

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Strategic Planning Committee held at Online via the zoom app on 7 June 2022

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.45 am

1 Public speaking

Before the start of the meeting the Chair thanked the former Chair, Councillor Dan Ledger, on behalf of the Committee for doing a fantastic job for the past two years leading the Council through the difficult early stages of the new Local Plan.

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting

Members accepted the minutes of the consultative Strategic Planning Committee on 3 May 2022.

3 Declarations of interest

7. Community Infrastructure Levy Allocation for Dinan Way Extension, Exmouth. Councillor Olly Davey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Exmouth Town Councillor, Exmouth Town Council is implicated in funding for the Dinan Way Extension and a resident of Exmouth.

8. Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill - Planning Implications. Councillor Dan Ledger, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Seaton Town Councillor, Seaton and Axe Valley are being put forward for a Levelling Up Bid.

9. Employment Land Review to year ending 31 March 2021. Councillor Dan Ledger, Affects Non-registerable Interest, A unit owned by his family is listed in the report.

4 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

5 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There were no confidential/exempt items.

6 Community Infrastructure Levy Allocation for Dinan Way Extension, Exmouth

The Committee was asked to consider a request that the Community Infrastructure Levy allocation of £400k that had previously been withdrawn from the Dinan Way Extension project in Exmouth be reinstated. This was brought about by the Government's announcement of the new Levelling Up Fund 2 and Devon County Council's decision to pursue a revised bid for the extension.

Discussion covered:

- Clarification was sought whether the developers for Goodmores Farm had contributed funding to Devon County Council for the school and the Dinan Way Extension. The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised he would provide a written response;
- Reassurance was sought that if the bid was unsuccessful the £400k would be returned to the pot. It was confirmed that in that eventuality the intention in the recommendation, if Members agreed, would be deallocate the money and return it to the main Community Infrastructure Levy Pot;
- It was questioned whether the match funding of £400k would be an adequate amount to successfully build the extension taking into account the increase in inflation. The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management confirmed the cost of the project had indeed increased and had been contacted by Devon County Council after the report was published to consider an opportunity to increase the funding which was open to the suggestion if Members agreed;
- Not in favour of increasing the amount of funding as money needs to be spent all over the district;
- There is a need to cross reference with the Devon Climate Emergency Strategy. Is it essential as it will move traffic congestion from Exmouth to Clyst St Mary and Junction 30 of the M5?
- Clarification was sought about whether Exmouth Town Council would still contribute as previously agreed. The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management could not give a definitive answer but confirmed Exmouth Town Council would be contributing. During the meeting the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management received an email from the Exmouth Town Council Clerk who clarified their original contribution was £158k but that their members would be discussing whether to increase this amount at their Full Council meeting next week;
- Would enable shorter journeys for the residents of Brixington with a suggestion that Stagecoach could also deliver a service along the route;
- It would enable redevelopment of the gateway to the town including the railway station;
- Improvements to some cycle routes;
- Not clear in the report about why there is a need for a new road especially as the council's ambition is to be a green council. In response the Committee were reminded that the current Local Plan adopted the Dinan Way Extension as an infrastructure project for Exmouth and was also on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan as a priority one project but could be reviewed through the new Local Plan to take into account the council's climate change emergency if Members wished;

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Confirmation that £400k of Community Infrastructure Levy money be made available as match funding to support a Levelling Up Fund 2 bid being made by Devon County Council for the Dinan Way Extension in Exmouth; and
2. In the event that Devon County Council's Levelling Up Fund 2 bid for the Dinan Way Extension in Exmouth is unsuccessful the £400k to be deallocated for this purpose and returned to the main Community Infrastructure Levy pot.

The report presented to Committee summarised the key planning reforms in the new Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill that could potentially impact on EDDC and changes to the production of the new Local Plan and timetables if major changes were proposed.

These included:

- The potential risks to the planning system that could impact on the local plan production, including a plan led system and the importance of having an up-to-date Local Plan;
- The removal of the proposals for a zoning system and 'in-principle' consent for sites allocated for growth;
- Funding and delivery of infrastructure which would replace the Community Infrastructure Levy and the need for negotiation. Although this was welcomed it was difficult to understand how this would work;
- Creating beautiful places and improving environmental outcomes;
- Digital transformation and better use of digital technology to increase engagement in the planning system.

The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management reassured Members of the need to move ahead with the new Local Plan as these changes would not be as significant as previously presented in the Planning White Paper.

Members' comments included:

- Clarification sought on the outcome of the Environmental Outcome Reports. The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised it was unclear what extent this would differ from the Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessments already carried out or whether it was just a rebranding exercise;
- Support was expressed for the report;
- Support to give more weight to neighbourhood plans;
- Clarification sought on the outcome to remove the requirement of a five year land supply upon the adoption of the Local Plan. The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised that in his opinion this change was not that significant as the requirement was only to be removed for the first 5 years following adoption of a Local Plan. He advised that in order to be found sound a Local Plan would need to demonstrate that it delivered a 5 year land supply at least that period of time anyway.
- Reference was made to the delivery of high quality design and beautiful places and the need to make sure the correct design standards were in place in the Local Plan to build accessible homes suitable for the right stage of life and disability level. In response Members were advised that the Bill required a District Design Guide to be produced that would be revisited and produced taking into account good design and engagement through community consultation. The accessibility issues and adaptability issues have been addressed through the new Local Plan and will be further considered through evidence from the Local Needs Assessment. Members were reminded that they had all been invited to attend a workshop on Friday morning to update Members on the Local Housing Needs Assessment;
- Reference was made to 'enhance local democracy and engagement' and how this would work in terms of how the public would understand the rules on planning;
- Clarification sought about the pilot community land auction. The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised there would be some requirement but was unclear what this would be until he had sight of the regulations;

- Clarification sought on the land value tax and the suggestion that payment would be made at the end of the build out. What mechanism would be put in place to ensure completion is reached. What action could be taken? The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management acknowledged the concerns raised and emphasised that this issue was why CIL was originally introduced to ensure payment was made in the early stages of development to ensure money was available to deliver infrastructure in good time however this had not worked in the long term due to the lack of match funding. He stressed this issue could be made worse if developers were required to pay at the end;
- Clarification sought on who would bear the cost on enforcement action for planning applications. The Service Lead – Planning Strategy advised that his personal preference was to impose spot fines that would be equivalent to the cost of the planning application, however this was not part of the bill and so the cost would remain with the local authority;
- It was questioned whether there would be further consultation with Local Authorities as the Bill goes through Parliament.
- It was questioned whether the Government would look at improving energy efficiency on existing housing stock and whether there would be increased grants to accommodate this. It was advised Government was taking this forward through the Building Regulations to improve insulation levels and renewable energies in new builds and was happening through the Future Homes Standard through a phased approach.

Strategic Planning Committee Members noted the contents of the report.

8 **Employment Land Review to year ending 31 March 2021**

The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management presented a report that summarised the employment land review undertaken for 2020-21. The Council was required to undertake this monitoring exercise for the production of the new Local Plan and to ensure there was sufficient land availability in the district to support growth.

Members' attention was drawn to appendix 2 of the appended report that summarised the overview of employment land for that period which included:

- 3 ha of employment sites granted;
- 1.3 ha of permissions under construction;
- 1.91 ha of completions;

Also included were:

- 38 ha with extant planning permission;
- 63 ha allocated in the Local Plan but not being taken forward

The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised there was a need to understand the reasoning behind this and suggested this could be because of the cost of building the employment spaces and the income from selling or letting. This meant that in some areas employment spaces were barely worth what they cost to build. Members also noted there was also a need to allocated employment land as part of housing sites to subsidise the delivery of the employment sites.

Comments included:

- It was questioned what the impact on employment sites would be given the demand to work from home. In response it was advised the Economic

Development Needs Assessment report detailing guidance and evidence would be provided to Members in the next couple of months

- There was a need to take into consideration the B8 (storage and distribution) category as a lot of minor country roads are not suitable for HGVs. There is a need to monitor where these planning applications are being made and refuse them if the road is inadequate. In response the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised the council was bound to the Highway Authority's advice but they would usually advise us to restrict HGV movements to sites where the road network is unsuitable for such vehicles;
- There was a clear need to look at mixed use development sites to link employment and housing together.

Strategic Planning Committee Members acknowledged the report.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

P Arnott (Chair)

O Davey (Vice-Chair)

M Allen

J Bailey

K Blakey

P Hayward

M Howe

B Ingham

R Lawrence

D Ledger

A Moulding

G Pratt

E Rylance

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

M Chapman

P Faithfull

J Kemp

D Manley

M Rixson

J Rowland

E Wragg

Officers in attendance:

Ed Freeman, Service Lead Planning Strategy and Development Management

Shirley Shaw, Planning Barrister

Wendy Harris, Democratic Services Officer

Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor (and Deputy Monitoring Officer)

Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

Councillor apologies:

S Chamberlain

P Skinner

Chairman

Date: