District council report

I have to report, with some regret, that East Devon District Council saw the retirement of one of the longest serving Chief Executives in the country. Without delving into the array of conspiracy theories flying about, it is suffice to say he leaves a big pair of shoes to fill.

I took some encouragement from the definitive statements that have come out of last Strategic Planning Committee meeting. If implemented in full they could offer us an element of protection from the scourge of never ending developer lead mass housing applications.  The Government will be issuing a new NPPF in the near future. At its core is the following statement
"The Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act is at the heart of this long-term plan and will ensure new development is built more beautifully, produces more local infrastructure, like GP surgeries, schools and transport links, is shaped by local people's democratic wishes, enhances the environment, and creates neighbourhoods where people want to live and work.  "

This should help empower our planning committee to make a stand against inappropriate development.  A point in case was last weeks refusal of the application for 63 houses to the south of Ottery St Mary. Despite officer recommendation, the committee decided to refuse. It remains to be seen if the council lawyers come back with reasons why these grounds will fail ( an unfortunately familiar scenario).

With the ongoing spell of unpredictable weather, all our minds turn to the issue of flooding. As of the 27th I understand that, although some roads have been affected,  no houses in the ward have suffered. I hope this remains the case by the time this report appears. We seem to have got off lightly from Storm Ciaran compared to others in the Southwest. I hope that remains the case for the rest of winter.

Finally, I'd like to express my very grateful thanks to all those that have written to me recently. Your fine words and support at this difficult time have been of great help to me. Thank you.

Report Ends