

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Strategic Planning Committee held at Council Chamber Blackdown House on 26 March 2019

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.01 am and ended at 11.55 am

50 Public speaking

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

There were no members of the public that wished to speak.

51 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee held on 20 February 2019 were confirmed as a true record.

52 Declarations of interest

Cllr Eleanor Rylance - Minute 56 – Personal interest – Ward member for Broadclyst Parish Council;

Cllr Ian Hall – Minute 57 – Personal interest – Chairman of Open Lawn Sports Centre

53 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency discussed.

54 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There were no items that officers recommended should be dealt with requiring exclusion of the public or press.

55 Heritage Strategy

The report presented to the committee outlined the outcome of the public consultation on the Heritage Strategy and sought agreement to the adoption of the East Devon Heritage Strategy 2019 – 2031, subject to amendments outlined in the report and to the introduction of a pilot scheme for a Conservation Area review in a phased approach for East Budleigh including the Otter Valley Association.

The Service Lead, Planning Strategy and Development Management advised that 34 responses to the consultation had been received from consultees including local history and amenity groups, neighbourhood planning groups, and town and parish councils. Members noted that the responses received were largely positive including minor comments about detail and engagement with other groups and comments about the timing and monitoring of the action plan. Members also noted a positive response had been received from Historic England endorsing the strategy.

The Committee were supportive of the recommendation and comments included:

- Clarification was sought about recommending East Budleigh for the pilot scheme. In response the Service Lead, Planning Strategy and Development Management advised East Budleigh was a typical example of a conservation area with a community group and neighbourhood planning group that were keen to be involved.
- Clarification was sought if East Budleigh had been chosen because of its historic association. In response the Service Lead, Planning Strategy and Development Management confirmed this was the main reason and drew attention to the Otter Valley Association and the Neighbourhood Planning Groups.
- Clarification was sought whether the parish council was aware of the proposal. In response the Service Lead, Planning Strategy was not able to confirm but advised the Policy Team had liaised with all the community groups.
- Clarification was sought on the Sid Vale Association's interest on the pilot scheme and whether two schemes could be run at the same time. The Service Lead, Planning Strategy and Development Management advised he was aware there had been interest but wanted to use a smaller town for the pilot to learn from;
- The need for an additional planning officer to help undertake the task. In response the Chief Executive confirmed that additional staff resources were not envisaged;
- The need to protect heritage;
- The need to engage with national bodies including The National Trust;

RESOLVED:

1. That the East Devon Heritage Strategy 2019 – 2031 as detailed in this report be approved.
2. That the pilot scheme for a Conservation Area review for East Budleigh including the Otter Valley Association as described in the Heritage Strategy be approved.

56 **East Devon and Blackdown Hills Landscape Character Assessment**

The Committee considered the Service Lead, Strategic Planning and Development Management report summarising the comments on responses received and to seek Members approval for adoption of the revised (2019) East Devon and Blackdown Hills Landscape Character Assessment.

Discussion on the East Devon and Blackdown Hills Landscape Character Assessment included:

- Consideration to incorporate animals for conservation grazing to bring farming into the local economy. In response the Chief Executive advised this was part of the Management Plan and highlighted Nature Reserves and gave an example of the RSPB Nature Reserve at Newton Poppleford where grazing has been going on for some time;
- Concerns raised that farming interest had not been demonstrated in the report as farming has the biggest effect on landscapes. In response the Chairman explained that the farming community had been fully engaged in work on the Blackdown Hills AONB management plan where these issues were more relevant;
- No response received from the National Farmers Union;

RESOLVED:

1. That the comments received on the Draft document be noted.
2. That the adoption of the revised (2019) East Devon and Blackdown Hills Landscape Character Assessment for use in decision making be approved.

57 **Action Plan for Production of a Revised East Devon Playing Pitch Strategy**

The Service Lead, Planning Strategy and Development Management briefed the Committee on the production of the original East Devon Playing Pitch Strategy and the Sports Playing Pitch Strategy and advised this report sought recommendation to revise the East Devon Playing Pitch Strategy. The expectation would be a light touch exercise every three years to refresh information and data.

Members noted the major benefits of keeping an up-to-date strategy which assists in funding from Sport England. Members noted funding had been received for Kings School, Ottery St Mary and had also helped massively with negotiations on development at Cranbrook, Winslade Park, Clyst St Mary and the former Rolle College Playing Fields, Exmouth.

The Committee considered the report that outlined the methodology for a revised East Devon Playing Pitch Strategy as discussed and agreed with Sport England. Members noted the slight risk of assistance from external consultants for the more technical work with costs covered by existing budgets.

The Committee were supportive of the East Devon Playing Pitch Strategy and points raised during discussion were:

- Fundamentally important for health and wellbeing;
- The Strategy needs to be reviewed to reflect the criteria changes for sports halls. Concerns raised that the Rugby Union now would like to lease pitches to clubs;
- Concerns raised that schools are losing play space due to expansion to accommodate the increase in pupils;
- Welcome the focus on grass root sport and a flag ship facility;
- Need provision for children to be active;
- Football teams struggle in the winter to find suitable pitches to play on;
- Social and health benefit to children and families;
- Encourage more sports field sites to be used for night time helicopter landings for financial benefit and site protection;
- Encourage joint use of school fields;
- Not boundary restrictive;
- Encourage clubs to signpost for funding;
- Clarification sought on pitch provision in green wedge sites. In response the Service Lead, Planning Strategy and Development Management explained that pitch provision could be appropriate in a green wedge provided it does not conflict with the purposes of the green wedge such as if it would lead to settlement coalescence. The Service Lead, Planning Strategy and Development Management also referred to the example in the draft Exmouth Sports Pitch Strategy and advised it would be reviewed in the next phase;
- Provision for ladies sport including netball;
- Provision for 3G pitches and Multi-use Games Areas (MUGA's);
- Concerns raised for deterioration of non-club sites and bringing them up to standard;
- Protection of sports;
- Clarification of Sports Strategy, Health Strategy and Planning Strategy.

RESOLVED:

That a revised East Devon Playing Pitch Strategy in consultation with Sport England and other supporting bodies and clubs to aid future funding bids to support the delivery of new and improved sport facilities in the district and negotiations with developers over provision as part of the major developments be approved.

58 **Custom and Self-build Housing**

The Committee considered the report which sought to provide Members with a detailed understanding of ways to encourage more custom and self-build in East Devon.

During discussion some members expressed frustration about recommendation 3 and comments were made that the proposed task and finish forum would duplicate work already completed by the Overview Committee and Housing Review Board. It was also commented that the detailed work already undertaken had not been included in this document. The Chief Executive responded to the views expressed and advised the idea of another task and finish form had come from Members themselves as expressed in the Member Workshop on self and custom build in December 2018. The Chief Executive advised the comments made would be addressed.

Comments made during discussions included:

- A good way to bring good quality affordable housing into the community;
- Interpretation for self-build and affordability;
- The need for work on examples including modular builds.
- The need to tailor buildings to community needs;
- Homes England policies have changed;
- Custom build houses provides work for small builders;
- Frustration was expressed that some very expensive houses are alleged to be self-build;
- The National Planning Policy guidance considers how to best support self-build and custom house building;
- Building houses builds communities;
- The Right to Buy Model should be used for custom and self-build housing, people should have working and family links to the area;
- EDDC own a huge piece of housing land in Axminster that could be used for the benefit of people who live in the East Devon area. Concerns raised that EDDC had not moved forward with the site in Axminster. In response the Chief Executive noted the concerns raised and suggested it could be discussed at the Housing Review Board to better understand the levels of difficulty the council is faced with;
- Big demand for assisted living units which could potentially release existing housing stock;
- Conflicting demands between building more affordable houses and the delivery of infrastructure. Self-build houses are being gamed by people who want to build large expensive houses.
- It was queried whether a tier classification could be introduced so that large and expensive houses built pay CIL and to use the CIL tool to encourage building the type of property that is wanted. In response the Chief Executive agreed in principle that it was for ordinary families to acquire land to build their own houses but said the difficulty was policy allowed houses to be built subject to finances available. In response to the comment about CIL the Chief Executive advised that CIL did not apply to self and custom build.
- Clarification sought on Policy H2. The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised it was not a requirement, however, it could be

considered at the local plan review to look at evidence to put in a policy to make this a requirement.

The Chief Executive noted the comments made to recommendation 3 and advised a revised report can be brought back to Strategic Planning Committee to help tie up what has been done through previous forums, what other authorities are doing and potential actions to promote self and custom building in the district.

RESOLVED:

1. That a total of 93 individual registered on the self-build register at the end of the monitoring period (30 October 2018) and the need to take this into account when undertaking the Council's planning, housing regeneration and disposal of land functions be noted.
2. That the need to permission nine suitable plots in addition to those already consented to meet the demand shown on the self-build register during the next 3 years (by 31 October 2021) be noted.
3. That a new comprehensive report on self-build be brought to the next appropriate Strategic Planning Committee taking into account what is happening in the district, what the council can do to assist and taking the outcome of the Housing task and finish forum and Housing Review Board Workshop into account.

59 **Draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document**

The Committee considered the Service Lead, Strategic Planning and Development Management report that sought approval of the draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document for public consultation over a period of six weeks. The purpose of the report was to give guidance about expectations for affordable housing delivery in the district which would enable developers and landowners to understand the requirements.

The Committee noted the limited detail on viability in the report. The Service Lead, Strategic Planning and Development Management advised it can be referred to on the website where it is regularly updated.

Points raised during discussion on the proposed draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document included:

- Clear guidance and illustrations were welcomed to show what is and what is not acceptable when considering planning applications at Development Management Committee that have badly clustered affordable housing;
- Clarification sought on the affordability ratio and the definition of affordable housing. The Service Lead, Strategic Planning and Development Management advised that delivering houses under the new definition of affordable housing in the NPPF such as discounted market housing are not affordable to people with the greatest need in East Devon. The Service Lead, Strategic Planning and Development Management advised it was a fundamental problem that East Devon District Council do not have control over but had made representations to government about;
- Clarification sought on whether the viability can be done ahead of planning consent as the value paid for the land is often the biggest factor affecting the viability of a development. The Service Lead, Strategic Planning and Development Management advised the approach taken was from Homes England in terms of funding bids and welcomed the responses from the consultation. It

was also advised that viability appraisals would only be done when not policy compliant. Since the viability often changes over time due to unexpected costs, economic change etc., it was not possible to fix viability and hold developers to the original agreement. The Chief Executive advised to use Cranbrook as a case study to reflect on how much public money was needed for the development. Phase 1 cost £55m (not including Junction 29 and the Clyst Honiton Bypass);

RESOLVED:

That the draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document for public consultation over a period of six weeks be approved.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

P Diviani (Chairman)
M Allen (Vice-Chairman)
S Bond
J Elson
G Godbeer
I Hall
G Jung
R Longhurst
E Rylance
P Skinner
M Williamson

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

D Barratt
R Giles
A Moulding
I Thomas

Officers in attendance:

Mark Williams, Chief Executive
Ed Freeman, Service Lead Strategic Planning and Development Management
Shirley Shaw, Planning Barrister
Wendy Harris, Democratic Services Officer

Councillor apologies:

M Booth
C Brown
M Howe
G Pook

Chairman

Date: