

Councillor Report

Housing Review Board

The Housing Review Board had a zoom meeting on Thursday 9th of November.

The board met to discuss the Forward Plan, the Future of Warm Hubs, reviewed Housing Compliance policies, the Housing Performance Dashboard, the Finance Report, the Electrical Compliance update, staffing and the Home Safeguard update.

Conclusions

Warm Hubs have been a great success and EDDC is looking at locations where the scheme could be extended, including Newton Poppleford.

The Housing Performance Dashboard showed that work on improving the turnover of voids is improving but not fast enough. Councillors suggested looking to see if extra resources could help.

The staffing structure has been reviewed in light of the poor performance across the Housing Department. A restructure and new appointments have been made and there is hope that we see improvement in the service.

Amy Gilbert-Jeans - Director of Housing Health and Environment

Overview Committee

The Overview a committee met on Thursday 9th November.

We discussed way forward for public toilets across the district.

There is no Statutory requirement for local councils to provide public toilets and no funding is available from central govt.

Category A and B toilets are being refurbished 2024/25, the current plan for works has been submitted to planning.

Cabinet decided that charging of toilets will be implemented and the costs of the system is expected to cost 250k, the current access rate agreed will be 40p.

In regards to Category C and D toilets there has been a lack of interest and take up of long leases provided by EDDC especially in Budleigh Salterton and Colyton.

Conclusions

That EDDC write to the Secretary of State to push for public toilet provision to be made a statutory service.

That elected Councillors go back to Budleigh Town Councillors to discuss the purchase of toilet freeholds for Cat C&D toilets, otherwise they will close.

One member suggested that EDDC look at a Council scheme in Cornwall where locals do not pay an entrance fee for toilets but tourists did, since we already pay Council tax.

Poverty Working Panel

The Poverty Working Panel met on Monday 13th November.

The panel reviewed progress of its East Devon Poverty Strategy action Plan.

Key points:

There is a significant number of households living on low incomes or in poverty - defined as not having enough possessions or income for a persons needs, income below 60% of the national average.

The EDPS Action Plan was created to work towards objectives in its Poverty Reduction strategy, which include;

- Helping people on low incomes maximise household income , minimise costs, build financial resilience and reduce debt.
- Strengthen communities through support groups working to combat poverty.
- Promote an inclusive economy by raising skills and improving employment opportunities.
- Address the high cost of housing, housing conditions, heating and reduced homelessness.
- Improve health.

Conclusions

We looked at progress in all these areas in detail and the level of action and support is outstanding. There are so many schemes to help people across east Devon, my only concern is that the information may not be getting out to people who need it.

There is the EDDC Help a Hub, but for people without social media I think there should be more, and myself and Cranbrook's Councillor Kim Bloxham are meeting to discuss ways of reaching people which could include a booklet going out across the District.

Seachange

We have begun work on the Sensory Garden, if anyone is interested in helping, please let me know.