

# **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Board held in the Council Chamber, Knowle, Sidmouth on Wednesday, 30 March 2011**

**Present:**

**Councillors:**

Sara Randall Johnson (Chairman)  
Graham Brown  
Geoff Chamberlain  
David Cox  
Jill Elson  
Ray Franklin  
Stuart Hughes  
Graham Godbeer  
Mike Green  
Andrew Moulding

**Also Present:**

**Councillors:**

Vivienne Ash	Ann Liverton
Roger Boote	Frances Newth
Andrew Dinnis	Helen Parr
Christine Drew	Bob Peachey
Vivien Duval-Steer	Pauline Stott
Chris Gibbings	Graham Troman
Pat Graham	Eileen Wragg
Steve Hall	Steve Wragg

**Also present:**

**Officers:**

Mark Williams, Chief Executive  
Denise Lyon, Deputy Chief Executive  
Diccon Pearse, Corporate Director  
John Golding, Head of Housing and Social Inclusion  
Rachel Pocock, Head of Legal, Licensing and Democratic Services  
Chris Powell, Head of ICT  
Simon Smale, Head of Environmental Health & Health Equalities  
Nigel Harrison, Economic Development Manager  
Charlie Plowden, Countryside Manager  
Diana Vernon, Democratic Services Manager

**Apologies**

**Non-Board**

**Members:**

**Councillors:**

David Atkins  
Ray Bloxham  
Iain Chubb  
Stephanie Jones  
Graham Liverton  
Brenda Taylor

The meeting started at 5.30 pm and ended at 7.33 pm.

**\*187 Public Questions**

The Leader welcomed members of the public present and invited them to address the Board.

Sandra Semple, questioned Council funding given to support of the Business Forum which she suggested should be used for the benefit of smaller businesses. She also questioned the potential prejudicial interest of elected Councillors who were members of the Forum representing their own business interests.

**\*187 Public Questions (cont)..**

The Leader advised that the Council was obliged to communicate with local business and welcomed this opportunity; the funding provided was largely for administrative support. She added that Councillors were entitled to be members of the Forum in their own right.

Emily McIvor raised concerns about the excessive noise of the Tesco pipeline at Seaton where infill work was currently being carried out. The Leader invited the Head of Environmental Health and Health Equalities, Simon Smale to up-date those present on the current situation. He advised that the noise levels had exceeded those agreed with Tesco and pumping materials at night had been stopped. Council Officers were in talks with Tesco to see what steps could be taken to bring the noise levels down to those that had been agreed.

James Semple advised that Tesco and EDDC should not have been surprised by the noise levels generated by the pumping works as he had submitted a paper in advance of the works predicting unacceptable noise levels. The Leader responded by assuring Mr Semple that the paper would have been read and taken into account. The Head of Environmental Health and Health Equalities had been concerned about potential noise levels and that is why the limits had been set.

**\*188 Declarations of interest**

Councillor/ Officer	Minute number	Type of interest	Nature of interest
Chris Gibbings	192	Personal	Responsible for issuing the applicant's instructor's certificate
Graham Brown	200	Prejudicial (left the Chamber during discussion)	Donated land and gave a financial contribution towards the bridge over the River Otter.

**\*189 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Board held on 2 March 2011 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

**\*190 Exclusion of the Public**

**RESOLVED:** that the classification given to the documents to be submitted to the Board, be confirmed, and that the reports relating to exempt information, be dealt with under Part B.

**\*191 Forward Plan**

The contents of the Forward Plan for the period 1 April to 31 July 2011 were noted.

**192 Matters referred to the Executive Board**

A matter had been referred to the Executive Board by the Overview/Scrutiny Committees of the Council for re-consideration in accordance with the Overview/Scrutiny procedure or budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules under Part 4 of the Constitution.

This was a Portfolio Holder decision which had been reported in the Knowledge on 11 March 2011. The matter had been 'called in' and considered at the scheduled meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 16 March 2011.

192 **Matters referred to the Executive Board (cont)..**

The 'called in' Environment Portfolio Holder decision was:

**East Devon Training concession application** – that the applicant be granted a licence to operate the concession: to operate lifeguard and fitness training sessions in Exmouth, Sidmouth and Seaton; jet ski training in Exmouth and kayak safaris across various East Devon beaches, in accordance with the terms set out by the Council Estates Surveyor.

The recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee from its meeting on 16 March 2011 for consideration by the Executive Board is set out below:

1. that the concession be referred back to the Executive Board to consider the consultation carried out with local residents and other interested bodies, including Exmouth Town Council, on the jet ski element of the concession only.
2. that the Council agrees to a future review of the jet ski use from all East Devon beaches to determine if there is any action that the Council can take to alleviate nuisance from jet ski use.

The Committee had not contested the remaining elements of the concession.

The Board was asked to consider any recommendations contained in these minutes relating to the 'call in'.

Before the matter was discussed, Councillor Graham Brown, Environment Portfolio Holder, said that lessons had been learnt from the 'call in'. He felt that a lack of information and communication had led to criticism but that his decision as Portfolio Holder had been made with best intention and on information made available to him. He had been asked to make a Portfolio Holder decision on a training concession and not about jet skis per se. He felt that the discussion and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been useful and that the outcome of the study currently being undertaken in respect of the area including use of personal water craft (jet skis) and the impact on wildlife would be valuable in guiding future wider action.

A number of members of the public had asked to address the Board on the proposed jet ski training at Shelly Beach, Exmouth.

Rupert Ormerod, a member of the Wetland Bird Survey Team covering the Exe Estuary, spoke of the need to protect wildlife in the Lower Exe and the disturbance caused by jet skis. This was a site of Special Scientific Interest and a Ramsar site. These designations required full and specialist consultations (including with English Nature and the RSPB) in respect of any proposed activity in the area. He listed numbers and species of wildlife which used the area and the impact of jet skis. Wildlife (particularly wetland birds using the site to over-winter) was in decline. He advised that the area was a major source of amenity and an economic driver for many local businesses.

Roy Pickering spoke on behalf of the Exmouth Quay Residents' Association. Shelly Beach was dominated by jet ski users and associated trailers and vehicles. No licence was needed to use a jet ski and Shelly Beach was not protected by byelaws which meant there were limited controls available. He described the noise from jet ski use as deafening. He said that the Exe Estuary was a beautiful natural area which was a haven for wildlife. He was concerned about the impact of the noise on the local wildlife and also on local residents, families and visitors who were unable to quietly and safely enjoy the area. He asked for consideration to be given to appropriate byelaws to prevent the use of jet skis in this area.

192 **Matters referred to the Executive Board (cont)..**

Martin Luce said that Belchers Slipway was unsuitable for jet skis. The area was sandy, relatively sheltered and safe and so ideal for family use. However their quiet enjoyment was destroyed by jet ski users.

Ward Members were invited to speak and raised the following points:

- There had not been adequate consultation
- The communication from Natural England should have been circulated to the Board
- The area's usage needed to be controlled to protect wildlife and members of the public
- It was acknowledged that a joint survey of the area by this Council, Exeter City Council and Teignbridge District Council was currently being undertaken
- The importance of the estuary to the ecology and economy of the area
- The use of jet skis was not just limited to weekends
- Usage was currently dominated by jet skiers to the detriment of other users
- Licensing with conditions would be impossible to enforce

The Leader advised receipt of a letter from the Senior Conservation Officer of the RSPB who had written about the RSPB's major concerns with the use of Shelly Beach and the estuary in front of it as a jet ski school. The letter also referred to the legal protection of the area and the Exe Estuary's designation as a Special Protection Area and a Ramsar site. She assured those present that the letter from Natural England had been taken into account by Officers.

The Council had been frustrated in its attempts to progress a suitable byelaw for the area but changes in the law could result in local authorities being given powers to establish local byelaws and this move would be welcomed.

- RECOMMENDED**
- (1) that further consultation be carried out with local residents and other interested bodies, including Exmouth Town Council, on the jet ski (personal water craft) element of the concession only (if pursued);
  - (2) that the Coastal Special Interest Group of the Local Government Association be asked to lobby the Government to establish a relevant byelaw to cover jet ski (personal water craft) use.

\*193 **Minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

The Board noted the minutes of the following meetings:

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|--|------------------|
| • Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee                | 16 February 2011 |
| • Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee                    | 24 February 2011 |
| • Housing Review Board                                       | 3 March 2011     |
| • Service Delivery & Performance Overview/Scrutiny Committee | 9 March 2011     |
| • Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee              | 16 March 2011    |

Councillor Pauline Stott, Chairman of the Housing Review Board drew Members' attention to the apparent unfairness in valuation of the Council's Housing stock; a letter had been sent to Government and local MPs to ask for levels set for East Devon to be reconsidered.

Councillor Andrew Moulding, Portfolio Holder – Resources raised capacity issues in respect of the delivery of the Asset Management Plan and endorsed the interim arrangements recommended at Minute 57 of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee minutes.

**\*193 Minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees (cont)..**

- RESOLVED:** (1) **that the following decisions be noted:**
- Communities O/S Committee Minute 38** (1) that the Housing Team be congratulated for all that they have achieved in delivering new affordable housing in the area;
- (2) that the progress being made in providing new affordable home in the district be noted.
- Communities O/S Committee Minute 39** (1) that the Committee's concerns over the functionality of adopting a single scrutiny model within the Committee structure be noted,
- (2) that the social impact on services as a result of changes to the NHS be referred to the new Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a matter of urgency.
- Housing Review Board Minute 57** that the Board sends its thanks and congratulations to the East Devon Voluntary Support Agency (EDVSA) for securing a funding award for the Heath Park Project.
- HRB Minute 59** (1) that officers be invited to update the property investment plans and the Housing Revenue Account using the new data from the housing stock condition survey results ;
- (2) that a future report be brought to the Housing Review Board on properties of particularly high investment needs and the options available.
- HRB Minute 62** that a series of actions to raise the profile and improve the effectiveness of the Housing Review Board be agreed
- HRB Minute 63** that the performance measures and progress in rolling out Systems Thinking techniques to other areas of the Housing and Social Inclusion Service be noted.
- Service Delivery & Performance O/S Cttee Minute 37** that the report on monitoring performance of the Key Strategic Objectives and Service Projects for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter for 2010/11 be noted.
- SD&P Minute 39** that the report on monitoring performance for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter for 2010/11 for Streetscene be noted.
- SD&P Minute 40** that the report on monitoring performance for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter for 2010/11 for Development Management be noted.
- SD&P Minute 41** that the report on Benefits Service – Performance Measures for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of 2010/11 be noted..
- SD&P Minute 42** that the report on Housing Service – Performance Measures for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of 2010/11 be noted.

**\*193 Minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees (cont)..****(1) that the following decisions be noted (cont)..:**

**Co-ordinating O/S Cttee Minute 51** (1) that it be noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee was clearly aware of the changes in Housing and Council Tax Benefit legislation and satisfied with the steps taken to inform customers;

(2) that a report be presented to a future Overview and Scrutiny Committee if there is subsequent adverse effect on homelessness as a result of the changes in Housing and Council Tax Benefit legislation.

**Co-ordinating O/S Cttee Minute 52** that the final version of the Annual Report be agreed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

**Co-ordinating O/S Cttee Minute 53** that the suggested topics/issues for consideration by Scrutiny be carried forward to the next civic year.

**RESOLVED (2) that the following recommendations be approved:**

**Communities O/S Committee Minute 34** that the Chairman of the Council send a letter of thanks and congratulations to the Open Door Project for all its fantastic community work.

**Communities O/S Cttee Minute 35** that the Service Level Agreement for the East Devon Voluntary Support Agency be approved.

**Communities O/S Committee Minute 36** (1) that in respect of the Sustainable Communities Act, the Council takes no immediate action other than to promote the Barrier Busting website: <http://barrierbusting.communities.gov.uk>

(2) that the Sustainable Communities Act be revisited and given more focus in the new Council year, with consultation being carried out at least once a year.

**Communities O/S Cttee Minute 37** that it be noted that the Localism Bill had potential for generating more community demands on the Council.

**HRB Minute 58** (1) that the appointment of consultants to undertake further financial modelling and assistance in updating the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan be agreed,

(2) that a working group to oversee preparations for the self-financing of council housing be established following elections and appointments to the Housing Review Board in May 2011,

(3) that a letter be sent to the Government and local MPs stating the Board's view that the high valuation of the Council housing stock was unfair and its concerns about the implications of 75% of receipts from sales under the Right to Buy scheme being retained by Central Government.

**\*193 Minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees (cont)..**

- (2) that the following recommendations be approved (cont):**
- HRB Minute 61**
- (1) that the Asbestos Management Plan for Council housing stock at annex A to the report be approved,
  - (2) that an annual budget of £40,000 be approved to ensure the Council was compliant with health and safety legislation and guidance.
- Service Delivery & Performance O/S Cttee Minute 36**
- (1) that the report to the Service Delivery and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Farmers, Fields and Land Drainage Report be circulated to all Town and Parish Clerks;
  - (2) that consideration be given by the new Council in May to forming a Task and Finish Forum to keep a watching brief on flood and drainage issues, particularly on partnership working between authorities and agencies, under the Overview and Scrutiny arrangements.
- Co-ordinating O/S Cttee Minute 57**
- (1) that the interim arrangement to assist the delivery of the Asset Management Plan and project delivery be approved ;
  - (2) that a report be presented to Members setting out a delivery plan for key sites in Exmouth as a first phase review of the District.
- RESOLVED**
- (3) that the following recommendations be referred to Council for approval**
- HRB Minute 60**
- (1) that the revised policy on disabled adaptations to Council housing stock at annex A to the report be approved,
  - (2) that the implementation of charging for adaptation work be deferred until the annual review of the policy in April 2012.
- Co-ordinating O/S Cttee Minute 54**
- (1) that the publication of Councillor attendance at the principal Council Committees be published online from May 2011;
  - (2) that the allowances and expenses claimed by Members continue to be published online;
  - (3) that, subject to the investigation of legal implications to determine the level of consent required, the publication of the Register of Interests be made online from May 2011.

**\*194 Recycling and Refuse Partnership Board Minutes**

Members received and noted the minutes of the meeting of the Recycling and Refuse Partnership Board held on 8 March 2011.

Councillor David Cox, Portfolio Holder – Streetscene advised that performance in respect of missed bins had improved. The extension of the recycling project to include plastics would be deferred to await the outcome of a desk top review to be carried out by SITA.

Councillor Cox took the opportunity of thanking Mike Green for his contribution to the success of the initiative; Councillor Green was not seeking re-election. Councillor Cox also acknowledged Honorary Alderman Ron Mudge's valued contribution; Ron Mudge was stepping down from the Partnership Board.

**\*195 Member Development Working Party minutes**

Members received and noted the minutes of the meetings of the Member Development Working Party held on 21 February and 1 March 2011.

The February meeting had considered feedback from a Councillor survey which was used to influence the content and structure of the welcome/refresher programme following the May 2011 elections. Members of the Working Party had considered the draft programme in detail. The Working Party had previously agreed that learning should be delivered in 'bite sized' sessions and the 3 month draft programme reflected this approach. The programme would be delivered in-house to ensure that it was tailored specifically to the needs of the organisation and to limit costs. The Working Party also agreed that mentoring/peer support would benefit new Councillors and all Councillors intending to stand for re-election would be invited to volunteer to be part of the Peer Support arrangements.

The March meeting had been called to discuss the provision of IT equipment for Councillors; the Portfolio Holder – Communications and the Head of ICT had been invited to the meeting. Members recognised that the Council was increasingly reliant on electronic information and communications, with Councillors needing the tools and ability to access the Council's systems electronically. Although most newly elected Councillors were likely to have their own computer equipment, the Working Party felt strongly that this should not be assumed or that they would be in a position to provide this at their own expense. The Working Party wanted procedures to be in place to make sure that all Members had access to computer equipment and relevant software in order to carry out their roles as elected Councillors.

Councillor Ann Liverton, Member Development Champion re-emphasised the importance of providing Councillors with the right tools to carry out their work and not to assume that they had the means to provide computer equipment themselves. The Portfolio Holder – Communications supported the recommendations of the Working Party in this respect.

**RESOLVED** that the recommendations of the Member Development Working Party (including Welcome/Refresher Programme and the use of 'thin client technology' and the option being given to newly elected Councillors of pre-owned computer equipment), be approved.

**REASON** To ensure that the Welcome Programme suits the requirements of the new Council and that all Councillors have access to electronic information and communication with the longer term intention of significantly reducing print costs and facilitating paperless meetings.

**\*196 Re-instatement of the Economic Development Budget 2011/12**

Members considered the joint report of the Economic Development Manager and Head of Finance seeking the re-instatement of the Economic Development Budget. This had been cut from the 2011/12 revenue budget in order to retain the East of Exeter Growth Point Delivery Team. Since the 2011/12 budget had been approved, the Homes and Communities Agency, Devon County Council and Exeter City Council had agreed contributions to the continued funding of the Growth Point Team in 2011/12. As a result, Members now had the opportunity to re-instate the budget. It was proposed that this would be used to continue funding the Business Improvement Point (BIP) which gave unbiased support to businesses through practical advice, assistance and training and was particularly important during challenging economic times.

Richard Eley, Chairman of the Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce was concerned that the BIP was based in Okehampton, that its performance was not independently monitored and that its direct benefit to East Devon businesses had not been assessed.

**\*196 Reinstatement of the Economic Development Budget 2011/12 (cont)..**

Councillor Graham Godbeer, Portfolio Holder – Economy believed that business support was essential for small businesses, and would be particularly relevant in the next 12 – 18 months. He said that benefits to East Devon businesses had been identified. He would help oversee the work of the BIP together with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Economic Development Manager suggested that it would be helpful to increase business awareness of the benefits of the BIP and what it could provide. Councillor Graham Brown, Chairman of the East Devon Business Forum, supported the re-instatement of the funding and continued support of the BIP for the next year. The Council would assess its value for money and benefits to the local business community to determine whether to fund the initiative in future years.

- RESOLVED**
- (1) that £45,710 be re-instated into the Economic Development budget for 2011/12 in order to continue funding the Business Improvement Point,
  - (2) that the £21,770 consultants' fee budget be not re-instated as no specific commitments had been identified; if required, a report setting out the business case would need to be referred to the Board.

**REASON** To continue to provide independent (impartial) support to small and medium sized local business and promote economic development in the area.

**\*197 Performance Monitoring Report January – February 2011**

Members considered the report of the Communications and Improvement Manager in respect of performance information for the 2010/11 financial year for January to February 2011.

Denise Lyon, Deputy Chief Executive, outlined results of selected performance measures and services. She advised that performance was doing well overall against expectations, with a trend of improvement, indicating good service to our customers. The data identified variations which could then be analysed and steps taken to address.

**RESOLVED** that the performance and proposed remedial action against selected Performance Indicators for the 2010/11 financial year until February 2011 be noted.

**REASON** To reflect the monthly monitoring being undertaken by elected Members on the Council's performance in respect of key Performance Indicators and to take into account proposed remedial action.

**\*198 Community Right to Buy – consultation response**

Members considered the report of the Principal Engineer Surveyor which outlined the introduction of a Community Right to Buy initiative as part of the Decentralisation and Localism Bill. The initiative would give communities new powers to help them save local facilities threatened with closure.

Members were asked to consider the Consultation paper 'Proposals to Introduce a Community Right to Buy – Assets of Community Value' and the proposed consultation response; these documents had been made available on line in advance of the meeting.

**\*198 Community Right to Buy – consultation response (cont)..**

Members noted the process of nominating assets (deemed locally to have community value) for inclusion on a register. The owner of the asset would be advised of the designation and should the owner wish to dispose of the property, the local authority had to be informed. The local authority then had to notify the nominating community group and publicise the proposed sale locally. The arrangements were intended to give community groups a fairer chance to bid to purchase assets.

The Council consultation response included its concerns in respect of the burden of responsibility and administration. The Council would need to have 'an adequate level of financial resource to enable the provision of sufficient resource, including staff, to work with the community groups and affected landowners to implement the requirements of the Bill'.

**RESOLVED** that the Council's consultation response be agreed and submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government.

**REASON** The onus of managing the process would be placed on the Council if implemented, and so this was the Council's opportunity to raise its concerns in respect of the resource implications and the administrative burden.

**\*199 Proposed transfer of land to the Council to contribute to the Withycombe Valley Park, Exmouth**

Members considered the report of the Principal Estates Surveyor in respect of a legal agreement linked to planning approval now granted to the former Hillcrest School building on St Johns Road, Exmouth. This included the transfer of wooded land at the southern end of the site to the Council as a contribution to the establishment of the Withycombe Valley Park. Members noted that the Council's liabilities, inherent with adopting new public open space, would be mitigated for 15 years in terms of maintenance costs by a commuted sum. The area of land in question had been the subject of a detailed Woodland Management Plan.

Local Councillors welcomed the report and acquisition of the piece of land which would complete the 'Green Lung' vision for Exmouth.

**RESOLVED** that the Council adopt woodland at Hillcrest, Exmouth as public open space as part of planning agreement arrangements in connection with the redevelopment of the Hillcrest school site.

**REASON** The proposed transfer of land to the ownership of the Council represents an opportunity to secure a significant addition to the Exmouth Valley Parks and the wider contribution that the Parks could make to the quality of life for residents of Exmouth.

**\*200 River Otter cycle path and footbridge scheme**

Members considered the report of the Countryside Manager giving an up-date on progress in respect of the River Otter cycle path and footbridge scheme. East Devon District Council was the lead organisation for this scheme and was working with partners including the Environment Agency, Ottery St Mary Town Council and Devon County Council, to deliver. Details of the scheme and funding were included in the report. Funding from this Council had been matched by Devon County Council. Sainsbury's supermarket had also provided a \$106 contribution towards the scheme.

**\*200 River Otter cycle path and footbridge scheme (cont)..**

Phase 1 of the scheme (appointment of Project Engineers, design and submission and approval of planning application) had now been completed.

Phase 2 covered the procurement process of appointing contractors and committing capital funds. Six companies had been invited to tender for the scheme with the short list companies of 3 being interviewed for selection. The interview process had included representatives from all the Funders, the Community Steering Group, the Project Engineers, WSP and Ottery St Mary Town Council. The unanimous decision was to appoint Dyer and Butler based on value for money criteria. It was anticipated that following appointment, the scheme could commence on 18 April and be completed on 22 July 2011.

Councillor Cox, Portfolio Holder Streetscene thanked Charlie Plowden, Countryside Manager for his commitment and for effectively co-ordinating and progressing the scheme on behalf of the Council. These comments were supported by the Leader of the Council who welcomed the creation of this safe route to school.

- RESOLVED**
- (1) that the progress of the River Otter cycle path and footbridge scheme be noted;
  - (2) that Dyer and Butler be appointed as the preferred contractor to build the scheme and enable project completion.

**REASON** Members had been provided with an up-date on the scheme which they noted. Dyer and Butler were the preferred contractors and represented good value for money.

**\*201 Exemption from Standing Orders – council housing finance scheme**

Members considered the report of the Head of Housing and Social Inclusion setting out the reasons for an exemption from Standing Orders to enable consultants to be appointed to undertake a further assessment of the Government's proposals to change the current council house finance system. Members had been made aware of the changes at previous meetings and of the Council's intention to take on a share of the national housing debt. The changes had been progressed through the Localism Bill and the publication of implementation guidance. Additional financial advice was needed to help the service prepare for self-financing.

**RESOLVED** that the request for an exemption to Standing Order 1.13 to enable the appointment of Tribal Group to complete the work referred to in the report, be agreed.

**REASON** To facilitate detailed financial modelling as required to assess the impact of the Government's proposals in respect of changes to the current council housing finance system.

**\*202 Exclusion of the Public**

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting as exempt information, is likely to be disclosed and on balance the public interest is in discussing the items in private session (Part B).

**\*203 Land off Combe Hayes, Sidmouth**

Members gave consideration to the report of the Estates Surveyor on a request from a developer to purchase a strip of land from the Council to enable access and development of the adjoining site off Combe Hayes, Sidmouth.

**RESOLVED** that authority be granted to the Estates Surveyor to open negotiations with the developer to agree terms for the disposal of Council land at Combe Hayes, Sidmouth.

**REASON** To give permission to open negotiations with the developer. It was anticipated that the disposal would result in a capital receipt.

**\*204 Mobile and Integrated working**

Members considered the report of the Head of ICT which set out a corporate mobile working solution that would enable officers, customers and Members to communicate and access information remotely. The advantages of this solution included potential reduction in running costs, improved service to customers and a reduction in office space requirements. Members noted the costs involved in setting up the recommended ICT infrastructure in the first phase of the corporate programme and the savings that could be achieved in future phases.

The Portfolio Holder – Communications spoke in support of the proposal, referring to positive evidence from case studies and increased competitiveness in the market which would help achieve value for money. He said that the proposal would achieve improved and quicker communication links between customers and services.

Members recognised that this would be a major investment but one which was justified due to the benefits that would be realised.

**RESOLVED** (1) that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Resources and Communications Portfolio Holders to purchase the ICT infrastructure required to enable development of a corporate mobile working system;

(2) that exemption be made to Contract Standing Orders to enable the purchase of the recommended solution by negotiation with the selected supplier subject to a detailed business case being made and to further legal advice.

**REASON** To commence the process of delivering mobile and integrated working to achieve improved working arrangements and customer service.

Chairman .....

Date .....