town parking in this area costs shoppers significant amounts of money. It could be argued that much of it acts as a tax on shoppers and is a valuable source of income to local authorities such as the East Devon District Council. It is an implicit surcharge on in-town shopping that is not experienced by out of town shoppers. In many parts of this district, it may well add a cost of 5% to the average shopping trip.

With such discrepancies in shopping costs it is scarcely surprising that town centres suffer. A possible remedy would be place a charge on out of town shopping spaces either through the rating system or a direct local authority charge. If this were done one would expect in-town parking charges to be reduced so that local authorities were not accused of exploiting shoppers generally (and thus further benefitting internet shopping). We recommend that the Council pursue with Government the case for either introducing a rateable value increase on the basis of private parking spaces or allowing councils to make an annual charge for such spaces.

Parking

Parking has been identified as a key issue for many of the towns, with Exmouth and Sidmouth in particular requiring additional spaces. Whilst greener methods of transport are desired, the current practice of the majority of visitors to the District's towns by car cannot be ignored. Town Centre reviews elsewhere in the country by Scrutiny committees revealed that the issue of parking availability and price was a common theme, resulting in a number of parking schemes to help improve town centre footfall. These included pay on exit, pricing zones with those closer to the town centres being cheaper, and promotions combined with parking tickets.

The Forum appreciates that car parking charges set by the District Council realises a valuable income that helps towards the services it provides. Finding a balance between a reasonable income, whilst being at an acceptable fee level to the public, is a difficult one. Many traders cited examples to the Forum members of shoppers suddenly fleeing shops to return to their cars, as their parking ticket was due to expire. Shoppers would not pay additional money at that point and walk back to the town centre to continue shopping. A pay on exit option as a way for retaining shoppers for longer was raised by almost all of the towns. This option was

not identified in the scope at the start of this Forum but the Forum recommends that further work is carried out to explore the economic viability and benefits of pay on exit schemes. The Forum was pleased to learn that progress is being made towards a pay by phone facility so that shoppers may top up their parking ticket without having to return to their vehicle.

The parking costs issue was raised to such a degree in relation to the advantage of out of town shopping then, as indicated under the heading of rating, the Forum believes that a charge should be introduced related to the number of parking spaces available at such centres. The Forum would welcome a review of the charges that would include consideration of providing the first half hour in some car parks for free.

A number of towns, in particular Exmouth and Sidmouth, raised the issue of the convenient availability of sufficient parking spaces. Several people commented that shortages of parking spaces in convenient locations were a major deterrent to many shoppers. It was also felt there needed to be more spaces for perhaps 30 minutes limit for those who just wished to make a visit to a bank, or a very limited visit to a shop. This reinforced the concern that parking issues were a very major cause of the difficulties facing town centres.

Signage

Whilst the Forum would not like to see the District covered in signs, it is clear that some towns are in need of improved signage and maps to aid visitors to the town.

Axminster has a good example of a town map, on display in several accessible areas of the town that sets out the town's key features and retailers. Some towns have already embarked on improving signage, such as Exmouth working with the Streetscene service. A review of all towns' signage would help assist work already in place. Key locations in each town need to be signposted, but a review should also assess how the towns are signed from main access routes. Economies of scale could be achieved by purchasing signs, (including brown tourism signs), in quantity for all of the towns in the District.

Town Centre reviews elsewhere in the country by Scrutiny Committees revealed that signage was a common issue that needed a consistent and logical approach, both for signs within the town and to direct traffic approaching towns.

The Maintenance or Creation of Major Attractions to Bring People to a Town

It was quite clear from the evidence that the River Cottage restaurant in Axminster brought many people to the town and that this benefitted the shops there greatly. It was also apparent that the attractiveness of the seafront, together with the Fields department store and the presence of major hotels boosted the numbers who visited Sidmouth shops. For a small town, Budleigh Salterton has several Literary, Music and Art festivals and displays that encourage visitors to the town.

Ottery St Mary, Seaton and Exmouth are perhaps rather less fortunate or successful in these regards. Seaton has the benefits of the Axe valley and the Axe tram ride but there is no linkage between those attractions on the east of the town and the shopping area. Exmouth has a superb sea and estuary front but there is no satisfactory linkage between that and the shopping area and furthermore most of the visitors to the town are day visitors from Exeter who have substantial shopping facilities in the city.

Exmouth is a sufficiently large town for it to have to have a significant store that would attract shoppers to it in town. It is also sufficiently large and with an excellent sea front that should be attractive to a major restaurant name to take advantage of the sea front. It is hoped that the regeneration of the town succeeds in bringing a “magnet” activity that brings real life to the shopping area.

For Ottery St Mary and Seaton the task may be harder. However, Otter Nurseries is clearly a major magnet near Ottery St Mary and perhaps some form of trading linkage could be developed to the benefit of the town and the nursery. For Seaton the leisure activities involving the Wetlands and the tramway need to be exploited by the town in a way that does not significantly occur at present.

Each town needs a clear vision on how they are going to improve and continue to grow visitor numbers, and some towns have started to form their view of how their town will progress in the future. The Council needs to support the towns in helping define that vision.

Local Plan policy on Town Centre Areas and Primary Shopping Frontage

Some peripheral retail units have ceased trading on the outskirts of some town centres. In the current economic climate, the Forum felt that constraining the established boundaries of the town centre areas, including the designated primary shopping frontage areas, would benefit the town centres. Such constraints would help distil retail and other premises for visiting (such as leisure and community facilities) into refined town centre areas that appear fully occupied and keep visitors interested. It would also permit those premises that clearly cannot economically function as a retail unit on the edges of the town centre to change use.

Fair Competition

The Forum debated the unfair advantages that certain shops and out of town retail outlets had over town centre premises. Examples were given of establishments completing with goods whilst enjoying the benefit of a lower or nil level of business rates. These included charity shops holding a larger percentage of new goods for sale than the level permitted; and out of town farm shops providing a large product range from outside the local area in direct competition with shops in town centres. Charity shops are checked twice a year to assess the proportion of new goods sold. The Forum are keen to ensure that excessive proportions of new goods in charity shops are not permitted, as that impacts on retail units that have higher overheads selling similar products. There is also concern that some farm shops are sometimes

not selling the proportion of locally produced food that they have contracted to do, and that such matters should also be monitored.

Whilst there are clearly resource issues in monitoring such premises, and difficulties in identifying where some products have been sourced, the Forum felt it was important to enforce policies designed to give fair protection to existing retail premises.

Mary Portas Review

The report by Mary Portas includes many recommendations that are yet to be fully agreed by Government. The concept of the “Town Team” is already being developed in Exmouth, and in other less formal forms in the other towns.

A number of her recommendations, relating to business rates and quality of service in particular, are supported by the Forum; however the concept of a new “National Market Day” or deregulating to enable market traders anywhere on the high street was felt to be counterproductive to already struggling businesses.

Online sales

The proportion of retail sales made via the Internet is estimated to have been 10.7 per cent of all retail sales excluding fuel in February 2012. Reports have reached the Forum of the practice of visitors in shops who are purely noting prices, to then proceed to purchase an identical product online at a cheaper price. Clearly retailers cannot compete on price for many products.

Large retail organisations are now selling large quantities of their goods on-line and, for some, this is offsetting reductions in sales at their shops. On a much smaller scale, the Goviers shop in Sidmouth sells a very large quantity of items either on-line or through telephone sales. It is something that a number of specialist shops in our towns might develop to their advantage and use such distance selling to complement their shop sales.

Customer Service and Aesthetics

Budleigh Salterton, among other individual units in other towns, demonstrates that good customer service and quality presentation is of value to shoppers. Exmouth Town Team is aiming to undertake some training for retailers in customer service and actively campaign with retailers to improve the customer experience. Excellent examples like these should be built upon and shared as good practice across of the towns in the District.

Streetscene do an excellent job to keep the town centres clean and tidy. If additional litter bins are required, sponsorship of them could be encouraged to cover costs. Landlords should be encouraged to keep up maintenance of premises in town centres, including upper floors, to complete the attractive picture of a welcoming town centre.

Joint Action and Advice

Action for Market Towns (AMT) is a national membership group that provides small towns, local authorities and others with information and advice, examples of best practice, and gives national representation. Action for Market Towns is a not-for-profit company and a registered charity. Membership benefits should be explored to decide if membership should be recommended to the towns in the District.

Acknowledgements

The Panel: Councillors Tim Wood (Chairman); Graham Brown; Roger Giles; Pat Graham; Steve Hall; Sheila Kerridge; John O’Leary

The Panel would like to thank:

The seven Towns of the District – their Town Councils and Clerks, Chambers of Commerce, and residents and shop owners who answered the many questions of the Forum both at meetings and during visits to the towns;

Mr Ade Brayley, Chairman of the Exmouth Town Team

Mr John Fowler

Stephen Hughes, Valuation Office

Matt Dickins, Planning Policy Manager

Nigel Harrison, Economic Development Manager

Hilary Hardwicke, Partnership Officer (Empty Homes)

Andrew Ennis, Environmental Health and Parking Services Manager

Simon Davey, Head of Finance

Richard Cohen, Deputy Chief Executive

Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

Agenda Item 12

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

27 September 2012

EF



Progress on Ward Member Satisfaction with Planning Task and Finish Forum resolutions

Summary

This report is to update the Committee on progress in implementing the recommendations made by the Ward Member Satisfaction with Planning Task and Finish Forum, agreed by Cabinet on 30 November 2011.

The recommendations of the TAFF have all been implemented and for the most part have been successful in Officers opinion.

Officers are however concerned that the 3 day consultation period on draft officers reports is increasingly leading to Members waiting until they receive these reports before making any comments on application. This means that officers are only aware of the Ward Members views at the end of the process and are unable to consider them earlier. This has led to applications going to committee that did not previously need to be considered by committee under the delegation scheme. This leads to a delay in the processing of the application while it is timetabled for a committee. If officers had been aware of the Ward Members views earlier in the process, the application may have been taken to an earlier committee meeting.

This has been frustrating for a number of customers of the service. It is recommended that this process be amended so that Members only receive the draft report on applications that they have already commented on within the consultation period. This would prevent these unnecessary delays but still enable Members to receive reports on as many applications as they wish.

Recommendation

1. Members acknowledge the report and that the recommendations of the Ward Member Satisfaction with Planning Task and Finish Form have been implemented;
2. That the Ward Member consultation process be amended such that Members only receive a copy of the draft report with 3 days to comment if they have already commented on the application within the initial consultation period.

a) Reasons for Recommendation

To stop Members from only making their views known at the end of the planning application process such that applications are unnecessarily delayed.

b) Alternative Options

N/A

c) Risk Considerations

If the recommendation is not agreed a significant number of applications could be unreasonably delayed to the detriment of customer satisfaction and leading to delays in development taking place.

d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

The recommendations do not have any policy or budgetary implications. The reorganisation of the Planning Enforcement Service has already been carried out in accordance with established policies and within current budgets.

e) Date for Review of Decision

N/A

Main Report

The final report of the Ward Member Satisfaction with Planning Task and Finish Forum set out nine recommendations that were approved by Cabinet on 30 November 2011.

The progress for each recommendation is set out below.

Recommendation 1:

“The Interim Development Manager is asked to review the process ‘calendar’ given in appendix 2 to ensure that the requirements to contact Ward Members are properly met, and that prompts to members are issued in good time. Members must be given the opportunity to join the decision process (post ‘21 days’) where the balance of a decision is uncertain, or where pertinent issues (examples being a highways or drainage issue) exist in the context of the application. The Forum noted the practice of the Chairman of the Development Management Committee and his determination that a Ward Member’s comment should be sought before a delegated or committee decision was reached. The Forum commends this procedure as an excellent example of good practice.”

Update

The process calendar has been reviewed and improvements made to ensure Ward Members are contacted in a timely and appropriate way. Members are always the first to be notified of an application being received in their ward. If it is considered to be a significant and controversial major application in their ward, they are invited in for a briefing from officers. Ward Members are further consulted on any significant amendments to the proposed plans, and then sent a draft copy of the officer’s report including the comments of all consultees and the officer’s views and recommendation. They then have 3 days to comment on the report. If the application is to be considered at a Chairman’s Delegation Meeting, Members are advised of the time and date of this meeting and invited to attend.

Recommendation 2:

“That the Interim Development Manager reviews and provides updated guidance notes for planning officers, in order to improve the level of co-operation between the planning officer and the Ward Member(s). This guidance should reflect the value that may be gathered from a Ward Members’ local knowledge.”

Update

Officers have been advised to keep Ward Members in the loop on key planning issues in their ward. An open evening was arranged and all Members invited to come in to meet the planning teams, follow an application through the process, and understand how

applications are processed and the points in the process where Ward Members are involved. This proved to be a highly successful evening with most Members attending. Feedback from Members on the evening was positive, including comments that Members felt they gained a much better understanding of the process and how they can best be involved. Similarly officers felt that it had helped to improve understanding between officers and Members and improve levels of co-operation.

Recommendation 3:

“That amendments be made to the current planning application process, and supporting officer guidance, to incorporate:

- a) A copy of pre-application advice given for applications classed as “Minor” and “Major” must be sent to the Ward Member(s) subject to a sensitive awareness of confidentiality and pre-determination issues;
- b) An urgent review of the way applications can be ‘tracked’ for the benefit of Ward Members who need to be kept aware of any changes and additional information supplied during the consultation period. Members also need to be made aware of any delays in the determination of an application. (IT has advised that the current tracking system is unable to provide the alerts required – therefore planning officers must be prepared to alert Ward Members directly until the software is improved);
- c) Notification of a recommendation about to be made, known as a “PDE”, must be issued to the Ward Member(s) whenever a balanced conclusion cannot be readily determined; the Ward Member(s) must then promptly respond within three days;
- d) Timely notification of the date of Chairman’s Delegation and the recommendation of an application of interest, to the Ward Member(s), to enable the Ward Member to decide if they wished to attend the delegation. This is particularly relevant where a Ward Member’s views differ from the Officer recommendation. It has been agreed that notification will be sent on the Friday preceding delegation. Where a Ward Member is unable to attend delegation, due consideration must be given to any written comment they make.”

Update

- a) Ward Members are advised of significant pre-application enquiries being copied into correspondence, or in cases where a Members Advisory Panel is held, being invited to attend and see a presentation from the developer, and receive comments from officers and consultees on the proposals.
- b) Ward Members have received training on how to track an application online and how they can activate alerts. The onus is on Members to activate tracking for those applications that they have a particular interest in. The system does not have the ability to automatically notify Members.
- c) As detailed above Ward Members receive a draft report detailing officers recommendation and have 3 days to respond with any comments on the report.

This has generated significant issues for officers and the service that can be provided to customers. This is because some Ward Members appear to have stopped commenting on applications within their ward within the 21 day consultation period and are instead waiting until they receive the draft report at the end of the process before commenting. This was not the intention of this recommendation of the TAFF.

It is of key importance that officers are aware of Members views on applications as early in the process as possible, so that their comments can be given due consideration. This also enables Officers to establish whether the application can be considered under delegated powers or needs to go to committee, which is dependent on whether officers view is contrary to Members or not. If Officers are not made aware of Members views until the end of the process then the application cannot be timetabled in for a committee agenda. This has already led to several applications taking in the region of 4 – 6 weeks longer to determine than would have been the case had the respective Ward Members informed officers of their views in good time. In each case the Ward Members views were principal concerns that were not dependant on consultee responses and therefore they are views that could have been expressed prior to them receiving the draft officer report.

It is considered that if the system continues to operate as it does at present, more and more applications will potentially be delayed. It is therefore recommended that Ward Members only receive the draft report if they have already commented on the application within the 21 day consultation period. This will ensure that Members comment on applications that they are concerned about within the consultation period and do not wait until they receive a draft report. It will also prevent Members who represent urban wards being inundated with reports for minor household extensions, which has been another by-product of the current arrangements.

d) Ward Members are now notified of an application in their ward which is due to be presented to the Chairmans Delegation Meeting, and advised of the date and time of the meeting, and invited to attend. Even when they are unable to attend their comments are read out to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and where appropriate the Ward Member may be telephoned to discuss the development before a decision is made.

Recommendation 4:

“That the Interim Development Manager addresses the issue of improving customer care by issuing training and guidance where necessary. Ward Members are encouraged to interact frequently with planning officers within their respective team structure and to become part of that team.”

Update

Customer care has been emphasised at team meetings, and targeted as part of the Performance Excellence Review process. All staff across the Council have to undertake regular refreshers in respect of the customer care policy.

Recommendation 5:

“That full training be made available to all Ward Members. Such training must cover the use of Planning Online and the Members’ Intranet, including the protocols required to assist with a simplified and direct ability to comment on planning applications. Training must include a ‘hands-on’ approach to electronic processes. Training opportunities and support should be offered at regular and frequent intervals.”

Update

Training on the software available has been undertaken on several occasions. The planning team are very happy to undertake any refresher training for those Members who feel that they need further training.

Recommendation 6:

“That the Interim Development Manager provides a report on the situation regarding Enforcement resource levels and case workload to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 January 2012. A full report, covering any outstanding issues in enforcement process and efficient links with the Legal Service (and the discharge of section 106 agreements) is to be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2012.”

Update

An update on the Enforcement resource levels was presented to the Committee in March 2012 and a further update will be presented on 27 September 2012.

Recommendation 7:

“That any review of the interaction of Town and Parish Councils with the Planning Service by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be deferred until more detail on the implications of the Localism Agenda are known. In the meantime the Chairman of the LDF Panel is requested to ensure that policy regarding the use and value of Parish, Town and Neighbourhood Plans forms part of his Panel’s deliberation.”

Update

The Committee may wish to debate the appropriate timing of a review of interaction with Town and Parish Councils for their forward plan. The preparation of the local plan has taken account of existing parish, town and neighbourhood plans.

Recommendation 8:

“The Head of Economy, along with other Senior Officers, is often required to explain the principal considerations of an argument. From a planning perspective it is acknowledged that a range of material considerations will need to be taken into account, and the Chairman of the Development Committee will need to ensure that the scope of the advice is clear and Members have been fully appraised of material points. It is quite possible that, when answering such requests for advice from the Chairman, that Senior Officers are obliged to proffer both supporting and opposing views.”

Update

This recommendation was noted and taken on board.

Recommendation 9:

That the free pre-application advice offered to householders is promoted on the Council’s website to help change a perception that the service attracted a charge for householders.

Update

This advice is readily available on the Planning section of the Council’s website.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications

Consultation on Reports to the Cabinet

N/A

Background Papers

- Task and Finish Forum: [Improving Ward Member interaction with Planning](#) Report to Cabinet 30th November 2011

Ed Freeman
Development Manager

Overview and Scrutiny Committee
27 September 2011

Agenda Item 13

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

27 September 2012

EF



Planning Enforcement Resource and Workload Update

Summary

This report has been prepared in response to recommendation 7 of the final report of the Task and Finish Forum: Improving Ward Member interaction with Planning. The TaFF raised some concerns regarding the enforcement service, which officers attributed to staffing problems within this part of the service at the time. Unfortunately these staffing problems have continued, and the enforcement part of the service has still not been fully staffed consistently for any significant period of time this year.

There will however be all 3 enforcement officers in post by the time of Members meeting to discuss this matter, and it is hoped that given a sustained period of being fully staffed, the service will be able to fully re-establish itself as a quality enforcement service.

Recommendation

That the update report be acknowledged.

a) Reasons for Recommendation

The concerns raised by the TaFF have been addressed through the reorganisation of the Planning Enforcement Service as detailed in the report.

b) Alternative Options

N/A

c) Risk Considerations

That any concerns that Members have regarding the Planning Enforcement Service may not be addressed if not highlighted in response to this report.

d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

The recommendations do not have any policy or budgetary implications. The reorganisation of the Planning Enforcement Service has already been carried out in accordance with established policies and within current budgets.

e) Date for Review of Decision

N/A

1 Main Body of the Report

Introduction

This report has been prepared in response to recommendation 7 of the report of the Task and Finish Forum into improving Member interaction with the planning service. The recommendation requires a report to be prepared on “....the situation regarding Enforcement resource levels and case workload....” The report highlighted concerns regarding delays in dealing with enforcement cases, but acknowledged that there had been staff shortages and therefore this element of the service was not looked at. Concern was also expressed that the service was not pro-active in monitoring developments as they were constructed and only responded to complaints regarding whether works were being carried out in accordance with the approved plans. This report seeks to address these concerns.

The report below consists of the report that was presented to Members in March for information purposes with updates under each section detailing what has happened since the March meeting of the committee.

Resources

At the start of 2011 the Planning Enforcement Team comprised a Senior Planning Officer (Enforcement), two Enforcement Officers, and an Admin support officer. Unfortunately during the first 6 months of the year the Senior Planning Officer had left for a new job elsewhere, one of the Enforcement Officers went off on sick leave and the admin support officer retired. This left just one Enforcement Officer to deal with cases across the whole of the district, which was clearly not feasible even though some other Members of staff were used to help out. The service inevitably suffered as a result, although all high priority cases were still investigated quickly, and as such it was the low priority cases where the case had been assessed and identified as not causing significant immediate harm that were delayed. The remaining officer did an excellent job in keeping on top of the in-coming workload while this situation was resolved.

The staff shortages led to a rethink of how the enforcement service is provided and the decision was taken to dismantle the Enforcement Team and integrate the enforcement officers into the planning teams, thereby giving the team responsibility for enforcement in their area with each team having a dedicated Enforcement Officer. This negated the need for the Senior Planning Officer (Enforcement) and the dedicated enforcement admin support post to be replaced enabling a third Enforcement Officer to be recruited. The third Enforcement Officer started work in summer 2011 and the remaining Enforcement Officer who had been on long term sick leave returned to work at the end of the summer.

The Planning Enforcement service is now operated for the first time by 3 full time Enforcement Officers who investigate alleged breaches of the planning legislation with the support of their respective planning team of planning and admin officers. The service therefore has the highest number of dedicated enforcement officers it has ever had.

Update on Resources

The Enforcement Officer for the central area team left the Council earlier this year at short notice following a long period of sickness. This left the service with only two enforcement officers trying to do the work of 3 for several months. In August a replacement officer started. She has settled in well and is now dealing with a full caseload. Unfortunately at the

end of August the Enforcement Officer for the western area team left the Council for employment elsewhere for reasons of career progression. A replacement officer starts on the 17th September. Following this date it is hoped that the service will remain fully staffed in the long term and it will be possible to undertake the monitoring of development sites as envisaged by the TAFF, and that performance will also improve.

Workloads and Performance

Clearly during the period detailed above the number of cases the service had on hand increased, as did the time periods for dealing with cases. Since last summer the number of cases has however gradually reduced from about 450 cases on hand to 361 at the end of January. This figure is consistently reducing as the number of cases closed in each fortnight period exceeds the number received. Clearly there are a number of historic cases in the system which have been open for over a year, and these are being targeted. This has meant that 17 such cases were closed or resolved in January alone.

In terms of the time period taken to resolve cases, clearly the overall statistics are significantly skewed at the moment by the historic cases. However if these are excluded from the statistics then the most common experience of a customer (the complainant) in January was that their case (where no breach is identified or is too minor to pursue) would have been dealt with from start to finish in 7 days including a site visit. Clearly in cases where there is a breach of the legislation to be resolved this will take longer. Although there is no equivalent data from the period when Members were raising concerns it is believed that this figure would be a substantial improvement over the performance during the latter half of 2010 and early 2011.

Update

Since the previous report in March the service received 271 new cases but closed 282 cases. The total number of cases on hand now stands at 328 down from 261 at the end of January. Performance levels have not changed since those discussed above. Despite having only two enforcement officers in post for much of this year the number of cases on hand has still reduced - indeed it is considered that having in the region of 300 cases on hand at any one time would not be unusual even if the service was fully staffed. The two remaining officers did an excellent job in keeping on top of such a large workload and should be commended for their efforts.

The Future

It is hoped that as the number of cases on hand reduces further there will soon come a time when there will be capacity to start to pro-actively monitor a small number of new major developments as they are constructed, and to check compliance with the conditions imposed on these developments. There have always been links with the Building Regulations service with regard to the monitoring of developments; however the two services are considering different aspects of the development. While the comments of the TaFF with regard to better working with Building Regulations are noted, there is a limit to the extent to which the two services can help each other. We will however continue to look at ways of improving links between the two services wherever possible.

There remain a number of historic cases within the system that can only be resolved through formal enforcement action and prosecution proceedings. The Enforcement Officers are working this into their work programmes. However such proceedings take time due to the legal process that has to be gone through, and so there remain some high profile cases that will still take a number of months to resolve at this stage. This is

dependent on capacity in the legal team and as members may beware there is presently a problem with staff numbers. This will inevitably impact on the end to end times for enforcement notice preparation and other legal courses of action. Nevertheless the changes to the enforcement service detailed earlier in this report mean that officers now have the capacity to progress these cases as quickly as possible whereas this had not previously been possible.

The enforcement service has always copied correspondence to the relevant Ward Members to keep them advised of progress with cases within their ward, and will continue to do so while the implementation of the other recommendations of the TaFF will enable better interaction with Members on enforcement issues.

Update

It is hoped that with a sustained period of being fully staffed it will be possible to commence the monitoring of a significant proportion of developments to pro-actively ensure compliance with the approved plans and conditions. It will also enable as many outstanding cases as possible to be closed so that the service can proceed with everything as up to date as possible.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications

Financial Implications

There are no further financial implications, the enforcement officers are included within the current budget.

Consultation on Reports to the Cabinet

N/A

Background Papers

- Task and Finish Forum: [Improving Ward Member interaction with Planning](#) Report to Cabinet 30th November 2011

Ed Freeman
Development Manager

Overview and Scrutiny Committee
27 September 2011

EXTRACT

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Knowle, Sidmouth on Wednesday, 5 September 2012

*49 Arts and Culture Task and Finish Forum – Key Decision

The Countryside and Leisure Manager presented the [recommendations of the Arts and Culture Task and Finish Forum](#) which had been endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee subject to minor amendment. He advised that one of the key outcomes had been the need for the Thelma Hulbert Gallery to be more involved with the local and wider community and to generate more income streams.

He advised that the Forum had recognised the opportunity to progress local work being carried out within East Devon Communities. The Forum had acknowledged the significant contribution made by arts and culture to the community and local economy and regarded the Manor Pavilion, Sidmouth as a positive example.

Councillor John O’Leary, Culture Champion and Chairman of the Task and Finish Forum spoke positively about the value of art and culture within East Devon and the need for the Thelma Hulbert Gallery to be run as a commercial business.

Councillor Phil Twiss, appointed representative on the Gallery’s Advisory Forum, believed that a more robust Forum was needed to drive forward a nationally recognised arts facility.

Councillor David Cox, Finance Portfolio Holder thanked the Task and Finish Forum for its work and the comprehensive and timely report. He believed that the lack of an effective reporting link between the Gallery and Council had meant that the Cabinet had not been kept fully informed. He emphasised that it was now vital to develop an income stream, establish a realistic business plan for a 2 to 3 year period with a tightly controlled and monitored budget. He doubted that the Gallery could achieve a revenue neutral position within 3 years but this should be the target.

Councillor Graham Godbeer, Economy Portfolio Holder fully appreciated the funding issues. He was very supportive of arts and culture and its value to the wellbeing of the community but recognised that the management of the Gallery needed to be more robust.

Councillor Douglas Hull, Member of the Task and Finish Forum said that the Forum had been very effective and that the officer reports had been clear and well presented. He spoke positively about the outreach programme and its benefit to the community.

Councillor Andrew Moulding, Strategic Development and Partnerships Portfolio Holder, had been proactive in supporting arts development over the years. He said that since the Council had taken over the Gallery, it had concentrated its efforts and budget on that facility to the detriment of district wide arts development.

The Cabinet accepted that urgent positive action was needed to address the Gallery’s on-going deficit position. The Cabinet wanted to see a turn-around in the financial position and that this should be evidenced within a year.

- *49 Arts and Culture Task and Finish Forum – Key Decision (continued)
- RESOLVED:**
- (1) that the recommendations of the Arts and Culture Task and Finish Forum as supported (with minor amendments) by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be referred to the Environment Think Tank with the Think Tank being asked to determine the membership and remit of an Arts and Culture Forum with immediate effect to focus on how to significantly improve the viability of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery, with an early report back to the Cabinet in November 2012;
 - (2) that the Environment Think Tank also consider the remit of the currently vacant Arts Development Officer post;
 - (3) that recommendations 1(a), 1(b), 2(a), 2(b), 3(a), 3(b), 4(a), 4(c), and 9 be approved as printed in the report.
- REASON**
- To urgently address the budget deficit of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery.

Agenda Item 14

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

27 September 2012

Quarterly Monitoring Report



Quarterly Monitoring of Performance – 1st Quarter 2012/13 April to June 2012

Summary

This report provides performance information and progress against our promises and priorities as outlined in the Council Plan. This cumulative quarterly information will be used to provide an annual review of our performance against the Council Plan in the Annual Report.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Members consider performance against delivery of the promises/priorities in the Council Plan, Key Service Objectives from Service Plans and Performance Measures for the 1st quarter of 2012/13 so that issues can be addressed in a timely way.

a) Reasons for Recommendation

So that Members can gain a clear view of progress against what we said we would deliver in the Council Plan and deal with performance issues arising.

b) Alternative Options

None

c) Risk Considerations

A failure to monitor performance may result in customer complaints, poor service delivery and may compromise the Council's reputation.

d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

None

e) Date for Review of Decision

Performance information is provided on a quarterly basis.

1 Main Body of the Report

1. Appendix A is a report showing progress of the Council promises taken from the Council Plan 2012-16 and key performance indicators from our services. The report also highlights Service achievements and performance from the last quarter.

2. [Appendix B](#) available online shows progress against service plan objectives and performance indicators in the form of bar charts. A supplementary in these papers provides information for Members on all performance indicators and objectives and draw attention to any areas that are showing as a 'concern'.

Legal Implications

No legal comments are required.

Financial Implications

No direct financial implications.

Consultation on Reports to the Executive

Relevant Heads of Service, Corporate Managers and Officers have contributed to the appendices.

Background Papers

- ❑ Appendix A – Detailed report showing progress against all of the Council Promises, key performance indicators and service achievements follow this report.
- ❑ Appendix B – [Bar chart summary for service plan objectives and performance indicators with a detailed report for areas of 'concern' or 'variation'](#).
- ❑ [Council Plan 2012-16](#)

Karen Jenkins Ext 2762
Corporate Organisational Development Manager

Overview and Scrutiny
27 September 2012



Quarter 1 Performance Report 2012-13

June 2012

Document Key

Promise Status classification

- Red (Concern) highlights targets with serious problems or significant delays.
- Amber (Variation) indicates actions with mild concerns or minor setbacks.
- Green (Achieved) displays special achievements or early completions.

Performance Indicators (PI)

- The 'Previous Year End' column reports performance at the end of 2011/12, if that information is available.
- The 'Current Target' column represents the annual target some measures no longer have targets or are not suitable for targets.
- The columns 'Q1 Act', 'Q2 Act', etc. show the actual year to date situation for each Performance Indicator. The key for the colours is as follows:
 - o Red (Concern) – if the PI is 10% or more below the target.
 - o Yellow (Variation) – if the PI is between 10% and 0.1% below the target.
 - o Green (Achieved) – if the PI and the target match exactly or the PI is above the target.
- The Direction of Travel column shows if the PI has improved since the same period last year. An up arrow showing improvement, a down arrow showing deterioration and a level arrow showing a static trend.

Council Promise - Living in an outstanding place

Outcome - Make more affordable, good quality homes available for our residents

Council Promise 2012-13	Status	Comments
Bring at least 10 private sector empty homes back into use each year	Normal	Investigations continue into long term empty homes using both Service Requests from the public and Council Tax lists. We are partnering with a RP (Chapter 1) and a not for profit organisation (Sheikinah) who successfully bid for funding to bring 5 long term empty homes in East Devon back into use over the next 3 years. We have identified 2 of the 5 properties. We are also pursuing an Enforced Sale Action which has been delayed by the Courts but hope to complete this by the end of 2012.
Have all the infrastructure in place to start building homes at Cranbrook in 2012	Achieved	Off site - highway infrastructure all commenced on schedule. On site - School opening in Sept 2012, station planning permission now approved, multipurpose building also opening Sept 2012
Manage and maintain our council homes to our adopted local standards	Achieved	We are delivering on our local offers and meeting the commitments in our various housing plans and strategies.
Produce at least 100 new affordable homes per annum	Variation	Annual target - on course to achieve the 100 units of affordable housing
Set a baseline and improve the thermal efficiency of homes in the District	Variation	The Cosy Devon scheme is still operating although it is under review across Devon because of the implementation of the Government's new schemes Green Deal and ECO which are to be launched in October 2012. It is hoped that a series of specifically targeted small Cosy Devon mail outs in the next couple of months will be carried out to take the scheme up to Oct 2012.

Performance Indicator	Prev Year End	Current Target	Q1 Actual	Q2 Actual	Direction of travel	Management Notes
Number of affordable homes delivered	148	25 (1/4)	0		↓	We expect the main affordable housing delivery output to show in Q3 / Q4. It is expected that the numbers of affordable housing delivered in East Devon this year will be lower than last. This is a reflection of the significantly reduced grant levels. We remain hopeful that Cranbrook will start to deliver in Q2/ Q3.

Service Achievements

- The tenants satisfaction survey (STAR) has revealed improved levels of tenant's satisfaction building on past high levels of satisfaction.

The survey shows 89% satisfaction with the housing service from general needs tenants and 96% satisfaction amongst sheltered housing tenants.

- This quarter particular attention has been paid to improving the environment of Littleham, Exmouth with direct intervention on a number of tenancies where untidy gardens have been an issue, as well as working with the local residents to site goal posts on Housing land. We have also worked with residents of flats in Lower Brook Meadow, Sidford to improve play facilities and internal walkways there.

- Through 2012-13 we will be continuing our successful estate walkabouts and blitz days. From July to October staff will be auditing the condition of estates across the district.

- This year's tenant conference was again a great success. Held in June in Broadclyst, it focussed on meeting front line staff, so most teams ran either workshops or held stalls publicising their activities. Tenants are already planning their conference for next year.

- Award and mobilisation of a new responsive repairs contract has been a priority and worth circ £10 million over 5 years.

- Housing Revenue Account Business Plan refreshed following taking out a loan portfolio.

Council Promise - Living in an outstanding place

Outcome - Maintain residents' high satisfaction with their area and home as places to live

Council Promise 2012-13	Status	Comments
Reduce the low amount of waste sent to landfill in the District so that we are amongst the 10 best performing councils in England.	Achieved	
Complete the Eon combined heat and power plant to service Cranbrook, Skypark and the Intermodal Freight Terminal in 2012	Normal	Energy Centre construction ongoing and will be ready for fit out in September
Finalise the Strand redevelopment and blueprint for creating new, attractive places to enjoy, live and do business in Exmouth in 2012	Normal	Consultation into redevelopment led by Exmouth Town Council and Town Team. District and County Council's await results due Oct 2012
Help Seaton achieve its Visitor Centre during 2012 - 2013	Normal	Preferred provider in place (Devon Wildlife Trust). Heritage Lottery Fund bid in progress. Target for completion of the visitor centre is March 2014.
Implement a District-wide survey in 2012 to help us track satisfaction over time and make plans to address key issues for residents	Normal	In planning stage

Performance Indicator	Prev Year End	Current Target	Q1 Actual	Q2 Actual	Direction of travel	Management Notes
Number of households living in temporary accommodation	20	40 (1/4)	19		↑	We are managing to keep numbers down despite an increase in homelessness approaches
Improved street and environmental cleanliness – fly tipping	3	3 (1/4)	2			

Service Achievements

- A review of the range of material collected for recycling has been completed following the Beer plastics recycling trial. The recommendations from this review will be considered and finalised in the autumn.

- We quickly cleaned up after several major storms in May, one of which damaged beach huts in Seaton. We were able to repair most of our huts within a week.

Whilst our teams were busy with storm recovery and clean up we still dealt with 111 flytipping clearing them in most cases within 3 days. There were only 58 requests for street cleaning which were resolved within 2 days for manual cleaning, but taking up to 6 days when a mechanical sweeper was required.

Performance in Focus

Objective – Comply with the regulatory framework produced by the Tenant Services Authority

Update - Local standards have been agreed with customers for a variety of functions across the Housing Service, and we monitor these and report on progress through our Annual Report to Tenants. Three of the TSA's standards are due for review this year and currently being consulted upon.

We are also complying with the regulatory framework's requirement for 'co-regulation' with our customers by having them with members on our Housing Review Board, a Tenant Scrutiny Panel that independently reviews areas of our activity that customers deem necessary to review. Also our Service Review Groups are made up of customers and front line staff.

Our arrangements are seen by others in the 'industry' as being at the forefront of good practise, and Wiltshire Council is sending staff and customers to learn from us.

Council Promise - Working in an outstanding place

Outcome – Deliver a thriving, competitive local economy

Council Promise 2012-13	Status	Comments
Hold talks in Honiton, Axminster and Sidmouth to explore the potential for regeneration opportunities	Variation	On hold pending identification of project opportunities.
Economy Strategy to increase the number and variety of job opportunities within and throughout East Devon by building on the benefits emerging from the development taking place in the West End of the District by 2013	Normal	Strategy in place, progress overseen by Think Tank.
To help secure the necessary infrastructure to create and support sustainable agricultural, business and visitor economies in East Devon.	Normal	Continued support for Business Information Point (BIP) and the East Devon Business Forum (EDBF).
To provide business support, innovation ideas, networking opportunities and training for small and medium size businesses. To look to provide or facilitate suitable premises for all stages of their development.	Normal	Business Information Point active in support of SMEs. Review of business units and asset portfolio underway.
To use the natural assets of the District to strengthen and widen the visitor economy throughout the year by aiding new and existing tourism businesses to provide high quality facilities and accommodation, without damaging the outstanding beauty of the East Devon environment.	Normal	Tourism development is a key part of the Regeneration Board activities in Sidmouth and Seaton. Wider visitor economy promotion recognised in the management of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery, Business Information Point funding, High Street Task and Finish Forum (TAFF) and Art and Culture TAFF deliberations.

Service Achievements

- By using a new software tool we are endeavouring to increase the proportion of our spend with small and medium enterprises and local suppliers. The software ProSpend enables us to quickly analyse and present graphically the spend by supplier, location and company size.

- Access works to the new Skypark near Cranbrook are now underway including the alignment of Clyst Honiton Bypass. First buildings for the new Science and Technology Business Park are expected to come forward during 2013.

- For our Planning Policy team through the first quarter of this year their work has been centered around consultation on the proposed town inset maps for the Local Plan and taking feedback and recommended changes to the plan through Committee and Council. This stage has been successfully completed and the Local Plan will now be subject to formal pre-submission consultation.

- We have been talking to Town and Parish Councils, Chambers of Commerce and our own Members on ways in which we might improve the management of our car parks to the benefit of local communities, the local economy and yet still protect this important revenue stream. A number of options have been identified and will be evaluated and presented to Cabinet in the autumn.

Council Promise - Enjoying this outstanding place

Outcome – Provide cultural and leisure activities accessible to all residents and visitors

Council Promise 2012-13	Status	Comments
Develop ideas and income generating projects to keep creative art workshops and international art exhibitions available and accessible in our District	Normal	Forms part of THG review and Arts & Culture TAFF scope.
Fund Leisure East Devon to the tune of £1 million a year	Achieved	Funding in place
Increase visitor numbers through a tourism and marketing campaign during 2012 - 2013	Variation	No current action to report
Support healthy lifestyles through our play provision, beaches, cycle routes and footpaths	Normal	Development of Stop line Way progressing well, Countryside Team working with LED on new health walk in Axe Wetlands for launch autumn 2012.

Service Achievements

- EDDC Environmental Health Team is working alongside the Environment Agency and South West Water to ensure that the Bathing water in the district meets national standards.

- An Arts and Culture review looking at the keeping arts and culture accessible in East Devon as well as reviewing the functions of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery is underway. The Review is due to report and make recommendations to Cabinet in September 2012

- Work is ongoing to implement the Community Infrastructure Levy and the Section 106 funds to ensure that the money required as part of the planning conditions for new developments within the district are being successfully collected, monitored and managed.

An example this quarter of the Section 106 money in action is at Littleham, Exmouth where the children from Littleham Church of England Primary School have been working with officers at EDDC to choose the new play equipment. The planned improvements to the play area will cost £22,000, all of which has been contributed by developers, under Section 106 funding for play, which was a condition of planning approval for a number of developments in the area.

Council Promise - Enjoying this outstanding place

Outcome – Protect and enhance East Devon’s natural environment and its habitats and wildlife

Council Promise 2012-13	Status	Comments
Complete and promote the Axe Estuary Wetlands as a regionally important wildlife destination, attracting 60,000 new visitors by 2013	Normal	On track to achieve.
Review our green and open spaces and plan to ensure we are delivering best value and community access	Normal	
Put in place a Local Nature Reserve Strategy and action plan in 2012 to involve more young people	Normal	On track for delivery in timescale.

Service Achievements

- By introducing a sustainable procurement strategy we are looking to buying products which are produced, delivered, used, and disposed of, in ways which avoid or minimise negative effects on the environment and society.

This strategy will work alongside the core procurement strategy which covers many other issues related to the way in which we procure materials, services and works. The core strategy is currently being extensively rewritten, with a first draft anticipated by the end of September 2012.

- Over the first quarter of this year Environmental Health Officers have had and will continue to have a significant input into Development Management and the Local Plan and have been working to raise the profile of the environmental consequences of various developments both large and small for existing residents, future occupiers and the wider environment.

- We are working with developers and other officers to promote good practice in terms of “considerate constructors” with the objective of minimising their impact on our existing communities around Cranbrook throughout the various developments. As a minimum we will be expecting full compliance with the Considerate Constructors scheme and ensuring the requirements are passed down to all site workers.

- The annual assessment of the condition and health of the District’s Local Nature Reserves is on track for 2012-13. The assessment is carried out to ensure that appropriate management decisions are made to target habitat and species decline or loss.

- The environmental education programme has made a flying start this year with more young people taking part this year so far than last year. The programme looks to involve all local schools in East Devon.

Council Promise - Outstanding Council

Outcome – Efficiencies: financial and time-saving

Council Promise 2012-13	Status	Comments
Complete the business case analysis in 2012 for a potential Council office relocation	Normal	Business case due for the 30/11/2012 - on target to meet this deadline
Complete the first phase of introducing mobile technology to officers and members to reduce paper use in 2012	Normal	The objectives in the first phase are proceeding well, despite being hampered by a long term illness of a key team member. Streetscene have had a number of smartphone applications delivered; mobile email is nearly ready to go; business case is being prepared for SITA in-cab technology; and the business case and technology for customer apps is being reviewed.
Explore the potential for sharing or outsourcing our support services during 2012 - 2013	Normal	ICT are actively pursuing two possible options for shared back office.
Maximise our use and sale of assets to fund our priorities for East Devon	Normal	Asset Management Forum active, ongoing disposals underway

Performance Indicator	Prev Year End	Current Target	Q1 Actual	Q2 Actual	Direction of travel	Management Notes
Percentage of Council Tax collected	98.71	32.93 (4/12)	30.67		↑	The in-year collection has improved slightly and we are 0.02% up on the same time last year.
Percentage of Non-domestic rates collected	99.11	33.03 (4/12)	32.59		↑	For the fourth month running, the in-year collection is up on the same time last year.
Working days lost due to sickness absence	8.19	2.83 (4/12)	2.39		↓	This indicator is now showing concern due to an increase in medium term absence due to significant health problems including cancer, post-operative recovery, clinical depression and muscular-skeletal issues. We are continuing to meet with managers monthly to review absence triggers and to ensure that we are actively managing all cases.
Percentage of planning appeal decisions allowed against the authority's decision to refuse	25.6	30.0 (4/12)	0		↑	
Proportion of outstanding debt that is more than 90 days old from date of invoice	11	No Target	13		↑	

Service in Focus - Environmental Health Team

During this quarter the Environmental Health Team maintained its programme of routine food safety inspections of food businesses carrying out 216 programmed inspections.

The Environmental Health Team also continued to respond to and resolve requests for advice, investigation and enforcement action from a variety of customers and in this quarter we dealt with almost 1000 cases.

In the same period our contractors dealt with a further 320 service requests with 141 requests for pest control treatments and 179 calls to the dog warden.

Our work has included 145 complaints and enquiries about food, 182 about noise, over 150 consultations about planning and licensing applications and a range of other Environmental Health issues including complaints about smoky bonfires, odour nuisance, flies and seagulls.

On average our investigations during this quarter were concluded within 29 days but there has always been considerable variation in end to end times due to the varying complexity of the investigations and the inevitable period of monitoring after an intervention to see whether or not it has been successful in changing behavior.

Council Promise - Outstanding Council

Outcome – Improved service through understanding our customers and making good use of web & mobile technology

Council Promise 2012-13	Status	Comments
Achieve our equality objectives during 2012 - 2013	Normal	The Action Plan is in place and lead officer agreed. There will be a progress provided to Scrutiny in the Autumn.
Complete our redesign of all our major frontline services during 2012 - 2013	Normal	The Waste Team are currently working on understanding current issues and should be making decisions on redesign experiments by the end of July.
Improve communications and our knowledge of our customers' needs (use our 2012 action plan to monitor)	Normal	We have now recruited the Communications and Public Affairs Manager and are awaiting written confirmation and a start date
Design an improved website with a complete range of self serve and information services that are very easy for customers to use.	Variation	Project delayed while new Communications Strategy was formalised. New content management system is being selected; it will be open source technology; and a project will be created to be led by the new Communications manager to update the existing website.

Performance Indicator	Prev Year End	Current Target	Q1 Actual	Q2 Actual	Direction of travel	Management Notes
Percentage of Minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks	63.90	16.25 (1/4)	62.04		↑	
Percentage of Other planning applications determined within 8 weeks	81.61	20.00 (1/4)	75.82		↓	
Days taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events	5.69	5.89 (4/12)	6.03		↓	An increase in Housing Benefit demand caused by additional information being passed to us from the Department of Work and Pensions. This is in line with feedback from a number of authorities. This has meant an increase in the number of days taken to process claims. By focusing resources on these amendments coming from the Department of Work and Pensions and we expect an improvement for the 2nd quarter.
Percentage of satisfied customers - Benefits	92	No target	93		↑	
Percentage of satisfied customers - Planning	90	No target	89		↓	
Creditor days - % of invoices paid within 30 days	99	99 (4/12)	99		↓	

Service Achievements

- We have updated our planning information technology systems to give better functionality and smarter working techniques. All of the Planning staff have been trained on the new systems and there are real improvements to our service delivery.

Performance in Focus

Objective – Review performance and employee data published on the internet

Update – We have updated our employee data page and the performance pages of our internet site. In reviewing our performance reporting we created a new monthly snapshot report giving details of our performance in areas that we think are most important to our customers. This new style quarterly report follows on from this work with the aim of making all of our performance reporting more accessible.

Quarterly report 2012-13 Concern Only

Quarterly report for 2012/2013

Arranged by Aims

Filtered by Flag: Include: Monthly, Quarterly

Exclude: Archive, Actions from Cabinet

Filtered by Performance Status: Include PI Status: Concern

Include Objective Status: Concern

Key to Performance Status:

Key Strategic Objective:	No Data available	Milestone Missed	Normal	Concern	Variation	Achieved
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Performance Indicators:	No Data	Concern	Variation	Achieved	Excellent
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Key to change on same period in previous year:

↑	Improved Performance	↓	Worse Performance	↔	Unchanged
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Key to +/- Column:

+	Higher figures are better	-	Lower figures are better	OFF	Direction cannot be determined
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* indicates that an entity is linked to the Aim by its parent Service

Quarterly report 2012-13 Concern Only									
Priority: Living in an outstanding place									
Outcome: Make more affordable, good quality homes available for our residents									
Performance Indicators									
Title	+/-	Prev Year End	Current Target	Q1 Act	Q2 Act	Q3 Act	Q4 Act	Improvement	Responsible Officer
NI155 Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) (LAA)	+	148	25 (1/4)	0				↓	Paul Lowe
Management Notes: (Quarter 1) We expect the main affordable housing delivery output to show in Q3 / Q4. It is expected that the numbers of affordable housing delivered in East Devon this year will be lower than last. This is a reflection of the significantly reduced grant levels. We remain hopeful that Cranbrook will start to deliver in Q2/ Q3. (PL)									

Priority: Enjoying this outstanding place
Outcome: Protect and enhance East Devon's natural environment and its habitats and wildlife

Quarterly report 2012-13 Concern Only

Priority: Enjoying this outstanding place

Outcome: Protect and enhance East Devon's natural environment and its habitats and wildlife

Key Strategic Objective

Objective Status	Title	Objective	Comments	Responsible Officer
Concern	<u>Complete the delivery of new inter tidal habitat scheme on Sheep's Marsh on Axe Wetlands</u>	<u>Complete the delivery of new inter tidal habitat scheme on Sheep's Marsh on Axe Wetlands & develop strategic Axe Wetlands Management Plan that guides site management, access & public engagement attracting 60,000 new visitors by 2013</u>	Delays over the transfer of land from Tesco's to EDDC means the scheme is not progressing as quickly as hoped - Estates have reassured that the land transfer will happen soon. EA funding of £150,000 to deliver scheme is at jeopardy if not completed.	Charlie Plowden
Concern	<u>Prepare Greenhouse Gases Plan</u>	<u>Prepare Greenhouse Gases Plan</u>	With loss of Carbon Management Officer there is no one taking this work forward within EDDC at the current time.	Charlie Plowden

Priority: Outstanding Council

Outcome: Efficiencies: financial and time-saving

Performance Indicators

Title	+/-	Prev Year End	Current Target	Q1 Act	Q2 Act	Q3 Act	Q4 Act	Improvement	Responsible Officer
<u>Working days lost due to sickness absence</u>	-	8.19	2.83 (4/12)	2.39				↓	Ali pain
Management Notes:									
<u>Number of random general licence checks</u>	+	223	46 (1/4)	23				↓	John Tippin

Management Notes:

(Quarter 1)

This quarter has been very busy and it is expected that we will be back on target during the next quarter.

(JT)

Key Strategic Objective

Objective Status	Title	Objective	Comments	Responsible Officer
Concern	<u>Ensure absence levels remain under 8 days (national upper quartile)</u>	<u>Ensure absence levels remain under 8 days (national upper quartile)</u>	This indicator is now showing concern due to an increase in medium term absence due to significant health problems including cancer, post-operative recovery, clinical depression and muscular-skeletal issues. We are continuing to meet with managers monthly to review absence triggers and to ensure that we are actively managing all cases. This includes specialist input from Occupational Health regarding phased returns and working	Karen Jenkins

Quarterly report 2012-13 Concern Only

Priority: Outstanding Council

Outcome: Efficiencies: financial and time-saving

Key Strategic Objective

Objective Status	Title	Objective	Comments	Responsible Officer
			from home wherever possible. We will continue to keep this measure under close review and SMT have been reminded to ask their line managers to pay particular attention to any increases in short term absence through return to work interviews.	

Not linked to any aims

Forward Plan for Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Month	Topic
25 October 2012	NHS Devon Presentation Sustainable Communities Act – updated arrangements
22 November 2012	Youth service provision (tbc) Quarterly Monitoring of Performance – 2 nd Qtr 2012/13 Update on Police Commissioner election Final report from Community Infrastructure Levy TaFF (tbc)
3 January 2013	
16 January 2013	Special Budget meeting (all day)
24 January 2013	
28 February 2013	Quarterly Monitoring of Performance – 3 rd Qtr 2012/13
28 March 2013	Local Plan production Reviewing the general terms of reference for working parties and task and finish forums, including consideration to formalising some officer meetings and criteria to apply.
25 April 2013	Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

Topics for scoping and allocation to the Forward Plan:

- Updates from each Portfolio Holder

Task and Finish Forums Update

- Community Infrastructure Levy – next meeting 2 October 2012. With further legislation due out in October, this Forum will require a further meeting in November.
- Fees and Charges TaFF to start February 2013