

Become a District Councillor and make a difference...



Play a part in making decisions affecting your area



Get more involved in your community



Influence the way local services are provided



"Give it a go; it's time consuming but very rewarding..."
(Existing District Councillor)

What does the Council do?

East Devon District Council (EDDC) provides local services to residents and visitors to the district. These include environmental health, planning, and recycling and refuse collection to list a few. The Council works in partnership with other public and voluntary organisations, including the police and health authorities, to improve the quality of life in East Devon. Councillors make the decisions that guide the council, and council officers implement the decisions according to laws and guidelines.

East Devon residents expect high performance and value for money, particularly in these challenging times.

The [Council Plan](#) has two clear purposes that underpin the work of its services and councillors for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors.

The Council's 2 purposes are:

- Delivering outstanding service
- Planning for the future of our district

The Council priorities are:

- To deliver the right cost effective services, and
 - To look forward with realistic and resilient plans
- (The priority work and projects are set out in the Plan).

The Council's values are:

- Accountable
- Open
- Listening
- Caring
- Looking forwards

Councillors are ordinary people doing an extraordinary job. Stand to be a councillor to make sure decisions being made meet the needs of East Devon.

What does the Council do? Continued...

EDDC is made up of 59 Councillors who represent 32 wards across the district.

As a councillor you will represent everyone in your ward – not just those that voted for you. You will be a:

- **Representative**, acting as a source of information or point of access to council services.
- **Community Leader**, developing links with all parts of the community and supporting local partnerships / organisations to campaign on local issues.
- **Policy maker**, attending meetings to discuss and approve council budget and policy. The Leader may invite you to become a Cabinet member to oversee implementation of policies.
- **Scrutineer**, you may become involved to act as the Council's 'watchdog' to review/improve services for local people and investigate issues of local concern.

We need councillors who are **ready to take on a challenge** – it's not a role that you can leave at the office at 5pm, the public can contact you at home at any time of the day. Not all decisions are easy and many can be controversial – but you **can** make a positive difference.

How can I become a District Councillor?

The date for the next District Council Elections will be Thursday 7 May 2015.

You are able to stand for election as an EDDC Councillor if you:

Are 18 years of age or over on the day of nomination;

Are British, or a citizen of the Irish Republic, European Union or Commonwealth, and

on the day of nomination and election day you are and continue to be an elector for the East Devon area, or,

you have owned or leased land in East Devon for twelve whole months proceeding nomination, or,

your principal or only place of work during that twelve months has been in East Devon, or, you have resided in East Devon for twelve whole months.



You may not stand for election as an EDDC Councillor (amongst other things) if:

In the last five years before the day of election you have been sentenced to prison for three months or more (including a suspended sentence) without the option of a fine;

You are the subject of a bankruptcy restriction order;

You are an employee of East Devon District Council;

You have been disqualified by the Adjudication Panel for England.



More detailed information on how to stand for election is available from the Electoral Commission:

www.electoralcommission.org.uk or EDDC's Election Officer, Jill Humphreys 01395 517550

jhumphreys@eastdevon.gov.uk

Will I be able to do the job?

You do not need any formal qualifications or experience to become a councillor. The main requirement is that you want to be involved and help represent the interests of your local area. You may also have special skills (such as communication, problem solving, team working and engaging your local community) or business expertise that you feel you could contribute.

Councillors should represent the whole community so it is important people from all backgrounds are elected - women and men; young and older people; parents; people with disabilities; people who are gay, lesbian or bi-sexual; and from different ethnic groups and religious beliefs.

Can I be a councillor if I'm disabled?

The same criteria for being a councillor apply if you are disabled. The Council is not able to provide you with additional support to help you canvass potential voters, although a political party may be able to help. However, once you become a councillor, the Council will work with you to overcome any barriers there are to ensure you are fully involved. Being a councillor is not a full time job and may not affect any incapacity benefit you receive, however, you should check with the Department for Work and Pensions. Read about the experiences of a councillor who is disabled by visiting [Marie Pye's](#) page on the [Be a Councillor](#) website.

How much time is involved in being a District Councillor?

The amount of time spent on council duties depends entirely on how involved you become with council work – what you get back will largely depend on how much you put in.

There are a number of meetings that you will have to attend as part of your role and Councillors will also spend time with their constituents and in development/training. In addition you may take opportunities to represent the Council on Outside Bodies, Working Parties and Sub-Committees.

What support will I get?

Council employees are there to advise on policy and decision making and to implement the Council's decisions.

A carefully planned induction/welcome programme will start and continue after the election to help you work effectively as a councillor if you are elected. Further training and development will be available to you throughout your time as councillor to help you develop your skills.

The Democratic Services Team is on hand to provide support.

Do I need to have a political preference?

You can choose to stand for election as an independent candidate or as a group/party political candidate.

The Leaders of the current East Devon District Groups are:

- Paul Diviani (Conservative, majority group, Leader of the Council) ☎ 01404 861616/07971 433175
✉ pdiviani@eastdevon.gov.uk
- Brenda Taylor (Liberal Democrats, second largest group)
☎ 01395 263805 ✉ btaylor@eastdevon.gov.uk
- Ben Ingham (Independents) ☎ 07708 352389
✉ bingham@eastdevon.gov.uk

Will it cost me anything to stand for election and will I be paid?

The cost incurred by a candidate at an election is at the personal expense of the candidate or political party (if they are representing one). The Council cannot, and does not, refund the costs incurred.

Councillors receive an allowance, plus travel and expenses. There is also a carer's allowance if you have children and/or people you may care for. You will also be paid extra allowances if you have additional responsibilities such as a Cabinet member. Please note that the allowances you receive may affect any benefits that you are being paid and are taxable - you should contact the agency that provides your benefits to find out how you may be affected.

Can I get time off work?

The Employment Rights Act 1996 requires your employer to allow you a reasonable amount of time off for your work as a councillor. You may need to discuss this and agree the details with your employer.

Many employers recognise that the skills people develop as councillors are also very useful in the workplace.

Most, but not all, of the meetings are held in the evenings.

What's next?

Thursday 7 May 2015 may seem a long time away but if you are interested in becoming an EDDC Councillor now is a really good time to gain knowledge of the Council and its services. You can learn a lot by attending a range of Council meetings as an observer – this will help you to develop an understanding of the Council structure, the decision making process and the rules for debate.

Nearer the date of the election, no later than March 2015, the Elections Office at EDDC will put up a Notice of Election at public points across East Devon informing you of where and when to apply to be a candidate.

Whether you stand for a political party or as an independent there are precise rules governing elections that will need your attention. For more information contact the Electoral Services Team – see useful contacts.

Get more information/Useful contacts

Find out more about EDDC by visiting their website:

www.eastdevon.gov.uk

Find out about election rules by contacting:

Electoral Services Team, Council Offices, Knowle, Sidmouth
EX10 8HL ☎ 01395 517402

Find out about being a councillor and the support you will receive by contacting:

Democratic Services Team, Council Offices, Knowle,
Sidmouth EX10 8HL ☎ 01395 517546

✉ democraticservices@eastdvn.gov.uk

www.eastdevon.gov.uk/councillorsandmeetings

Useful information and experiences of other councillors can be found at: www.beacouncillor.org.uk and

The Local Government Association – [guide for newly elected councillors](#)

The largest parties have councillors' associations. You can find out more from their websites:

Conservative Councillors Association

www.conservativecouncillors.com

Association of Labour Councillors

www.labouronline.org/councillors

Association of Liberal Democrat Councillors

www.aldc.org

The Local Government Association Independent Group

www.independent.lga.gov.uk

East Devon District Council's [Code of Conduct for Councillors](#)