



Our annual report for 2011/12

This annual report has been produced by East Devon District Council.
If you have any questions about this report or would like any further
information, please see our contact details on page 19.

All information is correct at time of production.



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We consider requests on an individual basis.

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Foreword

Looking back and to the future



Foreword by

COUNCILLOR PAUL DIVIANI, *Leader of the Council*
and MARK WILLIAMS, *Chief Executive*

This is the Council's Annual Report for 2012. In this report we look back at our performance for the financial year 2011/12 and forward to our plans for the future.

Last year was a challenging year financially. Despite that we maintained the high quality of our frontline services (with a 28 per cent reduction in government funding). Future budgets will inevitably bring further constraints and challenges.

We have taken some significant steps forward with progress in key areas. Significantly, these include:

- As with Devon County Council, our share of the Council Tax is frozen for the third year in a row.
- Consultation on the development of the Local Plan – our planning policy blueprint – continued this year to ensure we deliver homes and jobs for our communities whilst at the same time balancing the need to conserve and enhance East Devon's unique environment.
- Phase One of Cranbrook, Devon's first new town since the middle ages, will see 1,120 homes built, of which 300 will be affordable with a further 100 homes designed to be lower cost open market housing. The development includes a new school, community facilities, new railway station and other than in London, a unique central heating system covering the entire community.
- Regeneration projects in Seaton and Exmouth are proceeding with a number of ambitious projects in partnership with Exmouth Town Council, Devon County Council and the private sector.

As part of our commitment to continue to drive value through great service and low Council Tax, we are intending to replace our offices with a purpose-built sustainable building at no additional cost to the taxpayer.

We hope you enjoy reading this report. Please let us know if you have any questions or comments. East Devon is an outstanding place and we look forward to the continued engagement and support of our residents to achieve great things for the district.

Introduction

We have designed this report to let you know how we performed against the promises we made last year (2011/12).

We've had lots of highlights in the last year – from big changes to how the Housing Service is managed to the cutting of the turf at the Cranbrook new community and the opening of community play areas and outdoor gyms. To keep up-to-date with what we're currently doing, please visit www.eastdevon.gov.uk.

Please see the next page for more of our highlights

More information

The appendix to this report outlines our performance against our key service objectives and performance measures for the last quarter of the financial year 2011/12.

Please see page 19 for information on how to find this information.

Our Council Plan

We have recently developed a new Council Plan which sets out what we want to achieve in the coming years and each year we will let you know what progress we make through an annual report like this one.

Please see page 18 for more information.

MAY

Silver Surfers' Day

Residents of the Council's sheltered housing were able to enjoy events held as part of Silver Surfers' week. There was an opportunity to SKYPE overseas relatives and join in some digital games with local school children.



JULY

Play area opening at the Ham, Sidmouth

East Devon District Council, Sidmouth Town Council and a group of parents and children have worked together to deliver much-needed improvements to the play area, which now includes climbing rocks, a basket swing, a tall spinning feature and a zip wire.

Green Flag

We retained Green Flag awards for Connaught Gardens in Sidmouth and Manor Gardens in Exmouth.

JUNE

Exmouth sports voting

Exmouth Town Council and East Devon District Council invited residents of Exmouth to come along and vote on how they would like to spend £250,000 on sport provision in the town. All the funds available were accumulated from recent Exmouth housing developments.

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JUNE

Cutting the turf at Cranbrook

Ten years of planning paid off in June when partners behind the new community of Cranbrook celebrated an official turf-cutting ceremony, marking the start of Phase One of Cranbrook.



Artists' impression of the new community at Cranbrook

AUGUST

Opening of the new foot bridge at Ottery St Mary

A new bridge for pedestrians and cyclists connecting communities in Ottery St Mary was opened to the public on Bank Holiday Monday in August.



SEPTEMBER

Tour of Britain Cycle Race

The Devon Stage of The Tour of Britain finished in Exmouth and treated crowds to some thrilling action in late summer sunshine in September.



NOVEMBER

11 Million Takeover Day

More than forty East Devon pupils visited us as part of the national Takeover Day where children were invited to say how they would run things if they were in charge.



NOVEMBER

Switch movies at film awards

The films made by our Switch youth project had the honour of being nominated for an award at the annual First Light Awards in London.



HIGHLIGHTS 2011/12

SEPTEMBER

Seaton outdoor gym opens

Lots of residents came out to see the grand official opening of Seaton's eagerly anticipated new outdoor gym, and be among the first to try it out.



DECEMBER

Beer recycling trial

A trial of cardboard and mixed plastic recycling in the village of Beer in the autumn was a success. Now, we are looking at the best options for providing a collection service across the whole of East Devon, based on the findings of the Beer trial.



DECEMBER

Communities Together event

Nearly a hundred people representing East Devon's voluntary organisations, community groups and town and parish councils met together for an event in December organised by East Devon District Council to discuss some of the big issues facing our communities.

Thriving communities

Balanced communities are key to a sustainable future which is why we are driving forward key pieces of work

You told us that by far the most important issue you wanted us to tackle is to help provide affordable housing so that young families and people with low incomes can still afford to live in this outstanding place. We know that balanced communities are key to a sustainable future which is why we are driving forward key pieces of work to support this important priority.

We know how important it is to keep supporting our local economy. The delivery of the developments at the West End of our district is a critical part of our strategy to help create investment and well paid jobs. This will help balance the predominantly low paid work available in our district which mainly comes from the tourism and agricultural industries.

Our achievements

In 2011/12 we:

- exceeded our target of over a hundred new affordable homes, with 148 new affordable homes provided within the district
- delivered seventeen new council homes in Exmouth, Axminster, Lympstone and All Saints
- secured £4.5 million funding for Stowford Rise, Sidmouth and £13 million for Cranbrook
- further reduced homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation
- delivered a new community centre in Sidmouth.

Our promises

Our promises for 2012/13 are to:

- build at least 100 affordable new homes a year
- bring at least ten private sector empty homes back into use
- set a baseline and improve the thermal efficiency of homes in the district
- make sure all the infrastructure is in place for the new homes at Cranbrook
- finalise the Strand redevelopment and the blueprint for the regeneration of Exmouth
- help Seaton achieve its Visitor Centre
- have some of the lowest waste to landfill and highest recycling levels nationally
- complete the E.ON combined heat and power plant to service Cranbrook, Skypark and the Intermodal Freight Terminal
- repeat the district-wide survey to help us track satisfaction over time and make plans to address key issues for residents.

Supporting the local economy in partnership

Our achievements

We achieved the following:

- completion of the Redhays cycling and pedestrian bridge over the M5
- supported the opening of the new Flybe Training Academy
- improvements to Junction 29 and 30 on the M5
- started the Clyst Honiton bypass.

Our promises

Our promises for 2012 /13 are to:

- increase job opportunities by completing the strategic employment site developments in our West End
- hold talks in Honiton, Axminster and Sidmouth to explore regeneration opportunities
- use the natural assets of the District to enhance the visitor and tourism economy
- provide business support and premises for small- and medium-size businesses
- secure good infrastructure (road, rail and broadband) to help business thrive

Priority two

Outstanding environment

Our role is to help residents make the most of this outstanding environment and encourage investment which will enhance our natural assets

We are fortunate to live in such a beautiful part of the country. Our role is to help residents make the most of this outstanding environment and encourage investment which will enhance our natural assets. We also want to encourage cultural and leisure activities to cater for different age ranges and interests.

Our achievements

In 2011/12 we:

- delivered enhancements at the Axe Estuary Wetlands including new classroom facilities and a Tower Hide
- delivered a new cycle path and footbridge scheme in Ottery St Mary
- spent £100,000 throughout the year on modernising public toilets
- retained the two Green Flag awards for Connaught Gardens in Sidmouth and Manor Gardens in Exmouth
- improved our recycling rate which is now over 50 per cent.

Our promises

Our promises for 2012/13 are to:

- continue to fund Leisure East Devon to the tune of £1 million a year
- develop the district's cultural links with schools, partners and income generating projects
- increase visitor numbers through a tourism and marketing campaign
- encourage healthy lifestyles through our play provision, beaches, cycle routes and footpaths
- complete and promote the Axe Estuary Wetlands as a regionally important wildlife destination, attracting 60,000 new visitors
- develop a Local Nature Reserve Strategy and action plan to involve more young people
- complete a green space plan to review our green and open spaces to ensure we are delivering best value and community access through a green space plan.

Excellent services for our customers

Our aim has been to design both our service delivery and forward plans around what matters to our residents and customers

We were judged a 'good' Council under the previous government scheme and have continued from strength to strength since then. Our aim has been to design both our service delivery and forward plans around what matters to our residents and customers. The decisions we make are evidence based and the measures we use tell us whether we've achieved what you said was important.

Our achievements

In 2011/12 we:

- achieved a customer satisfaction ratio of 90 per cent for planning applicants
- completed a review within the Housing Service that has resulted in a more customer focused system for moving into and out of council homes
- updated the main council website to meet customer requirements and suggestions to enable better navigation to information
- restructure of Council's senior management team and implementation of revised terms to help safeguard jobs whilst retaining high degree of staff engagement
- held a successful 'member welcome and refresher' programme following the 2011 elections to support new and existing councillors to do excellent work.

Our promises

Our promises for 2012 /13 are to:

- complete the first phase of introducing mobile technology to officers and members to reduce the use of paper
- explore sharing or outsourcing our support services
- complete the business case analysis for our council office relocation
- maximise our use and sale of assets to fund our priorities for East Devon
- achieve our equality objectives
- increase the take up of our website services
- complete the redesign of all our major services
- improve communications and our knowledge of our customers' needs.

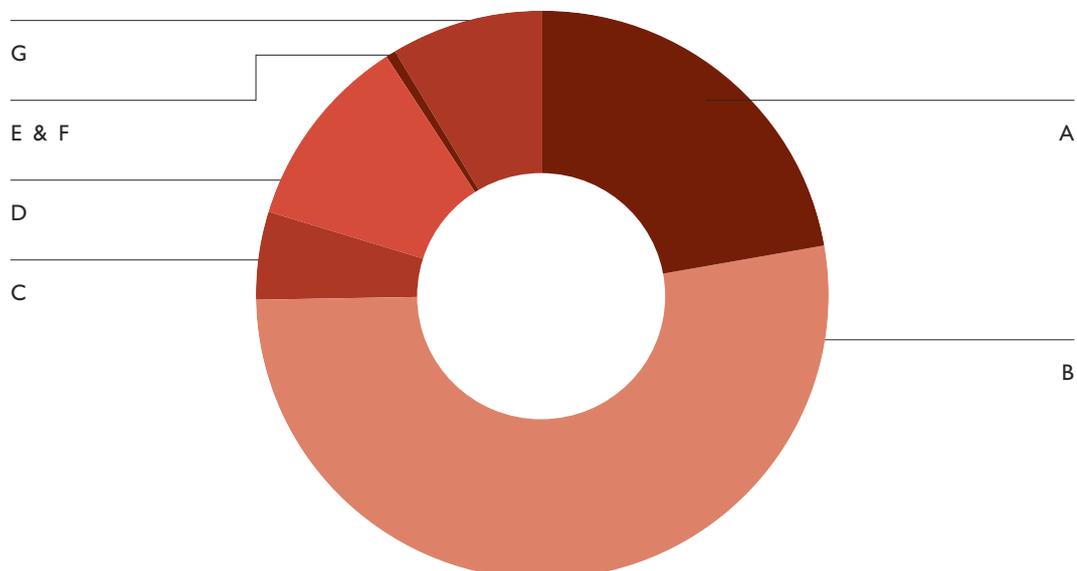
Our financial strategy

Underpinning our priorities is our Financial Strategy. The charts below show where the Council's funding currently comes from and how the money is divided up among different council services.

Where does the money come from?

2011 / 12 BUDGET INCOME

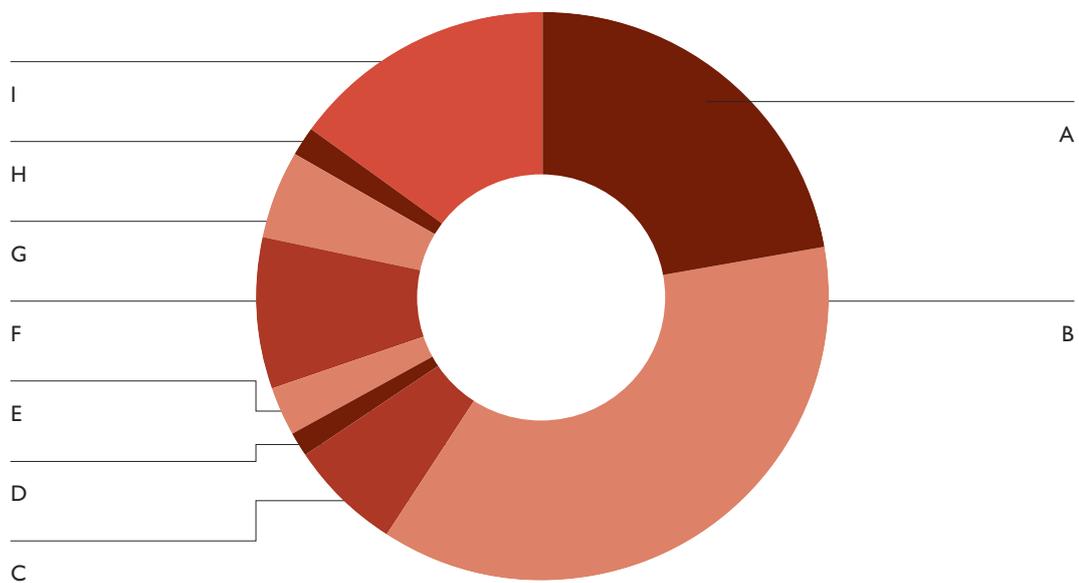
	Source	Income	Percentage of income
A	Council House Rents	18,442,000	22.4
B	Government Grants (includes Housing Benefit subsidy £36 m)	43,090,000	52.4
C	Other grants / contributions	4,224,000	5.1
D	Fees charges	9,058,000	11.0
E	Reserves	66,000	0.1
F	Net interest	344,000	0.4
G	Council Tax	6,950,000	8.5
	<i>Total</i>	82,174,000	100



Where does the money go?

2011 / 12 BUDGET EXPENDITURE

	Source	Income	Percentage of income
A	Council Housing	18,442,000	22.4
B	Other Housing Services	30,206,000	36.8
C	Recycling and refuse collection	5,254,000	6.4
D	Public health	1,281,000	1.6
E	Environment and StreetScene	2,244,000	2.7
F	Planning and economic development	7,056,000	8.6
G	Recreation and tourism	4,107,000	5.0
H	Transport	1,311,000	1.6
I	Other services	12,273,000	14.9
	<i>Total</i>	82,174,000	100



The main points from our financial strategy

In 2011/12 we have operated within the tight budgets set for the year and successfully achieved an overall underspend of £1 million which is a 1 per cent variation against planned expenditure. The savings against the budget have mainly come from additional income received from recycling volumes, better market prices than expected and an increase in income from planning applications. Full details of year end actual expenditure and income against budget can be found in the Cabinet Agenda papers for 13 June 2012.

For 2012/13 we have set a balanced budget where income balances expenditure, setting targets for savings and efficiencies to be achieved through the year. We have the sixteenth lowest Council Tax out of 202 other authorities like ourselves. It is a major challenge to continue to maintain services at existing levels and meet our set priorities. We expect further cuts in government funding to local authorities, having already seen a reduction in funding over the last two years. We will continue to set our budgets in line with our Financial Strategy and the underpinning principles of:

- Direct resources from low to high priority services to meet targets in the Council Plan.
- Decide which services can be better delivered by others, which can be shared and which offer better value when run in house.
- Continue to review our services to make sure we are delivering what matters to our customers in the most efficient manner.
- Where possible buy our services and goods locally and at the best price.
- Invest in the use of technology to reduce running costs.
- Improve our approach to asset management to make sure we have the right buildings and land to enable us to deliver our services.
- Maintain our Council Tax levels within government guidelines.

Our drive, focus, and ambition will be towards working through these challenges and delivering on our promises to keep East Devon an outstanding place

Our challenge will be to deliver cost effective services whilst looking forward with realistic and resilient plans. We have included your views in our priorities and promises and the results are set out in our Council Plan 2012–16. This will be updated regularly as we make progress in achieving our outcomes.

Some of the major and most immediate issues for us include:

- adopting the Local Plan after central government inspection
- establishing the financial viability of an office move to a more sustainable building
- keeping our residents informed about the new universal credit in 2013 whilst preventing homelessness and debt problems
- dealing with the issues arising from the localisation of Council Tax benefit
- making better, more effective use of the Council's assets
- better serving our customers and in particular respond to those who access our services through the Internet
- building and acquiring new council houses
- starting work on the visitor centre in Seaton
- reaching agreement on regeneration in Exmouth
- improving our recycling rates to 60 per cent by including cardboard and plastics in our recycling offer
- achieving the Investor in People Gold Standard in this Olympic year.

Our drive, focus, and ambition will be towards working through these challenges and delivering on our promises to keep East Devon an outstanding place. Our plan only includes work and projects that are achievable and funded.

Finding out more about our performance

If you want to find out more about our performance in 2011/12 please visit www.eastdevon.gov.uk/policy_and_performance. You'll be able to view the appendix to this report that provides more information on our performance against key measures.

Our Council Plan for 2012–16 and our plans for 2012/13

All of these plans are available to view at www.eastdevon.gov.uk/your_council. If you would like to view our plans in another format, please contact us.

How to contact us

If you have any questions or feedback on this annual report or if you would like any further information, please contact us.

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