

January Report from EDDC Cllr Johns – updated 2nd February 2024

11.01.24 - Joint budget meeting - Overview & Scrutiny; The full minutes are available on the EDDC website. The draft revenue and capital budgets 2024-2025 and draft council plan were introduced by the Finance director with a verbal summary. Various questions and clarifications were made by members of the committee. I asked why the LED were asking for more money when various other guns etc had opened during Covid and were thriving. I was also concerned that LED did not show all the information that was requested, I also pointed out I raised the same concerns last year. This issue is being looked into by the LED monitoring forum and will come back to council.

Other officers also brought forward their reports including;

Countryside & Leisure

Environmental Health

Housing

Streetscene

HR & Payroll services

Finance

Revenue & Benefits, Csc, Fraud and compliance

Growth, Development and Prosperity

Planning

Governance & Licensing

Place, Assets and Commercialisation

Communications, Digital Services and Engagement Team

Various questions were asked and answered all of which are in the minutes.

18.01.24 - Overview committee; The Beach Amenity development plan was discussed in full as it was the missing piece in the councils adopted greenspace strategy.

The work programme for Overview was also considered and the committee considered the resolution from Council on 6th December 2023 concerning Coach tourism in East Devon and the accompanying report from the Democratic services. It was discussed that the committee should work with the Town and parish councils with regards to tourism and with other existing tourism facilities as well as DCC highways and other appropriate partners. The minutes of this meeting are also available in full online.

19.01.24 I was invited to attend a Teams meeting by Cllr Bailey with regards to the Coleridge Bridge, DCC and the Kings School were also in attendance as was our town clerk. As frustrating as it is the issue is far bigger than previously thought due to the weight of the tree, the weight of the bridge itself and the softness of the land due to how wet it is. A full report needs to be undertaken and land ownership needs to be sorted.

29.01.24 EDDC Council Plan workshop 3; All EDDC councillors were invited to attend the workshop to see the preliminary Council plan where any questions etc could be asked and ideas put forward. It was mentioned on numerous occasions that EDDC needs to work more with its Town and parish councils and this was agreed. Unfortunately the minutes for this meeting are not available but the final plan will go to the full EDDC council in due course where it will be minuted.

01.02.24 - Scrutiny meeting;

A recorded meeting with South West Water to discuss the ongoing issues and upcoming issues relating to the housing being put forward and lack of possible capacity of the sewage treatment works. Lots of questions were put forward regarding the capacity of the present sewage treatment plants and to be honest I don't feel SWW actually answered any of the questions effectively.

Cranbrook was mentioned with regards to a sewage plant which should have been put in place but SWW decided wasn't needed.

There seems to be a distinct lack of communication between SWW and EDDC with regards to anything with various councillor's stating they aren't even are who they can contact with regards to issues.

A meeting between EDDC planning and SWW is supposed to happen at some point soon but there is no date for it as yet. Ed Freeman has advised he has received a communication from SWW with regards to a meeting but has yet to reply, except to confirm receipt, due to waiting for an Independent water cycle report.

Mike Howe feels strategic planning should also be part of the meeting with SWW.

I have also answered various emails as a district Councillor relating to increasingly difficult and inconsiderate parking issues around Ottery. I have been having conversations with our District Councillor Cllr Bailey and our highways officer with regards to how to overcome these issues. I have copied the Town clerk into the emails for openness and so there is continuity. On some occasions I have emailed our PCSO with regards to the issues if they are causing safety issues and they are dealing with the issues directly.

I'm also in communication with residents of Slade Close and our Public Rights of Way Officer with regards to the footpath at Slade Close and the forms have gone out for filling in to show how long the path had been in use. Once these have been collated we can start the process of applying for a Public Right of Way.

I've been communicating with residents who have ongoing issues with a planning issue and am still waiting to hear about a date for a possible meeting with EDDC officers.

On a separate planning matter I'm pressing for a 'hearing' for application 22/1973/MOUT that has gone to appeal as opposed to a written appeal.

With regards to the Tipton School report which has been sent to our MP and County Councillors I have emailed our MP to say how disappointed I am that District Councillors and the Town Council have been left out of the loop. How are we supposed to do our elected roles effectively if we are not allowed to see important documentation. I have not received a reply.

As the Armed Forces Covenant Champion I am delighted that a new Armed Forces Covenant is now in the process of going to Cabinet and then full council to be approved. I have been working closely with Jo Fellows the Corporate lead - Human resources at EDDC to ensure this is done as it needed updating and I look forward to getting it signed hopefully alongside EDDC 50th anniversary celebrations.

I've had a meeting with Cllr Burhop from Newton Poppleford with regards to the Otter Trail and it was discussed that working together with other Town and parishes is the best way to go. There was also some discussion with regards to seeing if there were any funds at EDDC to assist with the trail.

02.02.24 I was alarmed to see a planning application for the shop known as Potter of West Hill now known as McColls, come to EDDC planning with regards to the demolition of the shop and for housing to be put on the site with a small amount of retail space. There are so many people in West Hill and the surrounding area who rely on the shop and the post office within. I'm aware West Hill has separated from Ottery but we still have a current Neighbourhood plan and surely should be consulted on this application. I have emailed EDDC to ask that exact question.

Stay safe,

Vicky