

Date: 15 October 2013
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To:
Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
(Councillors Tim Wood (Chairman); Graham Troman (Vice Chairman);
Mike Allen; Peter Bowden; Derek Button; David Chapman;
Maddy Chapman; Deborah Custance Baker; Vivien Duval Steer;
Roger Giles; Peter Halse; John Humphreys; Sheila Kerridge;
David Key; Frances Newth; John O'Leary; Brenda Taylor; Chris Wale;
Eileen Wragg; Steve Wragg; Claire Wright)
Portfolio Holders
Chief Executive; Deputy Chief Executives

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday 24 October 2013 at 6.30pm

Council Chamber, Knowle, Sidmouth

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 the 26 September 2013. 4 - 12
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.

Public Question Time, but do not wish to be recorded, please inform the Chairman who will instruct those taking a recording to cease while you speak.

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 mobile phones to silent during the meeting.

Decision making and equality duties

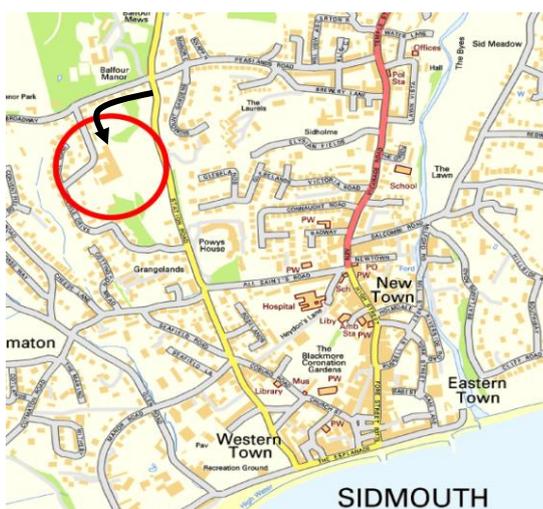
The Council will give due regard under the Equality Act 2010 to the equality impact of its decisions.

- 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.
- Where there is a High or Medium equalities impact, 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.

Getting to the Meeting – for the benefit of visitors



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The following buses all terminate at the Triangle in Sidmouth. From the Triangle, walk up Station Road until you reach the Council Offices (approximately ½ mile).

**From Exeter – 52A, 52B; From Honiton – 52B
From Seaton – 52A; From Ottery St Mary – 379, 387** (Please check your local timetable for times)

For a copy of this agenda in large print, please contact the Democratic Services Team on 01395 517546

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting of the
Overview and Scrutiny Committee held
at Knowle, Sidmouth on 26 September 2013

Present: Tim Wood (Chairman)
Graham Troman (Vice Chairman)

Mike Allen	Sheila Kerridge
Peter Bowden	David Key
David Chapman	Frances Newth
Maddy Chapman	John O'Leary
Deborah Custance Baker	Brenda Taylor
Vivien Duval Steer	Chris Wale
Roger Giles	Steve Wragg
John Humphreys	Claire Wright

Officers:

Richard Cohen, Deputy Chief Executive
Simon Davey, Head of Finance
Henry Gordon Lennox, Principal Solicitor
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

Also Present

Councillors:

David Atkins	Steve Hall
Iain Chubb	Stephanie Jones
David Cox	Andrew Moulding
Paul Diviani	Pauline Stott
Christine Drew	Ian Thomas
Jill Elson	Tom Wright
Graham Godbeer	

Apologies:

Committee Members:

Derek Button	Ray Bloxham
Eileen Wragg	Alan Dent

The meeting started at 6:30pm and ended at 09:57pm.

***22 Public Question Time**

The Chairman welcomed Councillors to the meeting. There were no public questions at this point of the meeting.

***23 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 July 2013 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

***24 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor/ Officer	Minute number	Type of interest	Nature of interest
Cllr Frances Newth	25	Personal	Committee member of Sidmouth Hospital
Ian Thomas	28	Personal	Director on Exeter Science Park Board

***25 Proposed changes to hospital services at Budleigh Salterton and Exmouth**

The Chairman welcomed Tamara Powderley, Dr Richard Mejzner, Dr Tom Debenham and David Basset to the meeting.

Dr Mejzner outlined how the WEB consortium were working to provide more effective and better located key specialism areas, drawing on both national research and local schemes that had received positive feedback. The consortium had already undertaken significant consultation with a view to changing services at Budleigh Salterton and Exmouth hospitals.

The proposed community hub in Budleigh Salterton would involve the combination of health and social care, along with voluntary sector involvement to provide a strong support base for the community. The Budleigh Salterton provision would include access to Age Concern and a memory cafe.

In response to the proposals to reorganise some specialist services such as provision for stroke patients, Members raised issues including:

- Having adequate staffing for community hospitals;
- Positive responses to the Hospital at Home scheme;
- Ensuring quality of staff extended to agency staff who took over once Hospital at Home team leaves;
- Whether the level of beds for stroke patients, once centralised, would remain the same;
- Health involvement in planning for the future especially in regard to the Local Plan and in ensuring there are comments on large scale planning applications.

In response, Members were told of the benefits of centralised scheme for stroke care both in the quality and continuation of care for the patient; and the improved sustainability of staffing for a centralised unit. The provision of beds for stroke patients would be likely to remain at the same level, but the type of bed (for example for acute patient bed) levels may fluctuate according to the demand.

Many Members spoke of positive experiences of the Complex Care Teams and the Hospital at Home scheme. The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes and Communities thanked the WEB Consortium for keeping Members informed and praised the strong communication links in place.

The Chairman thanked the Consortium members for their attendance and asked that they attend in the near future for discussion on wider health issues.

*26 **Transport Infrastructure Investment**

The Chairman welcomed Dave Black, Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment, and Nicola McIntyre of Devon County Council to the committee.

Mr Black gave the committee an overview of the development of the A303, including the findings of the consortium set up by Somerset. Three sections had been identified that would offer value for money with relatively quick delivery at:

- Chicklade Bottom to Mere (projected cost £150m)
- Sparkford to Ilchester (projected cost £50m)
- Ilminster to Honiton (projected cost £50m)

Following discussions with the Minister, Stephen Hammond, the A303 was back on the Government agenda with agreement for a feasibility study of the A303/A30/A358. Mr Black presented to the committee the work streams in place by the County, including an allocation of funding by the County Council for the Honiton to Broadway section of the A303.

Members raised concern over issues with the A303, including:

- Accident blackspots
- High volume of traffic particularly during summer months or when traffic flow was impaired on M5;
- Lack of services available late at night;
- Reporting of accidents not reflecting true accident rate and why accidents occurred;
- Monkton section could be vastly improved by removal of trees lining route.

Whilst Mr Black concurred with the issues concerned, he reminded Members of the criteria by Government for attracting funding, and how modest schemes had been worked on rather than expensive, larger scale schemes that would be more likely to be rejected.

The Members were advised of the representatives that made up the Local Transport Board, and the Devon schemes they had prioritised to draw down funding. Schemes included:

- Tithebarn Link Road at £6.21m;
- Airport Access Road at £1.4m;
- Cranbrook Station at £3.7m;
- Newcourt Station at £1.4m.

Schemes in the pipeline included the A303/Exeter to Waterloo line, which currently had a study underway. This scheme was not yet advanced enough to bid for funds. In response to a question about how the committee could help support the County Council in pursuing the scheme, Mr Black advised that letters of support from local groups (such as Chambers of Commerce) would benefit, once a consensus on the scheme had been reached.

Councillor Mike Allen extended an invitation to Mr Black to meet with Honiton representatives including the Town Council to discuss the strategic approach to Honiton's transport links.

Members appreciated the informative presentation to update them.

***27 Overview of Budget Scrutiny**

Simon Davey, Head of Finance, outlined the currently budget forecast for the medium term. He reminded Members of the continued reductions in Government funding and the current strategy for use of the New Homes Bonus to help meet the shortfall.

The scrutiny of the draft budget for 2014/15 would take a different format for the Committee this year, with a series of presentations from Portfolio Holders to the main Committee covering a large chunk of the budget – Economy and Environment – and further more detailed work by a Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish forum. Portfolio Holders would be presenting their 4% savings proposals at the first meeting of the TaFF on 10 October.

The Chairman outlined the approach of the TaFF in debating the discretionary aspects of the portfolios.

In answer to questions on New Homes Bonus top slicing and changes to retention of 50% of business rates, the Head of Finance assured the committee that risks relating to these two elements had been mitigated.

28 Update from Portfolio Holder for Economy

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Ian Thomas, the Portfolio Holder for Economy. Members were provided with a budget breakdown of the portfolio that helpfully set out the various elements within the portfolio. This included expenditure breakdown and the purpose of each element. Assets were also set out against each element as were staff numbers.

The Portfolio Holder also highlighted a number of areas where work progressed, including:

- Science Park (with particular thanks to Brian Wilkes from the Legal Team, and the Head of Finance);
- Likely representation for the Devon district councils on the LEP;
- Seaton regeneration – including plans for development of workshops;
- Vampire death squid – the term now used describing the monopoly supplier of broadband. The Portfolio Holder’s think tank would now be used to consider this issue.

In response to a question from the Committee on the general review of discretionary activities and the expenditure involved, whilst there was support for gaining the public’s view on the prioritisation of services, other survey findings were available (such as Yougov at a national level; and the results of a recent local residents survey was being compiled). The Committee discussed the other information that may be available, including a pending survey of the business community agreed by the Business Task and Finish Forum. They debated the value in reviewing existing information and forthcoming survey information, alongside examining the discretionary elements, before embarking on further consultation with the public on prioritisation.

RECOMMENDATION: that consultation to establish what services are most important to the public be considered once existing research data has been analysed, and the value of discretionary services has been debated by the Budget Scrutiny TaFF and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

29 **Fees and Charges Task and Finish Forum Interim Report**

The Chairman presented the interim report of the Fees and Charges task and finish forum, outlining the extensive work by the Forum in benchmarking and scrutinising the existing fee structures to reach the recommendations set out in the report. Concern was raised by some of the committee in relation to the percentage increase in some of the charges listed, particularly for those relating to cemeteries.

The recommendations listed in the report were voted on and approved by a majority.

- RECOMMENDATION:**
- (1) Countryside Service:
 - (a) to increase above inflation or to cover significant cost increases for 2014/15 due to the nature of the service objective being educational;
 - (b) investigate as a spend to save initiative shifting the focus of the service to allow the offer of commercial consultation on arboriculture and ecological issues, recognising that this may require additional staff resource in order to maintain the existing service.
 - (2) HomeSafeGuard:
 - (a) to increase above inflation or to cover significant cost increases for 2014/15 due to the nature of the service objective being predominately for vulnerable people;
 - (b) investigate moving the service into the telecare market as a spend to save initiative.
 - (3) Private Water Supplies:
 - (a) increase risk assessment fee by 10% for 2014/15 on completion of inspection of remaining properties on current inspection rota;
 - (b) increase supply sampling charge to from £60 to £70 for 2014/15;
 - (c) review actual cost of inspection of caravan sites in preparation for any legislative change that introduces the requirement for a caravan site licence (based on the assumption that this would attract a charge).
 - (4) No changes to the current levels of charges for Licensing (including Environmental Health function with licensing administered by Licensing) apart from:
 - (a) increase Hackney Carriage and Private Hire fees in line with full recovery of costs;
 - (b) increase Cemetery Fees for 2014/15 as follows:

- 1) Interment (Adult) from £415 to £480
 - 2) Interment (Ashes) from £113 to £140
 - 3) Interment (Scattering) from £78 to £100
 - 4) Exclusive rights of burial (Adult) from £622 to £850
 - 5) Exclusive rights of burial (Ashes plot x 4) from £276 to £350
 - 6) Exclusive rights of burial (Ashes plot x 2) from £156 to £200
 - 7) Exclusive rights of burial (Ashes plot x 1) from £78 to £100
 - 8) Headstone from £155 to £170
 - 9) Flat/foot/kerb stone from £155 to £170
 - 10) Vase/tablet/inscription from £70 to £80
 - 11) Chapel Service from £100 to £120
 - 12) Woodland burial plot from £415 to £960
 - 13) Register search from £25 to £30
- (5) Planning:
Introduce a new charge for letters responding to requests from householders regarding requirement to apply for permission at £35 per written response. Enquiries of a brief nature by phone and at reception to remain free of charge with advice if the response would be substantial enough to require the chargeable written response.
- (6) No changes to the current levels of charges for Building Control due to the competitive nature of the market.
- (7) Streetscene:
a) The following charges are retained at being increased in line with RPI:
- 1) Allotments
 - 2) Benches
 - 3) Boats and Winches
 - 4) Schedule 2 Waste collection
- b) Review of beach hut charges:
- 1) Review demand at end of season before actioning subsequent recommendations;
 - 2) Charges retained at being increased in line with RPI;
 - 3) Note high demand for sites in Budleigh Salterton and review offer at Budleigh Salterton at end of

RECOMMENDATION:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 26 September 2013
2013;

4) Review switch to site only offer and extending terms of lease to year round for 2015/16;

c) Set charge of £25 plus VAT for collection of 3 items under Bulky Household Waste; with a subsequent charge of £10 for each subsequent item with limit on number of items to be decided at an operational level;

d) Review charges for commercial events with Portfolio Holder to incorporate:

1) Full charge for commercial bodies;

2) Concession rate for community and charity events to cover at least the administration charge;

3) Assessment of charging model used by Exeter City Council

e) Make available the hire of a section of Connaught Gardens on a trial basis of up to one event per month during the period April to October, subject to review by the Portfolio Holder to assess feasibility, cost to provide and advertise. It is recognised that, due to the nature of the event market, this may not generate significant income until 2015/16;

f) Increase charge for water taxi operation agreement by 10% for 2014/15;

g) Review actual costs of cleansing toilets in conjunction with asset review;

h) Asset Management Forum to review recovery of costs on sports assets outside of the LED contract, with focus on ability to pay for membership based clubs and community use.

(8) Hire of Knowle building function rooms to retain same charge level with an RPI increase for 2014/15 due to limited life of the building within Council control.

(9) Continue approach of 5% increase in office rent rates at the East Devon Business Centre and maintain conference and training room hire at current rates.

30 **Pre-application advice - confidentiality**

Jessica Bailey, a member of the public, asked why the document released in April 2013 called “Probity in Planning” had not been referenced in the report before committee. She spoke of the importance of making pre-application information available to the public, and that she had been advised that all pre-application information was classed as “confidential” and not considered on a case by case basis for release as indicated in the report. She also advised the committee that the complaint referred to the Information Commissioner referenced in the report was now being investigated by the Information Commissioner.

The Committee were reminded that the report had been produced, as directed, on the issue of confidential information contained within pre-application advice, not on the topic of pre-application advice generally.

Councillor Roger Giles drew the Committee’s attention to the “Probity in Planning” document, which had recently been endorsed by the Standards Committee. The document clearly stated that written record of pre-application discussion must be placed on the planning file available for public inspection. The report related specifically to confidential and commercially sensitive information within pre-application discussions which, to release, would breach the code of conduct for both Members and officers.

In answer to a question, the outcome of the investigation of the Information Commissioner into the complaint about the application of an exemption to an Freedom of Information request would not necessarily result in the IC advising on the Council’s policy on releasing pre-application advice. Members discussed monitoring the availability of pre-application notes on planning files.

A proposal was made and seconded that pre-application discussion note(s) should be placed on the file as a public record; if there is a legitimate reason for confidentiality regarding a proposal, a note of the non-confidential issues raised or advice given can still normally be placed on the file to reassure others not party to the discussion. The vote was not carried.

A proposal to await the outcome of the IC investigation before revisiting the issue of pre-application advice was made and seconded and was carried, with the recorded vote as follows:

For	Against
Frances Newth	Claire Wright
John Humphreys	Roger Giles
Sheila Kerridge	Mike Allen
Peter Bowden	Brenda Taylor
Chris Wale	
Vivien Duval Steer	
David Chapman	
Maddy Chapman	
Graham Troman	

RESOLVED: to await the outcome of the IC investigation before revisiting the issue of pre-application advice

*31 **Performance Monitoring Quarter One 2013/14**

Red indicator on the percentage of minor applications determined within 8 weeks was noted and Members felt that this should be drawn to the attention of the Cabinet.

*32 **Forward Plan**

An update on the office relocation project to the Committee was requested; following advice the Chairman sought agreement from the Committee that this should be added to the forward plan for the 30 January 2014 meeting.

A request was made to schedule in the outstanding items on the listing and to add in consideration of the Green Spaces Strategy.

Chairman Date

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL REVENUE ESTIMATES 2013/14

ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

The Environment Portfolio covers culture, leisure facilities and countryside, health and safety, environmental health and car parks.

	Discretionary	Mandatory	Discretionary	Discretionary	Mandatory/Statutory	Mandatory	Discretionary	Total
Service	Sports Centres & Swimming Pools	Public Health Services	AONB & Countryside Teams	Arts Development	Crime and Disorder	Licensing	Car Parks	Environment Portfolio
Employees		599,040	484,760	85,480	41,610	162,600	461,360	1,834,850
Recharged Capital Salaries			(30,970)					(30,970)
Premises	180,820	70	17,700	23,790		730	425,630	648,740
Transport		57,820	36,030	1,000	2,640	8,900	50,730	157,120
Supplies & Services	957,990	137,540	142,930	33,550	10,640	23,520	163,290	1,469,460
Support Services	178,160	199,780	99,090	31,520	9,990	212,070	350,650	1,081,260
Total Expenditure	1,316,970	994,250	749,540	175,340	64,880	407,820	1,451,660	5,160,460
Income	(16,720)	(47,200)	(264,140)	(17,710)	(9,500)	(172,830)	(3,524,500)	(4,052,600)
Less: Recharges to Other Services		(139,350)	(116,460)	0		(242,950)		(498,760)
Net Expenditure	1,300,250	807,700	368,940	157,630	55,380	(7,960)	(2,072,840)	609,100
Loan Repayment								0
Capital Charges	511,590	19,640	1,170		0		17,230	549,630
Net Expenditure	1,811,840	827,340	370,110	157,630	55,380	(7,960)	(2,055,610)	1,158,730

Service / Events	Provision of 3 swimming pools, 7 sports centres, 1 tennis centre, 2 tennis courts, 7 football pitches, 4 rugby pitches, and 1 cricket pitch	800 food safety inspections, enforcing 65 animal licenses, scrap metal and skin piercing licences, dog warden service, pest control, air and noise pollution, drainage and water supply inspection and testing	Promotion of environmental education including working with schools, 12 Nature Reserves, 6 tree preservations and 108 conservation tree orders	Arts development and Thelma Hulbert Gallery	Support for community safety activities: coordinating positive interventions, use of Acceptable Behaviour and Anti Social Behaviour Orders	Admin and enforcement of 20 gaming, 8 street trading, 1 sex establishment, 168 lottery, 65 animal/zoo and 1,300 alcohol sales and entertainment licences	42 pay and display car parks and 7 free car parks, on street car parking enforcement on behalf of Devon County Council
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		Food safety & occupational health	Promotion of Environmental education	6 Exhibitions annually	Coordinates positive interventions, use of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts & Anti Social Behaviour Orders		
		Drainage & water supply issues		40 schools workshops			
		Air & noise pollution, environmental crime		Funding for arts development projects.			
		Pest control		6 public workshops			
		Dog warden service contract					

Assets	3 swimming pools	N/a	12 Nature reserves	Thelma Hulbert Gallery	CCTV	Licensing software	42 Pay and Display car parks
	6 sport centres		AONB's				7 free car parks
	1 tennis centre						3 owned but not operated
							62 Car park ticket machines + software

Customers	LED would have info	800 food safety inspections	6 tree preservation orders	6000 Visitors 11/12		168 lottery licenses	9,107 penalty notices 11/12
			108 conservation trees determined	20 designer/makers selling goods		1,300 personal alcohol licences	4,735 Annual permits 11/12
			2,000 school children			1,300 premises licences	
						8 Street Trading consents	
						20 betting /gaming/gambling permissions	

Staff Numbers	0.0	17.1	13.6	2.9	1.0	5.5	17.2	57.3
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Item 9

Points that need to be considered for any discretionary activity or service.

1. Is the activity essential or is it something that helps to fulfil one or more of the Council's key priorities?
2. Is the activity something that either has to be done by the Council or is the Council best fitted to carry it out?
3. If the answer to the above two questions is not necessarily yes then consider the following issues.
 - A) Is the activity necessary or desirable for residents?
 - B) Is the activity very popular with residents or visitors?
 - C) Are the number of users sufficient to justify the cost of the activity?
 - D) Can the extent (and therefore cost) of the activity be reduced?
 - E) Can the activity be run by someone else? (e.g. Town or parish council, charitable group, sports group)
 - F) Is it really necessary to spend the sums currently being consumed by the activity?
 - G) Are there other groups who may be prepared to make a contribution (or make an increased contribution) to the running of the activity?

There should be no assumption that because a service or activity has been run by the Council for the past ten or more years that that is sufficient justification for its continuation by the Council

Agenda Item 12

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

24 October 2013



Overview and Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan 2013/14

Date of Committee	Report	Lead Officer
21 November 2013	Consultation on Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for Devon Budget discussion Environment – Streetscene Final report Fees and Charges (tbc) Performance monitoring Quarter 2 2013/14	Martin Hutchings DCC Cllr Iain Chubb Cllr Tim Wood
2 January 2014		
15 January 2014	Special meeting on draft budget and service plans for 2014/15	
30 January 2014	GP Consortium report back on implementation of health reforms Office relocation project update	Richard Cohen
27 February 2014	Poltimore House update presentation (tbc) Performance monitoring Quarter 3 2013/14	
27 March 2014		
24 April 2014	Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report	

Topics for scoping and allocation to the Forward Plan or to Task and Finish Forum:

Proposed date	Topic
Start once Inspector's report published	Review of production process of Local Plan
January 2014	National Parks research findings and debate
February 2014	New waste contract 2016
On completion of TaFF	Business Task and Finish Forum final report
As and when available	Updates from Portfolio Holders
January 2014	Crime and Disorder update, including visit from Police Area Commander

March 2014	Council relationship with LEPS
February 2014	Reviewing the general terms of reference for working parties and task and finish forums
To scope and allocate	Improving communication with Ward Members and Town and Parish Councils on District Council work/events/consultations

Notes of a Meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Forum held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 10 October 2013

Present:	Forum Members:	Other Councillors:
	Tim Wood (Chairman)	Ray Bloxham
	Geoff Pook	Phil Twiss
	Ken Potter	Graham Troman
	Tony Howard	Andrew Moulding
		Jill Elson
		Stephanie Jones
		Pauline Stott
		Iain Chubb
		David Cox
		Ian Thomas

Also present: Richard Cohen – Deputy Chief Executive
Andrew Ennis – Environmental Health and Parking Services Manager
Simon Davey – Head of Finance
Ed Freeman – Development Manager
John Golding – Head of Housing
Andrew Hancock – Streetscene Manager
Nigel Harrison – Economic Development Manager
Karen Jenkins – Corporate Organisational Development Manager
Debbie Meakin - Democratic Services Officer
Charlie Plowden – Countryside and Leisure Manager
Rachel Pocock – Corporate Legal and Democratic Services Manager
Chris Powell – Corporate ICT Manager

Apologies: Mike Allen
Peter Bowden
Philip Skinner

The meeting started at 10.05am and ended at 13.27pm.

1. Public Questions

There were no questions from the public.

2. Overview of budgets

Simon Davey, Head of Finance, outlined the currently budget forecast for the medium term.

The scrutiny of the draft budget for 2014/15 would take a different format for the Committee this year, with a series of presentations from Portfolio Holders to the main Committee covering a large chunk of the budget – Economy and Environment – and further more detailed work by this forum, beginning with presentations on 4% savings proposals from each portfolio.

2. **Overview of budgets (continued)**

In response to questions on the New Homes Bonus, he confirmed that a reserve was in place should a decision be made by Government to cut the bonus that would give two years to recover from that decision.

3. **Equalities implications**

Karen Jenkins, Corporate Organisational Development Manager, reminded Members of their obligations under equalities legislation whilst shaping the budget.

She gave account of recent judicial reviews, and the principles from case law that must be applied, known as the “Brown principles”:

- Decision makers must be made aware of their duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations across all the protected characteristics.
- The duty to give due regard must be fulfilled *before* the decision is made.
- It involves a conscious approach and state of mind.
- It must be exercised in substance, with rigour and is not about ticking boxes.
- It is a continuing duty.
- It is good practice to keep an adequate record showing that the equality duties have been considered and decision makers have pondered relevant questions.

In response to debate over equalities issues, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Business reminded Members that having consideration for all in the community did not stop Members making a decision, and cited an example.

4. **Portfolio Holder presentation: Corporate Business**

No direct budgets to influence but working corporately across Portfolios and the Council.

Strategic Transformational projects are ongoing, working particularly with Corporate Services Portfolio Holder (open for business web channel, Members paperless agenda (paperlite strategy), worksmart , etc)

Specific projects were underway to achieve efficiencies and savings; examples given included reducing printed agendas for the public, printing of entire minute books at Council, and production of the Year Book.

Debate took place over the paperlite strategy, including:

- Need for staff as well as Members to have correct technology at meetings;
- Benefits to partially sighted in using technology to scale up and have good contrast for text;
- Legal obligations to provide a “paper copy” for the public;
- Storage limitations for the Council for paper copy.

5. Portfolio Holder presentation: Corporate Services

The efficiency savings and increased target for 2014/15 is £71,590, which breaks down into the following proposals:

- Now the legal team has filled its vacancies, more income can be obtained from recovering a greater contribution from third parties towards the costs to the council of preparing legal agreements (£4,725);
- Savings on print for committee agendas over 13/16 period if Members agree their 'Paperlite' strategy (£5,200)
- No longer co-opted members on Standards Committee (£500)
- Anticipated saving on taxis for members (£200)
- Members' training (£1000), members' catering [does not affect committees £500], reductions in cost of officer travel for committee support (£240)
- No need to advertise Forward Plan in newspaper (£2,500)
- Reduction to hours in Organisational Development following flexible working requests (£20,490)
- Minor savings across budget heads with the main saving being the appointment of an apprentice in place of an election officer (£11,200)

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services was confident that the remaining £15K of the target would be found through the paperlite strategy.

6. Portfolio Holder presentation: Economy

The Portfolio Holder for Economy set out the priorities for his portfolio, including:

- Strengthening the economy of East Devon, promoting good growth and the benefits of growth across the District
- Delivering a prompt and effective planning service
- Strategic planning functions including Local Plan preparation, spatial evidence gathering and S106/CIL acquisition
- Supporting SME start up and growth – business advice, business units, business communication and research
- Cost effective, efficient management and income generation over EDDC estate and premises
- Optimising EDDC assets to benefit our customers and secure returns
- Improving skills, employment access and earning power

The efficiency savings and increased target for 2014/15 is £143,750, which breaks down into the following proposals:

- Elizabeth Hall Cost Centre – This annual sum is no longer required following demolition of hall and toilets (£13,500)
- One off 4% reduction in planned maintenance going forward (£9,600)
- Property Services - Apprentice to replace retiring Grade 6 post (£11,000)
- Cease funding of maintenance of CCTV systems – Exmouth and Sidmouth (£26,000)

6. Portfolio Holder presentation: Economy (continued)

- East Devon Business Forum – EDDC contribution is no longer required following cessation of EDBF activities (£5,000)
- Renegotiate and reduce BIP Service Level Agreement (£10,000)
- Cease funding Exeter and Heart of Devon Economic Partnership (£10,000)
- Development Management – increased fee income (£60,000)

Some debate took place over the impact of withdrawing funding of CCTV systems. The Council had a duty under the Crime and Disorder Act to work with partners to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, but no alternative suggestions to the CCTV in place was provided to the Forum.

7. Portfolio Holder presentation: Environment

The Portfolio Holder for Environment set out the priorities for his portfolio, including:

- Working to maintain our outstanding environment, improve the health and wellbeing of residents and communities.
- Efforts directed towards people and place ensuring that our residents live, work and enjoy the outstanding place of East Devon.
- Looking at ways of improving the efficiency and quality of the services and 'doing more with less'.

The efficiency savings and increased target for 2014/15 is £271,600, which breaks down into the following proposals:

- Environmental Health budget reduction (£10,000)
- Review car park permit charges for 2014/15. Permit income is around £450,000 per annum and there is still significant headroom to increase permit charges across the board and retain their attractiveness as a value for money option (£45,000)
- Review the reserved parking charges for Sidmouth's Mill Street Car Park. A market rent for this car park could generate significant income (£20,000)
- Commence charging in the car park adjacent to the Anchor Public Housing in Beer (£10,000)
- Cease providing the Ham east car park free to the Sidmouth Folk Festival (£2,000)
- Provide a daily cash and cheque collection and delivery service between EDDC income and payments team at the Knowle and Lloyds Bank in Sidmouth (£2,000)
- Implementing premium charges for motor home parking in designated 50% larger parking bays to allow daytime parking only but at certain locations to also allow overnight parking (£500)

7. Portfolio Holder presentation: Environment (continued)

- **Countryside** - Efficiency savings: £10,300 for rent & rates for the Axe Riverside Depot Unit 14; £905 – 4% saving from 36042 Nature Reserves budget; £905 – 4% saving from East Devon AONB funding; increased income: £4,175 from events, sponsorship, grants for 36042 Nature Reserves budget (£16,285)
- Thelma Hulbert Gallery to increase its income by £2,060 through shop sales, sponsorship and grants; Manor Pavilion Theatre to increase its income by £3,693 through tickets sales and takings (£5,753)
- Raising hackney carriage/private hire fees in 2014/15 fees in line with full recovery of costs and cemetery/burial fees, as set out in Fees and Charges TAFF interim report of September 2013 (£7,830)
- Not automatically applying the 3% rpi increase across the entire Streetscene budget portfolio (around £8m). RPI only applied where it is required, such as fuel costs and the Refuse Contract. For other cost centres no RPI will be applied for 2 years. Delivered through good procurement control, careful monitoring of spend and a ‘thrifty’ approach to making materials last: **£54,300 2014/15, £48,300 2015/16, £0 2016/17**
- **Play revenue budget.** Improvement works and equipping new play areas was historically funded from the capital budget. Ongoing improvement works and maintenance costs are now on the revenue budget, which are being managed within a smaller budget. Any major works or refurbishments will be put through as capital bids (£20,000)
- **Beer Head Toilets.** EDDC pays Beer Head Caravan Park an amount each year so that it will make its toilets available for public use. EDDC could stop paying this contribution or reduce it in-line with the new Community Toilets scheme for Exmouth (proposal to pay businesses between £200 - £500 p.a. £3320 p.a. Total £9960 over 3 years (reduces to £8460 over 3 years if Community Toilets subsidy is still paid) (£2,820)
- **Branscombe toilets** are located on a beach not owned by EDDC, surrounded by private land. EDDC does not maintain anything else in this vicinity. The toilets are situated on the edge of a private car park. The toilet cleaner who did 2 hrs a day here has retired, so EDDC now have to cover this by stretching other resources. It would seem sensible to transfer the toilets to the Sea Shanty who are the main beneficiaries or the Parish Council (£13,745)
- **Seaton Hole & Chine toilets.** EDDC maintains and operates public toilets at both the Chine cafe and Seaton Hole. We believe there is an opportunity to re-negotiate the leases of both cafe owners to include the responsibility for toilet provision. To make this offer attractive to the businesses it is suggested that they be allowed to include the current toilet space within their internal cafe space, improving their cafe offer and provide new unisex cubicles in place of the existing large toilets (£10,200)

7. Portfolio Holder presentation: Environment (continued)

- Employment of Recycling & Waste Contract Manager instead of using consultant as well as a reduction in working hours within the Waste Management Team for one WMO from 37hrs to 30hrs per week. This efficiency has already been made but is not yet in the 2014/15 budget (£12,270)

8. Portfolio Holder presentation: Finance

The Portfolio Holder for Finance set out the priorities for his portfolio, including:

- Ensure the Council sets balanced budgets and manages its finances:
 - On target to meet required savings/income generation to balance budget over next 3yrs – under current assumptions!
 - Recent endorsements in financial management; Peer Review findings & Grant Thornton Financial Resilience Report.
- Proactively manage key financial risks:
 - Local retention of business rates – close monitoring
 - Local Council Tax Support – close monitoring
 - Government deficit reduction policy & other Government proposals effecting Local Authorities finances – ensure effects are reflected in Medium Term Financial Plan.
- Asset Management Forum priorities
 - Revised strategy to published shortly
 - Councils assets linked to regeneration
 - Exciting projects coming to reality – industrial sites
 - Cranbrook

The efficiency savings and increased target for 2014/15 is £59,920, which breaks down into the following proposals:

- Non replacement of Benefits Training Officer post at the point at which the current post holder decides to leave. Responsibility of training has switched to within the team, by team leaders (£18,000)
- Cash & Cheques from Knowle to be delivered to local bank by EDDC staff. This has saved using security contractor who banked in Andover, so banking credited now a day earlier (£9,000)
- Housing Benefit reviews and tribunals are currently undertaken using an officer previously employed by Exeter City Council now operating as a private contractor. By the redistribution of work and training of an existing officer this work can be undertaken in house (£8,000)
- Restructure of Housing Benefit Fraud Team (£11,200)
- Revised procurement arrangements for counter payments saving £8,500, credit card charges £21,000, reduced down to £16,700 assume 20% decline in use. Setup costs are estimated at £6k (£19,200)
- New BAC's system; significant capital saving on project and minor annual savings (£1,100)

9. Portfolio Holder presentation: Strategic Development and Partnerships

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Partnerships set out the priorities for his portfolio, including:

- Strategic Development and Partnerships includes both regeneration priorities, investment promotion activity and major regeneration partnership activity
- Cross-border, joint working and wider partnership with neighbouring authorities, government, private sector, funding and investment opportunities
- Strategic planning functions including Local Plan preparation, spatial evidence gathering and S106/CIL acquisition
- Delivery of Cranbrook and West End employment sites and infrastructure
- Regeneration priority projects and locations including target towns – Exmouth, Seaton and additional focus emerging on Axminster
- Securing external funding and investment

The efficiency savings and increased target for 2014/15 is £32,360, which breaks down into the following proposals:

- Growth Point Team – additional external funding can offset EDDC budget contribution for 2 yrs in the expectation that successful access to further funding streams will continue beyond two years (£10,000)
- Major Regeneration Project Budget – 2 yr savings on current budget allocation with reasonable expectation of capital and revenue receipt from further major asset realisation (£10,000)
- Introduction of CIL charging schedule will generate a 5% admin fee from charges. The fee will fund additional staffing requirement and offset some existing costs (£20,000)

10. Portfolio Holder presentation: Sustainable Homes and Communities

The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes and Communities set out the priorities for her portfolio, including:

- Continuing to move costs into the HRA where these can be justified i.e. housing enabling, housing register (2673 households currently registered);
- Continuing priority in delivering more affordable housing, preventing homelessness, and maintaining, improving and adapting the housing stock (public and private).
- Work towards improving the energy efficiency and safety of homes and supporting people with special needs

The efficiency savings and increased target for 2014/15 is £57,790, which breaks down into the following proposals:

- **Homelessness** - Termination of CHA Smartmove contract in September 2013 has enabled the private rented sector financial assistance and support service to be brought in-house. This approach was considered by SMT in May 2013 and supported (£25,000)

10. Portfolio Holder presentation: Sustainable Homes and Communities (continued)

- Current contract with Independent Futures (Devon and Cornwall Housing Group) for the provision of temporary accommodation at Gissage House, Honiton includes reimbursement of void costs (times when rooms are empty). The budget includes a £15,000 provision for voids. Current performance is good with minimum voids. Service is confident that it can reduce the budget by £5,000 as void costs can be maintained below £10,000 annually (£5,000)
- **Home Safeguard** - Traditionally held significant levels of stock and have an annual budget of £95k for the installation of new equipment, breakdown, replacements and consumables. By moving to a 'just in time' system of stock control, recycling equipment and improved procurement, reduction can be made to the annual budget (£15,000)
- **Home Safeguard** - Continuing revised charging structure (£1,920)
- **Private water supplies** - Service Level Agreement for private water supply sampling with a private contractor to complete 300 samples per year, at £40 per sample currently in place. The SLA is renewable annually. By bringing this service back in-house and providing training to one Technical Officer (TO) will produce a saving (£10,000)
- **Empty homes** - The budget set for this role was £19,000, in anticipation of an increase; however the SLA 2013/14 is for £17,171. Sustainability of this saving will depend on the negotiations year on year for this role with Exeter (£1,829)
- **Affordable warmth** - The Devon Affordable Warmth Officer was a shared cost (across Devon) and the role has become defunct and therefore this cost can be offered up as a saving. The post is vacant, unlikely to be rejuvenated and our contribution was circa. £2,200 (£2,200)

11. Focus on Economy Portfolio

Councillor Tony Howard took the role of Chairman from this point of the meeting following the departure of Councillor Tim Wood.

The Portfolio Holder for Economy outlined the demographic issues facing the District Council, ranging from youth unemployment to care of an elderly population. He outlined a number of approaches to promoting growth and driving change that were key to helping the economic health of the district improve. He asked the Forum to think wider than the 4% savings target and look to other initiatives that would help generate additional income.

The Economy portfolio covers:

- Building Control (33% mandatory; 67% discretionary)
- Corporate Buildings and security
- Economic Development (discretionary)
- Public Halls, Pavilions and Cinemas (discretionary)
- Disability Access (mandatory)

11. Focus on Economy Portfolio (continued)

- Markets (discretionary)
- Property services
- Beach Properties (discretionary)
- Industrial sites (discretionary)

Debate took place over a number of the portfolio elements, including:

- Large recharge element for economic development – this covered the time of the professional estates officers. A further breakdown of recharges to show the cost element on economic development and property services was requested;
- The majority of the economic development work relates to management of the Council's assets in relation to the Asset Management Forum priorities;
- Opportunity to maximise income by increasing industrial units available;
- Regular rent reviews;
- Opportunities for new businesses who did not have three years audited accounts were provided by the Council.

Members discussed the need to balance maintaining the outstanding environment of the district whilst offering opportunities to businesses.

Environment Portfolio Holder Update – Environment (not streetscene)

An update from Councillor Iain Chubb on the work in his portfolio.

I think we all agree - East Devon is a great place to live in and a great place to visit.

As Portfolio Holder for Environment I have the sometimes tricky job of balancing the need to protect and improve this outstanding environment with a pressing need to promote economic development in East Devon.

Our health, quality of life and economic prosperity are all dependent upon this high quality environment and we do of course have an Environment Strategy that sets out our approach.

In essence we see our role as making sure that the environment is being protected, that where possible it is being improved and that its value to the economy is properly recognised.

Most of you will know something about what we do day-to-day. I would however like to take this opportunity to just give you all a flavour of the breadth of my portfolio, to remind you of some of the key issues we are now facing and highlight some of our past achievements and plans for the future.

◆ Public Health Services

We believe that our wellbeing is influenced not only by the general appearance of the district but also the quality of the air we breathe, the cleanliness of the water we drink, the cleanliness of the sea in which we might swim, the food we eat, and our right to enjoy our homes without the unreasonable interference of noisy, inconsiderate or antisocial neighbours.

We believe that a clean and safe environment also attracts business investment. Our Environmental Health team makes sure that local businesses produce safe food and protect the safety and welfare of both their customers and their staff. They also work to ensure that the balance of the potentially conflicting needs of residents and businesses is retained whenever there are new developments in an area. We strive to produce an environment in which businesses can operate on a level playing field without fear of being undercut.

Every day our officers work tirelessly behind the scenes to monitor and control a wide range of environmental health and safety safeguards to protect all of those things that nowadays most of us simply take for granted.

Services are provided by the Environmental Protection Team and the Commercial Premises Team.

The Work of the Environmental Protection Team

- Local Air quality management (the team monitor air pollution levels at several key locations across East Devon and issue environmental permits that restrict pollution emissions from a number of industrial processes)
- Licensing – the team is consulted on the likely impact of new and altered licenses (typically for their views on how to prevent public nuisance and to protect public safety in licensed premises). They also investigate complaints when problems arise.

- Planning Consultations – the team works closely with the Council’s planning officers primarily to make sure that new development does not happen until its environmental impact has been properly thought through and given proper consideration.
- A range of dog control services are provided through both in house staff and a contractor and include routine inspections to ensure that animal boarding and breeding establishments are safe and clean, patrols to ensure that dog control orders are being properly complied with, investigations into allegations of dangerous dogs and taking steps to ensure that stray dogs are taken into custody and rehomed.
- Officers deal with a range of requests from the public to help them sort out problems with noise nuisance including noise from domestic property, commercial premises and building sites.
- They also look into a range of other public health nuisances including smoke, odour, dust and accumulations of rubbish.
- They regulate contaminated land
- They are responsible for ensuring that land owners and occupiers take proper steps to control pests and can step in where appropriate action is not being taken
- They also deal with the funerals of the perhaps surprising number of people who die in East Devon each year with no one else able to make arrangements for a burial or cremation.
- Bathing Water Quality is tested by the Environment Agency and the team job is to provide advice to the public as to whether or not that water is safe to bathe in.
- The team visits small rural communities to carry out a programme of neighbourhood assessments. This is a popular initiative and each year they identify local issues, tackle those issues in partnership with other agencies and then provide feedback to the community as to what has been done.
- The team has also begun to work in partnership with the Director of Public Health at Devon County Council to explain how the basic safety, health and hygiene work they are doing on a day to day basis continues to tackle the underlying causes of health inequalities
- Finally there is always an experienced Environmental Health Officer on call outside normal office hours. This officer is available to deal with all Environmental Health

emergencies ranging from a defective noisy burglar alarm that is keeping the neighbourhood awake through to a major environmental incident.

The way the work is done.

The team comprises 1 Principal Environmental Health Officer, 2 EHOs and 3 Technical Officers, along with a dog warden contract. Temporarily there is no in-house pest control service. This is under review but officers continue to provide advice and to investigate complaints about untreated pest infestations.

<i>Service Requests (Winter/Summer)</i>	<i>12/13 W</i>	<i>12 S</i>	<i>11/12 W</i>	<i>11 S</i>	<i>10/11 W</i>	<i>10 S</i>	<i>09/10 W</i>	09 S
Noise	412	425	403	490	441	532	500	570
Pests	144	126	246	153	113	140	112	141
Planning	201	178	222	152	160	148	171	108
Smoke	55	53	62	49	56	77	64	75
Cont Land	36	42	49	18	37	23	44	22
Licensing	102	179	63	51	37	27	22	
Other	514	399	547	391	539	484	418	408
Total	1464	1719	1692	1537	1786	1775	1760	1594

The figures show that the 12 month average over the past 4 years has been **3331** service requests.

1. Environmental Protection Team – Collective Objectives 2013/14

1. To develop the team's role in the **Public Health Agenda** work by attending and contributing to the EDDC PH Group, and developing ideas, projects and events.
2. To continue to work with others to ensure that **Bathing Water Quality** standards are improved and maintained – particularly on beaches at risk (Budleigh and Exmouth).
3. To work with others to encourage **Greendale Industrial Estate** to adopt responsible environmental practices.
4. To work with the Business Support team to develop their contribution to our work.
5. To provide **training to Planning Officers** in the importance of Environmental considerations in the development management process.
6. To review **Neighbourhood Assessments** to take on more of a health and well being emphasis.
7. To ensure that all **Service Requests** receive a timely and appropriate first response and consequent action in accordance with team procedures and professional practice leading to resolution of cases within a target timescale.
8. To review the **EH licensing procedures**, identifying successes and shortcomings and developing new procedures taking into account current legislation, case law and guidance.
9. To implement the new and improved **dog warden and cash collection service**, once a decision has been made on the most appropriate way forward. The service to include promotional, routine and enforcement activities.
10. To ensure that the Council fulfils its statutory obligations in relation to **Environmental Permits**.

11. To implement all relevant aspects of **Local Air Quality Management** in East Devon and to represent the Council on the CIEH AQ Working Group.
12. To develop the concept of “**Healthy Honiton**” into a project that relates to the Honiton AQMA.
13. To review the contents and use of the noise room to create a useful place to store equipment and analyse data.
14. Prepare a report reviewing the Dogs Day Out 2013 event, identifying what worked well, lessons learnt and making recommendations for future events.
15. Review the current pest control trial and prepare a report outlining options for the future, and in due course implementing the options decided on.
16. Update the procedures covering all aspects of the **EDDC pest control service** requests.
17. Work with other authorities to review **National Assistance Burial** procedures, in particular the provision of social fund funeral payments and other arrangements for funding.

Commercial Team Function

The Commercial Team has a wide-ranging remit for the protection of public health and wellbeing through the provision of advice, education and, where necessary, law enforcement powers primarily for the business community; and also for the residents and visitors of East Devon District.

The team functions break down in to three broad topic areas.

1. Food safety control. The Teams overall objective is to ensure food produced, stored, handled and consumed in the district is safe, wholesome and poses minimal risk to the consumer. There are **1796** food premises, mainly retail and catering, and **22** premises approved for food manufacture. There is a statutory regime for routine inspection of these premises, and inspection defines the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) score, which most businesses can display to inform the public of their compliance with hygiene standards. We carry out a food sampling programme for our higher risk food manufacturers, and some statutory sampling for shellfish classification. We participate in the national sampling programme from the Public Health Laboratory Service, and some local priorities determined at the Devon Food Sub Group.

There is a strong statutory framework that defines work in this area, and this work has significant impact on public health outcomes.

Infectious disease control. The team work alongside Public Health England and the Northern, Eastern and Western Devon Clinical Commissioning Group to identify and control sources of infectious disease and reduce the risks of onward transmission of disease within East Devon population.

There is a statutory requirement to carry out these functions.

2. Health and safety at work. The team works to promote and maintain good standards of health and safety for employees and people affected by work activities; supporting businesses and the local economy by promoting sensible, proportional risk management. We enforce in small, lower risk premises, mainly retail, office, service sector, warehousing leisure and catering premises. There are more than 3100 of these businesses across the District. In recent years the health and safety role of the team has reduced as the food safety side has increased. Also the attitude of central government that health and safety places burdens on business has resulted in directives that have curtailed much of the activity previously undertaken to support businesses. Following the National Local Authority Enforcement Code, the team do not carry out proactive inspection of premises. Work is focused on a number of topic based interventions with selected business sectors identified

by national or local data as posing higher risk to public health and safety; specifically animal handling attractions, swimming pool/spa pools, catering premises gas safety, and legionella control in certain businesses.

The team also have a duty to investigate accidents and respond to complaints concerning health and safety. We have procedures to determine the level of response to these incidents which follows national guidelines.

There is a statutory framework underlying this work, and it has a particularly important role to play in encouraging a thriving local economy which encourages a healthy local community.

3 Other work

The team administer a variety of statutory registration and licensing processes designed primarily to protect the public from the risks to their health and safety of certain activities, such as skin piercing, animal contact through licensing of riding establishments, pet shops etc, and public health and safety through event licensing consultations. Routine administration is carried out by the Licensing Service, inspection and enforcement of the licensing requirements is undertaken by the Commercial Team.

We also comment on planning applications and liaise with planning applicants to ensure legislative requirements at commercial premises are complied with and nuisance conditions arising from premises are minimised. When effectively done this minimises costs for businesses by ensuring problems are addressed before significant expenditure is needed.

The team provide community support, as resources permit, with business support and public health education activities such as Junior Lifeskills events, talks to community groups, school visits and demonstrations etc. This work will encompass the developing Public Health Agenda, which will be integrated into all aspects of the teams work and is likely to result in work patterns that cross all the disciplines noted in the above sections.

Current topics of interest

Food

We are working hard to complete the plan of work required to satisfy the Food Standards Agency audit team. The team have put renewed emphasis on careful file and computer record keeping, and improved review and checking procedures and practices to ensure we maintain the standards that will result in a good final audit report.

The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme is now operational across all the eligible food premises in East Devon, and the team are providing proprietors with ratings following inspections. By 2016 all premises, even those who are the lowest risk and only inspected every three years will be rated and the rating will be available to members of the public on the FSA website and, for those businesses proud enough of their rating to display them publicly, displayed on the food premises.

We are currently investigating two possible cases of serious E.Coli infections linked to an animal handling attraction in the area, in partnership with Public Health England. There is some work to do with a number of our tourist attractions that offer some form of animal contact to ensure that they comply with the most up to date guidance on hand washing and availability of information for the public.

Health and Safety

We are planning a major piece of work, to coincide with an initiative taking place in Exeter, to offer advice and access to free training opportunities to employers on the Heathpark Industrial Estate in January/February of 2014.

Exeter City Council and the HSE are forming an Estates Excellence partnership to offer businesses on the Marsh Barton Industrial Estate. It comprises a visit to help them complete a self assessment package that identifies gaps in their knowledge about some basic health and safety issues, and then offers free training workshops for the businesses to fill these gaps in knowledge. The Team will run a similar initiative at Heathpark at the same time, and enrol our business proprietors in these training courses as required.

Other work

We are looking to improve the service we provide to members of the public that are planning some form of event in East Devon. We have a duty to advise on health and safety matters at events, and we are currently exploring the feasibility of creating a formal Safety Advisory Group that would pull together all the agencies involved in advising and regulating events to provide a single point of contact for event organisers. This would simplify the application process for all agencies that need to comment on the applications, and enable the applicant to meet and discuss the event at one time rather than have to arrange a number of meetings, some of which could replicate issues.

Team objectives

1. Be the acknowledged experts across the Council in
 - a. Food safety
 - b. Health and safety
 - c. Infectious disease
 - d. Port health
2. Meet food inspection targets in a timely manner with effective follow up where required
3. Respond to service requests in a timely and appropriate manner
4. Investigate infectious disease reports in a timely and effective manner. Provide the expert knowledge necessary for the Council to deal with infectious disease issues effectively
5. Investigate accident reports
6. Carry out health and safety projects in the business community
7. Carry out appropriate food and environmental sampling functions
8. Provide the expert advisory and enforcement functions needed to enable the Licensing Team to process and control licensed premises
9. Consider planning applications concerning commercial premises for food hygiene and health and safety issues that may arise in a timely and appropriate manner
10. Participate in public health initiatives
 - a. with young people, i.e. Junior lifeskills and 11 million take out day
 - b. with businesses, i.e. estates excellence, healthy eating, wellbeing at work
 - c. with the general public, i.e. healthy eating/food safety
11. Improve officer knowledge and competency through

- a. taking up additional training opportunities
 - b. participating in structured regular peer review exercises
 - c. focused technical meetings on particular topics
12. Maintain the Customer Excellence Standards
 13. Provide the expert Zoo and Wild Animal advice and enforcement functions needed to enable the Licensing Team to process and control licensed wild animal premises
 14. Provide the expert Port health advise and enforcement capability to deal with enquiries and events related to imported food and animal products
 15. Develop best practice in procedures and practices across the team functions
 16. Develop effective mobile working practices across the team
 17. Maintain accurate computer and file records to enable effective reporting on work carried out
 18. Report the achievements and capabilities of the team widely across the council and promote the Environmental Health Service

Countryside & Leisure Team

Core areas of Countryside Service work are:

- LNR management (12 LNRs)
- Environmental education (schools service)
- Trees (Planning & Council owned)
- SW Coast Path management
- Public engagement & events programme
- Volunteer engagement – East Devon Volunteer Network, Tree Warden scheme, Junior Rangers & special needs groups
- Special project development – Axe Wetlands, Water Vole Recovery project etc .

Sports Centres and Swimming Pools are the responsibility of LED (Leisure East Devon)

LNRs & education:

- Axe Wetlands plans to create a 200 acre regionally important nature based tourism linking with the emerging Seaton Discovery Centre and Stop Line cycleway which will help attract in excess of 60K visitors pa and contributing additional £250K into local economy once all works are finished in 2014.
- Axe Wetlands has recently developed new facilities to improve the visitor experience including a new field classroom, a new Pond Shelter, 1km of new access for all tracks and currently building new toilets.
- School events – Education Ranger taken 1691 school children out in 2013 (Primary & Secondary) which is 67% up on last year and securing £8K of income.

- Trinity Hill LNR successfully awarded a HLS grant for reserve management that will help to fund works for reinstating heathland, recreate new areas of heath working with neighbouring landowners FC & improving access.
- Knapp Copse LNR is managed on behalf of Devon CC and has secured a HLS agreement to help fund habitat improvements and improve access for visitors; volunteers have been helping with many of the tasks.
- Fire Beacon Hill LNR also received a HLS grant for management works that will enable RSPB and Countryside Team to achieve habitat for species such as nationally declining Dartford Warbler and Nightjar.
- Maer LNR has developed an environmental play trail and access for all utilising S106 funds that will help encourage new audiences to site and provide interpretation via play trail equipment of local native species

Volunteer activities

- The Team supports a district-wide Volunteer network that includes LNR Volunteers, Tree Wardens and Junior Rangers as part of our commitment to engaging with the local community
- Currently over 200 volunteers are signed up and work on the Wetlands, Trinity Hill, Holyford Woods and Knapp Copse.
- The team has committed to providing training and skills development through its adopted Countryside Volunteer Guidebook
- The team runs weekly Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday groups with the Rangers and it is the plan to expand across all our sites as there are considerable health & wellbeing benefits from doing this work.

Arboricultural Service:

- Processed over 250 applications p.a for works to trees
- 130 planning consultations p.a
- Deals with an average of 60 phone calls p.w
- Deals with 200 tree status enquiries p.a
- 12 FC woodland grant/felling license schemes p.a
- 3 FC Forest Design Plans p.a
- Leads 2 evening Parish tree talk n' walks
- Provides survey & professional advice to Streetscene on managing Council owned trees
- Currently the team is going through a systems review process to help improve the efficiency of the way the team works as it is under huge pressure to deliver a district wide service on a very limited budget.

Press, awards & events

- Delivered in 2013 over 100 events and had 50% increase in visitors compared to 2012
- Over 3500 column inches of press coverage equivalent to £20K in PR value (including articles in the Western Morning News, Sunday Telegraph, Daily Mail as well as all local papers)
- BBC One Countryfile featured the Axe Wetlands and our work with volunteers
- Nature Conservation Officer writes regular feature in the Exmouth Journal and has a weekly slot with Bay FM promoting the Team's work.
- Axe Wetlands received Seaton & District Chamber of Commerce award for promoting the environment and also an Outstanding Certificate by South West in Bloom (the highest award).

Securing Funding

The Team also manages to secure huge amounts of external funding for its projects from partners such as Natural England and the Environment Agency as well as from lottery bodies highlights over the last 5 years are:

- £90K for the Great Trees project from Heritage Lottery Fund, Natural England and East Devon AONB (£10K from EDDC)
- £20K for environmental education from Heritage Lottery Fund's 'Young Roots' programme
- £20K for Food 4 Thought from Natural England (£5K EDDC)
- £162K for Devon Water Vole Project from SITA Landfill Tax Fund
- £40K for Water Vole Recovery Project Officer from Environment Agency
- £270K for Axe Wetlands habitat creation from Environment Agency
- £70K for the Axe Wetlands visitor facilities from AONBs Making it Local Fund
- £20K for wildlife enhancement projects from Natural England.

Arts Development

Key areas are:

- Manor Pavilion Theatre
- Thelma Hulbert Gallery

Manor Pavilion Theatre:

Business performance

- Operational/Trading figures (surplus/deficit)

2008/09 - £73,057

2009/10 - £65,361

2010/11 - £53,589

2011/12 - £43,285

2012/13 - £32,949

- Capital costs

2008 - £20,081

2009 - £38,695

2010 - £13,348

2012 - £102,280 (box office improvements/electrics upgrade) – works on going

Operational improvements 2013/14:

- Re-tendered Summer Season contract – increased fee from £16K to £21K for 2013 season with new Theatre Production Company – Paul Taylor-Mills

- New Summer Season contract also will take back box office control from previous arrangements enabling a further income of 10% on all box office sales to Theatre this has achieved an additional income of £12K.
- Paul Taylor-Mills Productions are a leading West End theatre production company with an impressive track record of awards and reviews which will significantly improve the quality of the Summer Season.
- Record number of shows booked – 52 for the 2013 season of which there are a number of nationally acclaimed companies and celebrity acts.
- New box office investment will mean Theatre has ability to take more bookings on upgraded software and also “chip & pin” facilities as well as improving the overall look of the venue.

Thelma Hulbert Gallery:

The future of the THG is to be considered by Cabinet on 30th October 2013 in which its business performance will be looked at and a decision made to its future operation.

The key areas of success are:

The Gallery’s ability to reach out to the community, and in particular to disadvantaged groups, young people and individuals who find it extremely difficult to access some of the Council’s services has been recognised in national awards (see appendix B). Examples of this work include:

- **Millwater School**, a community special school – free school workshops enjoyed throughout this year. THG has developed such a strong relationship with the school and staff that they held an exhibition of their artwork upstairs at THG this August to coincide with Evolver 2013 exhibition
- **Art & Mind at THG** is held on last Tuesday of every month. The co-ordinator is employed by Mind (the leading mental health charity, providing a range of mental health support services based at the Haven, Honiton). It offers an afternoon of artmaking in a safe and welcoming atmosphere for people who have experience of mild to moderate stress, anxiety or depression, or who care for someone who has.
- To celebrate **‘World Mental Health Day’** Thursday 10 October 2013, the THG will highlight the work of ‘Art & Mind’ with a display of participants’ work from Saturday 5 October – Saturday 19 October. On Thursday 10 October ‘Art & Mind’ co-ordinator Christine Barkla will be at the gallery to provide information about ‘Art & Mind’ sessions. Local press will put a call out prior to event and their photographers will document it.
- THG hosted **‘Mother Love’** (22 September-27 October 2012) an exhibition which highlighted the relationships between mothers and daughters, most notably ‘The Dementia Darnings’ by Jenni Dutton which explored the artist’s and her mother’s shared experiences of her mother’s Alzheimer’s disease. The exhibition was very emotional for many visitors, and acted as a vehicle for them to open up and talk about their own experiences with each other and with the artists. The THG has subsequently been visited several times by a small group of dementia patients with their carer.
- **Recollection (15 March – 25 April 2014)** – will be an exhibition exploring memory with linked exhibition upstairs of donated works to raise money for Honiton Memory Cafe, Honiton Hospital and THG.

Financial performance:

- The THG's financial performance in 2013 has been very encouraging in comparison to the same period 2012. The income achieved from March to September in 2013 - £9,570 in shop and exhibition takings in comparison to March to August 2012 - £5,107 **is up by £4,463 (87.40% increase)**. The shop income in particular is performing well and there has been a very positive response to the new retail area where the office used to be with an increase in sales. The link up with Double Elephant with a more affordable pricing structure for prints in the £10 - £250 price bracket has generated sales.

Comparative Shop and Exhibition Takings (2012 v 2013)

Month	2013	2012	Variation	Percentage
March	£969.52	£478.08	up	+65.8%
April	£1,450.94	£1,412.34	up	+2.7%
May	£2,780.06	£723.14	up	+284.4%
June	£418.87	£835.67	down	-49.9%
July	£1,848.06	£1,389.20	up	+33.0%
August	£1,933.62	£915.45	up	+111.2%
September	£1,604.90	£764.30	up	+110.0%

TOTALS	2013	2012	Variation	Percentage	
Mar-Sept	£9,569.86	£5,107.47	up	+87.40%	87.40% increase

Comparative Visitor Figures (2012 v 2013)

Month	2013	2012	Variation	Percentage
March	457	485	down	-5.8%
April	556	639	down	-13.0%
May	462	487	down	-5.1%
June	424	410	up	+3.4%
July	810	587	up	+38.0%
August	686	608	up	+12.8%
September	706	457	up	+54.5%

TOTALS	2013	2012	Variation	Percentage	
Mar-Sept	4,101	3,673	up	+11.7%	11.7% increase

THG budget performance summary (without recharge costs)

	EDDC Budget £	EDDC Actual £	Income budgeted £	Income actual £	Visitor numbers actual
2008/09	45,020	57,154	2,110	7,594	3,999
2009/10	35,600	59,987	21,030	8,993	3,332
2010/11	50,440	93,048	22,980	13,992	5,602
2011/12	43,290	80,388	25,200	14,892	5,984

2012/13	87,110	95,271*	13,710	14,827	6,299
2013/14 YTD (Annual Budget)	38,570 YTD (81,560)	41,070YTD	8,880YTD (17,710)	12,886YTD	3,644YTD

**The 2012/13 figure included the redundancy costs for the Gallery Development Manager of £3,038.*

Challenges:

The important next steps include:

- Using the £10,000 grant to support fund raising, marketing and developing the business plan. Consultants were appointed on the 26 September 2013 and the first meeting with key staff and members was on the 16 October. Initial findings indicate a likely income increase of £20,000 in the next 12 months. The detailed workings will be presented to members on the 11 November 2013.
- Developing initial talks with a potential partner to develop the cafe area and income which will increase income and also encourage footfall and increased cross-marketing via the new partner. We are at the stage of discussing the terms of a short term contract to test whether a private sector partner in charge of the cafe area can help us boost visitor numbers and income.
- Finalising the agreed external signage and access plans so that the Gallery is much more 'visible' in the Town and noticeable from the car parks.
- Exploring the feasibility of a Trust arrangement for the future of the Gallery as there are funding streams available to charitable trusts that council run galleries do not qualify for. Our consultant has some knowledge and expertise in this area and will explore this option with us. One way of doing this, for example, could be Education Charity status for the THG's extensive learning activities.

◆ Crime and Disorder

- Our Community Safety and Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator works to levels of crime and anti social behaviour. His work covers a range of initiatives, interventions as well as specific cases and includes safety campaigns in schools aimed at reducing the risk of antisocial behaviour and taking part in initiatives such as county Domestic Abuse Awareness week which starts on Monday 25th November. This year he will be writing to all the major employers in East Devon providing promotional material and offering help and support for people who are suffering from some sort of domestic abuse.

◆ Licensing

The Environmental Health teams work closely with our licensing officers and they provide the professional front line inspections and investigations that ensure that appropriate safety and welfare standards are maintained in licensed zoos, pet shops, animal boarding and breeding establishments and a range of other licensed premises.

◆ Car Parks

You all know that our car parks portfolio is one of our important sources of revenue and as such they are assets that we are obliged to manage well and to maximise the amount of revenue they earn. However we are also acutely aware that there is a relationship between the availability and price of car parking and the viability and success of our town centre businesses. A compromise in the way we manage these assets was therefore always going to be inevitable. A year ago Cabinet considered a review of a range of options and it was agreed that a number of special offers would be put in place on a trial basis commencing 1 April 2014 and that officers would monitor closely the impact of those offers on both car parking availability and revenue.

I thought it might be worth sharing with you what happened as a result:

Our analysis of the summer trials suggests that none of the offers were successful in revenue terms.

The offers were: 4 hours parking for the price of 3 in Sidmouth Ham, half price parking in Maer Road Exmouth, £1 for the rest of the weekend after 3pm on Saturdays in Honiton and Axminster and £3 after 1pm in Harbour Road Seaton.

We have looked in detail at the 6 month trial period (April to September 2013) and overall none of the trials were successful for us in simple revenue terms. In fact our attempts to help the business communities have actually cost us a substantial sum of money. We will be consulting with the local Chambers of Commerce in early November to establish their views on the success or otherwise of the offers.

I can say that the car parks where we didn't trial any special offers were actually £89,000 up on last year but the trial car parks were down by £12,000 (in both cases this is compared to the equivalent period in 2012). It is also interesting to note that despite the half price tariff, customers were not persuaded to change their behaviour and Maer Road continued to be used as an overflow car park once Queens Drive and then Foxholes car parks were full to capacity therefore although Maer Road car park produced around £17,500 (as compared to the £12,000 it produced in 2012) the transaction numbers increased from 7,300 to over 13,000 leading to the reasonable conclusion that if a full price tariff had been in place the car park would have earned double the revenue it actually did – i.e. a notional increase from £12,000 to £35,000 – all due to good weather bringing visitors to Exmouth's beach and, I would suggest, nothing whatsoever to do with the price of parking there.

Over the next year we will continue to explore new opportunities to use our car park assets to generate revenue but to do so in such a way as to not harm local communities nor to damage the vitality of our high streets. We are considering improving our offer to drivers of large motorhomes and campervans so that we can welcome them to East Devon's towns as day visitors without encouraging unofficial camp sites. We are also thinking about encouraging other possible events (e.g. markets, car boot sales, car valeting franchises) but only with strict safeguards that avoid harmful consequences. We are exploring the opportunities for selling advertising space in our car parks and intend to improve the local direction signs to ensure that as many customers as possible find our car park quickly and easily when they visit one of our towns for the first time.