

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **COUNCIL** held on 24 September 2025 at 6.00 pm

**Present
Councillors**

G Czapiewski (Chair of Council), C Adcock,
M D Binks, D Broom, E Buczkowski,
J Buczkowski, J Cairney, S J Clist,
L J Cruwys, G Cochran, C Connor,
F J Colthorpe, A Cuddy, G Duchesne,
J M Downes, M Farrell, B Fish, M Fletcher,
C Harrower, B Holdman, M Jenkins,
S Keable, L Knight, N Letch, J Lock,
J Poynton, R Roberts, S Robinson, T
Stanford, A Stirling, M Stratton, L Taylor,
H Tuffin, G Westcott, A White, J Wright and
D Wulff

**Apologies
Councillors**

N Bradshaw, S Chenore, A Glover (online), L G J Kennedy
(online) and N Woollatt

**Also Present
Officers:**

Stephen Walford (Chief Executive), Andrew Jarrett (Deputy
Chief Executive (S151)) and Laura Woon (Democratic
Services Officer)

25 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors: A Glover (online), N Bradshaw, S Chenore, L G J Kennedy (online) and N Woollatt.

26 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Sarah Coffin

Yesterday evening at the Planning, Environment and Sustainability Policy Development Group meeting the public raised serious questions on Anaerobic Digester plant Planning breaches and Climate/Net Zero Policy.

The first question asked the Committee if it would be reconsidering its present proactive policies in support of Climate Change/Global warming and Net Zero. The question made detailed reference to the growing volume of factual/technical evidence and global scientific opinions to the contrary, now openly published globally.

The next three questions related to the serious breaches of Planning Conditions and lack of Enforcement concerning the farm-led Anaerobic Digesters based in Mid-Devon and what action/measures could be taken to reassert Planning balance and compliance; to ensure delivery of the Environmental/Climate/Net Zero benefits claimed now and in the future.

My questions were related to the AD plants and the use of S106 legal agreements but could equally apply to large contentious Residential/livestock farming and green energy projects. Acceptance of S106 by approved Applicants indicate the intention to abide by all material or mitigating conditions attached to Planning Permission. There is an automatic right of Appeal throughout the timeline to delivery; providing evidence is shown that the condition no longer relevant or unnecessary due to changing circumstances. Perhaps the S106 could be used to remove speculative hoarding and hawking of Planning Approvals by including a completion deadline rather than a start deadline?

The questions are to be answered in writing but initial questioning by Councillors seemed to indicate that any inquiry would need to be costed and there was little confidence that the necessary funds or Council staff would be available to respond to Motion 608.

I therefore ask Members is democracy being throttled. If not how do Members prioritise and what constitutes an acceptable cost?

Paul Elstone

Question 1:

When this Council's Executive Officers made the decision to remove, the Reputation Risk relating to the failure of 3 Rivers from the Corporate Risk Register a commitment was given to provide regular updates to Audit on any remaining reputation risk. This is not happening. Hence the reason for my questions tonight.

More than a year ago, this Council purchased 5 properties at Haddon Heights in Bampton, from 3 Rivers, for £3.15 million – they are still unsold.

Can it be explained why Seddon's Estate Agents stopped marketing these properties in July 2025?

Question 2:

Searches of Right move and Estate Agent websites, such as Greenslade Taylor Hunt and after a site visit today, show no evidence that the five unoccupied properties are currently being marketed for sale.

Are the properties currently being marketed and if so who by. If not, why not?

Question 3:

I understand that in August the building company Blu Box were hired to install fire block cladding to the ceilings of the car ports in 6 of the 9 properties - at a cost to the Council of £23,000.

Surely the fire risk is the same for all the properties, why were only 6 of the 9 properties fixed?

Question 4:

How, and when, was the requirement for the work identified?

Question 5:

Calculations based on evidence available shows that since purchasing the Haddon Heights properties this Council has lost at least £520,000 and rising by the day.

Property price reductions, before they were taken off the market, of £230,000.

Loss of investment income 4.8% (simple) over 18 months or circa £227,000.

Council Tax, inclusive of 100% unoccupied premium since April 2025, circa £30,000.

Utilities, management fees and landscaping cost, circa £10,000.

Fire cladding work £23,000.

This substantial financial loss is a risk to the reputation of this Council. Especially so because PDG'S are being asked to approve cost cutting measures. Members of last night's Planning, Environment and Sustainability PDG were seen to be uncomfortable with some officer cost saving proposals.

Why is the status of the assets bought from 3 Rivers not being reported and as promised?

Question 6:

A visit to St Georges Court shows that, in places, it still looks like a building site this 18 months on from the development being purchased from 3 Rivers and at around £1 million pounds over valuation.

How many of the 28 flats are occupied today?

Question 7:

Unlike Haddon Heights, there is no evidence that that MDDC have ever paid Council Tax on the St Georges Court flats. If Council Tax has not been paid, why not?

Supplementary Question:

I am well used to getting responses to questions that are evasive, lack transparency or worse and this after the full 10 days.

My questions tonight are very straight forward and the officers in the room should be able to answer them off the top of their heads.

Based on the fact that a commitment was given to Audit to keep them updated, will officers provide the answers to all members this evening instead?

27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Members were reminded of the need to make declarations of interest were appropriate.

Cllr F J Colthorpe referred to item 13 regarding the appointments to Outside Bodies and declared that she was a Trustee of Tiverton Museum of Mid Devon.

28 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2025 were **AGREED** as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

29 **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair had the following announcements to make:

- On the 15 August he attended the V J Day service at the Burma Star memorial, remembering that 80 years ago was the end of hostilities in the Far East. The Service was attended by Una, the daughter of Viscount Slim of Burma.
- In the afternoon of the same day he attended the V J Day children's party in Crediton. This event was well attended and cake and ice cream were shared as it was a hot day.

30 **PETITIONS**

None received.

31 **NOTICES OF MOTIONS**

None received.

32 **CABINET-REPORTS OF THE MINUTES HELD ON THE 5 AUGUST 2025 AND 2 SEPTEMBER 2025**

The Leader of the Council presented the reports of the meetings held on 5 August and 2 September 2025.

33 **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE- REPORT OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 19TH JULY 2025**

The Vice- Chair of the Scrutiny Committee presented the report of the meeting held on the 19 July 2025.

34 **PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP- REPORT OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 29 JULY 2025**

The Chair of the Planning, Environment and Sustainability Policy Development Group presented the report of the meeting held on the 29 July 2025.

35 **PLANNING COMMITTEE- REPORTS OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 JULY AND 20 AUGUST 2025**

The Chair of the Planning Committee presented the reports of the meetings held on 30 July and 20 August 2025.

36 **APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

The following appointment to an Outside Body was **AGREED**.

Cllr G DuChesne to be appointed as the Council's representative on the Tiverton Museum.

Cllr S Robinson **MOVED** seconded by Cllr J Downes:

Upon a vote being taken the **MOTION** was declared to have been **CARRIED**

Those **ABSTAINING** from voting were Councillor F J Colthorpe.

37 **QUESTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULE 11**

There were no questions raised which were pursuant to Procedure Rule 11 and which had not already been dealt with during the relevant Committee reports.

38 **SPECIAL URGENCY DECISIONS**

With regard to any decisions taken under Rule 16 (of the Constitution) Special Urgency taken since the last meeting, the Chair informed the meeting that no such decisions had been taken in that period.

39 **QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS**

Cllr C Harrower asked the Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement.

- In regards to why the collection had not taken place for pots and pans in the West-Exe area.

The Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement would follow this question up with the relevant officer.

40 **MEMBERS BUSINESS**

- Cllr G Czapiewski highlighted to Members that he attended the Councillor Advocate Seminar in Exeter and met with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable who presented their Strategies to address crime and victim support.
- Cllr G Czapiewski highlighted to Members that Tiverton now had Street Marshalls patrolling the area to help tackle Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB).
- Cllr A Stirling highlighted to Members that he had written a letter to South West Water (SWW) about residents' concerns in regards to the sewage smell in the West-Exe area.
- Cllr C Harrower thanked the Specialist Lead for Community Safety and Safeguarding for his work in regards to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB).
- Cllr G DuChesne thanked all those that had attended the State of District Debate on the 17 September, there were good discussions about Local Government Reorganisation.
- Cllr B Holdman highlighted to Members that there was a 'Meet the Funders' event on Wednesday 22 October, this was for local voluntary, community and

social enterprise organisations to allow them to network and to meet potential investors and funders.

(The meeting ended at 18.35)

CHAIR