

District Councillor Helen Parr Report March 2022

Planning-

The Strategic Planning Committee debated the Settlement Hierarchy- the distribution of development in East Devon towns and parishes. Fortunately there were strong objections eg from Offwell PC and on behalf of Colyford and the option to add to the list of Tier 4 villages to be allocated development was rejected.

Budget and Parking Charges

The Budget was agreed 23 February at a Council meeting held in person at the Ocean, Exmouth. EDDC Council Tax charge for a Band D property will be £156.78- an increase of £5.00 / 3.29%.

Car park charges-

Parking charges will increase from £1.00 per hour to £2.00 per hour, a rise of 100%, doubling the cost of parking in 'prime car parks'. Prime car parks are those in the hot spots of Exmouth, Sidmouth, Seaton & Beer. Other inland car parks eg in Axminster and Honiton will be charged at £1.50 per hour, a 50% rise. These steep rises were agreed by the Democratic Alliance, and made it possible to include a Wish List of projects costing over £737,000 in the Budget.

In January Officers advised the Administration that the Wish List was unaffordable, and the Senior Management team would look with Cabinet for ways to make savings/ increase income over the next months to be able to afford these items.

However at the Cabinet meeting 2 February the Democratic Alliance agreed to double the hourly charge from £1.00 to £2.00 in prime car parks, and also to extend the list of prime car parks. This would bring in income in excess of what was needed to improve car parks and traffic management, making the Wish List affordable.

Before the Budget meeting, Councillors received emails from the Head of Service and Senior Lawyer advising that under the Road Traffic Regulation Act car park charges must be spent to manage and maintain car parks and for traffic management purposes. These huge increases in charges will bring in revenue well in excess of what is estimated to be necessary for parking management purposes, and do absolutely nothing to support our residents and town centres.

In 2021 the Council had agreed a rise in charges across the district to £1.20, in prime car parks deferred till April 22.

An Extraordinary Meeting of the Council has had to be called to reconsider the charges in the Roxburgh Car park, Sidmouth.