

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of Strategic Planning Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 2 September 2025**

#### **Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 10.05 am and ended at 4.05 pm

#### **9 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 July 2025 were confirmed as a true record.

#### **10 Declarations of interest**

Minute 14. Newton Poppleford Settlement Boundary.  
Councillor Jessica Bailey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Devon County Councillor for Newton Poppleford.

Minute 15. East Devon Local Plan - consideration of potential plan changes to allocations.

In accordance with the Code of Good Practice for Councillors and Officers dealing with planning matters as set out in the Constitution, the Chair, Councillor Todd Olive, on behalf of Committee Members advised lobbying in respect of site allocations Exmo\_20, Honi\_07, Honi\_12, Honi\_13, Honi\_18, GH/ED39a, GH/ED/39b and Whim\_08.

Minute 15. East Devon Local Plan - consideration of potential plan changes to allocations.

Councillor Jessica Bailey & Councillor Paul Hayward, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Devon County Councillor.

Minute 15. East Devon Local Plan - consideration of potential plan changes to allocations.

Councillor Olly Davey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 15. East Devon Local Plan - consideration of potential plan changes to allocations.

Councillor Paul Hayward, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Employee of Axminster Town Council.

Minute 15. East Devon Local Plan - consideration of potential plan changes to allocations.

Councillor Todd Olive, Affects and prejudicial Non-registerable Interest, Site allocation Whim\_11.

#### **11 Public speaking**

Minute 15 – East Devon Local Plan – consideration of potential plan changes to allocations. Councillor Roy Collins expressed his deep concern about the about the global food crisis, highlighting the alarming trend of farm closures and the loss of millions of acres of productive farmland. He noted that extreme weather events are increasingly devastating crops worldwide, compounding the issue. Councillor Collins criticised current government policies, stating they are contributing to farmers abandoning their

livelihoods. He referenced that over 6,300 farming-related businesses in the UK have shut down in the past year alone. He urged the Committee to take decisive action to protect farmers and preserve farmland before the situation become irreversible.

12 **Matters of urgency**

There was no matters of urgency to discuss.

13 **Confidential/exempt item(s)**

There were no confidential or exempt items.

14 **Newton Poppleford Settlement Boundary**

The report before Committee asked Members to reconsider the proposed settlement boundary for Newton Poppleford following concerns raised by Councillor Burhop in his capacity as Ward Member about how the western side of the village would not be accessible to the centre of the village as it did not have safe footpaths.

The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and development Management explained that there were two options for consideration referring to appendix 1 which would revise the boundary to that previously recommended by officers and appendix 2 which would retain the settlement boundary as previously agreed by Strategic Planning Committee.

Councillor Burhop, Ward Member for Newton Poppleford and Harpford joined remotely to expand on his concerns explaining that the western side of the village would affect the proposed allocations Newt\_04 and Newt\_05 that did not have a footpath emphasising the possibility of the creation of a footpath which may or may not happen. He advised that he supported the officer recommendation to revise the boundary to that previously recommended by officers as detailed in appendix 1 which would protect the village to the west by unwanted development, and which also had the support of the Parish Council.

**RESOLVED:**

That the settlement boundary for the settlement of Newton Poppleford be revised to the boundary that had previously been recommended by officers as shown on the map at appendix 1 as a thick black line.

15 **East Devon Local Plan - consideration of potential plan changes to allocations**

The Committee received a presentation from the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management on the list of sites that Members had requested officers to reconsider in light of a higher number of objections received from the public and statutory consultees from the first Regulation 19 consultation.

Members noted that site Lymp\_01, which had previously been suggested had been included in error and would therefore not be considered and that site Honi\_18 which had not been previously mentioned had now been included as it had come to light that a petition of over 80 signatures objecting to this site had not been addressed in the feedback report which the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management offered his apologies for.

The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management reminded Members about the need to remain in the transitional arrangements introduced by the updated National Planning Policy Framework as this allowed the plan to meet only 80% of the district's currently identified housing need. He also asked Members to consider the National Planning Policy Framework regarding the two-phase Regulation 19 consultation, noting its relevance to the site allocation discussion. The guidance clearly states that the content of an emerging plan must not change significantly from what was presented at the initial Regulation 19 stage as this could potentially lead to the need to find an additional 5,000 homes.

Councillor Ingham asked why the four large sites, were considered after the Committee had already gone through a detailed process of identifying a wide range of potential housing allocations in existing settlements to meet the emerging local plan target. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management acknowledged that focusing on the large sites might seem appealing, as it would reduce pressure on existing settlements. However, he explained that these sites were found to not support sustainable development over the plan period. Councillor Ingham disagreed, saying that the sites were dismissed simply because they were no longer needed to meet the housing target.

Clarification was sought from officers about what could be done to avoid the Inspector determining that the plan had undergone substantial changes. Members were advised that some changes could be made but to be mindful of making significant changes as these would change the transitional arrangements. For example, Exmo\_20 would equate to 48% of the total number of homes allocated in Exmouth and this would constitute a fundamental change as this percentage of houses could not be made up elsewhere in Exmouth.

## **EXMOUTH**

### **Exmo\_47 – land west of Hulham Road, Exmouth.**

Proposed use: residential, 15 dwellings

Main issues:

Impact of heritage assets – close to the Grade I Point in View Chapel, Grade I The Manse and Grade I A La Ronde.

Officer Recommendation:

Retain Exmo\_47 as an allocation for 15 dwellings though with policy refinement to follow to more fully emphasise heritage protection matters.

### **Exmo\_20 – land at St Johns, Exmouth.**

Proposed use: mixed use development, 700 dwellings

Main issues

Harm to the Pebblebed Heaths SAC/SPA

Loss of biodiversity, ancient woodland and wildlife corridors

Impact on heritage assets

Flood risk

Poor access from B3179

Unsustainable location

Procedural flaws

Mineral constraints beneath the site

Main issues addressed:

400m development buffer to be provided from the boundaries of the site to the Pebblebed Heaths to coincide with some of the higher more open parts of the site.  
Create a vehicular access off the B3179 to the north eastern corner of the site to run through the 400m exclusion zone.  
Mineral resource assessment to be undertaken to ensure mineral safeguarding.  
Detailed work completed on heritage assets in terms of visual connectivity

Officer Recommendation:

Retain Exmo\_20 as an allocation for 700 dwellings with amended policy wording to address heritage and mineral safeguarding.

**Exmo\_17 – land to the south of Littleham, Exmouth.**

Proposed use: mixed use/residential, 410 dwellings

Main issues:

Within designated National Landscape

Potential harm to the setting of St Margaret and St Andrew's Church and surrounding historic landscape

Traffic access

Local infrastructure and services pressure

Main issues addressed:

Creation of a 250m buffer between the site and church to reduce adverse impact on the setting.

The more sensitive areas of the site will be left as open space.

Officer Recommendation:

Retain Exmo\_17 as an allocation for 410 dwellings.

**Exmo\_08 & 16 – Littleham Fields, Exmouth**

Proposed use: Residential, 45 dwellings combined

Main issues:

Harm to the setting of Grade II listed farmhouse and the Maer Valley landscape

Impact on wildlife and biodiversity

Concerns on local infrastructure

Impact on roads, schools, sewage and water infrastructure

Potential flooding issues

Traffic congestion

Main issues addressed:

Farmhouse does not sit in isolation of development so additional impact of additional development is reduced

Visual impact varies at different times of the year

Benefits outweigh the harm as in a relatively sustainable location.

Officer Recommendation:

Retain Exmo\_08 & 16 as an allocation for 410 dwellings.

**Exmo\_18 – Littleham Fields, next to Liverton Business Park, Exmouth**

Proposed use: Employment

Main issues:

Southern part of the site is adjacent to the National Landscape

Main issues addressed:

Policy to mitigate landscape impacts.

Officer Recommendation:

Retain Exmo\_18 as an employment allocation limited to 1.8 hectares.

### Public Speaking

Nigel Humphrey strongly opposed the continued inclusion of Exmo\_20 in the local plan advising that despite over 20 documented issues the report remains unclear and contradictory. The report warns of risk from “significant changes” without defining what those are. He reminded the Committee that a year ago officers did not recommend this site, yet it was approved without full understanding. Since then, more issues have emerged, raised not only by residents but also by statutory bodies including Natural England, Historic England, Devon Wildlife Trust and the Environment Agency. Over 1,100 objections were submitted during consultation and even members of the Committee have expressed regret over its approval and the only justification for keeping it in appears to be meeting government housing numbers and avoiding delays. Mr Humphrey urged the Committee to reject the site and make a responsible decision.

John Hamill also strongly opposed to the allocation of Exmo\_20 and reminded the Committee that at the last meeting the Chair had said he had not voted for this site, Councillor Brian Bailey at the meeting in February said that he wished he had never voted for it and a year ago officers did not think this site should be allocated. Devon Wildlife Trust, East Devon National Landscape, Natural England and Historic England all oppose this site. No-one wants Exmo\_20. Mr Hamill urged the Committee to follow their own common sense and reject it.

Councillor Nick Hookway, as the Devon County Councillor for Exmouth and Budleigh Coastal Division raised concerns regarding highways and access issues related to proposed site allocations, particularly Exmo\_17 and Exmo\_20. For Exmo\_17, improvements to the local road network and national cycle routes were essential especially where the route passes through Bidmead sheltered housing as increased cycling traffic poses risks to vulnerable residents. Whilst he supported the proposed cycle route amendments connecting to the South West Coast Path there was still no mention of improved access to Devon Cliffs Holiday Park, Castle Lane or the new road mentioned in the neighbourhood plan. Also the proposed roundabout at Salterton Road and Liverton Business Park deserves greater attention, especially as it could serve multiply sites. Turning to Exmo\_20 he had deep concerns about the access via the B3179 due to its environmental sensitivity and proximity to the heathland and widening the road would be unacceptable. The report’s suggestion that ‘mitigation measures may be required’ is a gross understatement as Exmo\_20 risks turning a valued natural area into suburban sprawl, damaging tourism and wildlife. He urged the Committee to take a strategic, joined-up approach to consider placemaking and shared infrastructure across sites, rather than treating them in isolation. In response to Councillor Hookway’s comments about a new roundabout at Salterton Road the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised that this can only be required if it was necessary to make the development acceptable in highway terms and currently the Highway Authority does not consider it essential so it cannot be enforced through planning policy. He also addressed his concerns about the impact of increased vehicular movements on the Pebblebed Heaths and advised that consultations were currently assessing this and preparing a mitigation strategy and their findings will be added to the evidence base before the next Regulation 19 consultation.

Questions from Members included:

- In response to a question about whether the impact on wildlife and woodland could be mitigated for Exmo\_20, officers advised that the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA), which forms part of the evidence base, concluded that with proposed mitigations, the site is currently acceptable. However, further work is ongoing, particularly around vehicle emissions and their effect on the heathland but at this stage, there is no environmental barriers to allocating the site.
- In response to a question about whether it could be possible to get a connection into St John's Road via parcel 12 on the diagram, officers advised that vehicle access was not feasible (as shown on page 38 of the agenda) but pedestrian and cycle access is expected to improve site connectivity.
- In response to a question about whether it could be possible to consider limiting the speed limit to 40mph limit on the B3179 officers advised that this would be addressed at the planning application stage.
- Clarification was sought on the current percentage of dwellings in Exmouth
- In response to a question about type of mineral was beneath Exmo\_20, it was advised that it was sand and gravel and that it was owned by the landowner.

Comments during debate included:

- Serving on this Committee is incredibly difficult as every time we try to move forward with the plan the housing numbers shift, public concerns grow, and no community wants development near them. Nobody wants to lose farmland and landscapes, but we must face the fact that we have a legal duty to deliver housing numbers set by government, even if we disagree with them. East Devon is rich in heritage and protected landscapes, but government policy does not recognise this. We have a chance to deliver 80% of the required housing, it is not perfect and not easy but rejecting the plan risks losing control entirely and having to find 5,000 more homes. Removing Exmo\_20 means finding 700 homes elsewhere. This is a tough position, but we must make the best decision for all of East Devon, not just one town.
- It was suggested that a compromise could be reached for site Exmo\_20 and to just allocated housing on the south side of Exmo\_20 as the north side would be more difficult. In response the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management explained that by taking into account the 400m buffer zone and the mineral extraction zone means that development on this site would only be on the south side.
- A concern was raised about Exmouth's sustainability as the further out you go the more difficult it becomes.
- Totally against this site as it appears that officers are bending over backwards to try and make Exmo\_20 work and there is a limit to what you can do and what you cannot do because the main road.
- Reference was made to the comments made by officers about the inability to access through Exmo\_18 due to the water course and it was suggested to join together Exmo\_20 and Exmo\_18 to provide funds for a bridge which would help solve the access issue. It is important to try and look at all potential issues and outcomes.

**RESOLVED:**

To retain site allocations Exmo\_47, Exmo\_20, Exmo\_17 Exmo\_08, Exmo\_16 and Exmo\_18 in the Local Plan.

**AXMINSTER**

**Axmi\_01a – land west of Musbury Road.**

Proposed use: 2-hectare employment,

Main issues:

Flood risks

Archaeological interest on the site for the two World War II pill boxes and the potential route of the Fosse Way Roman Road, the route of the Axminster and Lyme Regis light railway, a trackway for prehistoric flint and medieval pottery.

Close to two Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

Main issues addressed

The site owner was requested to undertake the necessary archaeological works, but it was not proceeded.

Officer Recommendation:

Remove Axmi\_01a as an employment allocation due to the constraints.

**Axmi\_02, Axmi\_08 and Axmi\_09 – land east of Musbury Road.**

Proposed use: residential, 438 dwellings

Main issues included:

Heritage and archaeological sensitivity due to proximity to Roman Fort and Fosse Way on the northern part of the site

Flood risks

Road safety concerns on A35

Road safety and access issues on Musbury Road

Inadequate sewerage infrastructure and surface water flooding

Main issues addressed

Further archaeological work to be carried out.

Officer Recommendation:

Retain Axmi\_02, Axmi\_08, Axmi\_09 as a combined allocation for 438 dwellings subject to archaeological concerns not establishing an unreasonable constraint to development (this information is not currently available)

Public speaking

Simon Coles from Carney Sweeny spoke on behalf C G Fry & Son who were promoting these sites for development confirmed that a GFS survey had been completed on the northern part of the site and that a trenching plan of 30 trenches has been agreed with the County Archaeologist which would commence in September and the results will be provided in November.

Questions from Members included:

- Clarification was sought about the November timing for the results of the archaeological works as the plan had to keep to a strict timeline. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management confirmed that it was later than he hoped but that some initial findings may provide clarity.

**RESOLVED:**

To remove Axmi\_01 as an employment allocation and retain Axmi\_02, Axmi\_08 and Axmi\_09 as an allocation for 438 dwellings subject to the archaeological findings.

## **HONITON**

### **Honi\_07, Honi\_12 and Honi\_13 – land adjacent/near to St Michaels Church.**

Proposed use: residential, 111 dwellings combined.

Main issues included:

Honi\_12 is dependent on Honi\_07 for access

Concerns about landscape and heritage impact due to proximity to listed buildings

Legal compliance concerns over the consultation process and late inclusion of Honi\_12

Impact on the Blackdown Hills National Landscape

Partly adjacent and seen within the context of the East Devon National Landscape

Officer Recommendation:

Remove sites Honi\_07, Honi\_12 and Honi\_13 from the plan.

### **Honi\_18 – land at Kings Road, Hale Close, Honiton.**

Proposed use: residential, 136 dwellings

Main issues included:

An error had occurred in the feedback report that had not identified that a petition had been submitted including over 80 signatures objecting to this site.

Road safety and access issues.

Impacts to environment and wildlife

Heritage and visual impact concerns

Site abuts the Blackdown Hills National Landscape

#### **Main issues addressed**

National Highways and Police recommend introducing a new speed limit extending the existing 30mph limit in a south easterly direction up the A35.

Officer Recommendation:

Retain the allocation of site Honi\_18 for 136 dwellings within the plan.

### **GH/ED/39b – land south of Northcote Hill (south of railway) & GH/ED/39a (north of railway)**

Proposed use: residential, 100 dwellings

Submissions on behalf of the developer made provision for up to 300 dwellings on the site. Further work indicates to accept the increase capacity in a reasonable landscape sensitive way, and which could help deliver improvements to walking, cycling and bus access which are currently poor.

Officer Recommendation:

Retain the site GH/ED/39a and increase the allocation to 115 dwellings and retain site GH/ED/39b and increase the allocation to 195 dwellings.

#### **Public speaking**

Dan Rogers from Bell Cornwall spoke on behalf of Coombe Estate and expressed disappointment on the proposal to remove Honi\_07 and reminded Committee that it was in a highly sustainable location, close to public transport, services and town facilities, it scored high in the HELAA process, that it was a second choice site in the Regulation 18 consultation and at the meeting in September 2024 officers and Committee endorsed to allocate for the site for 30 dwellings. Overtime Honi\_07 was merged with Honi\_12 to form a larger allocation which the Coombe Estate had concerns about as Honi\_12 is more



prominent and many of the issues in the officer's report seems to stem from combining the two sites. Mr Rogers addressed the two main objections raised for landscape impact and heritage concerns advising that Honi\_07 was well screened by mature trees and additional planting could further reduce visual impact and that the concerns for the nearby church gates and cottage listed could be mitigated with open space and planting. Mr Rogers urged members to retain Honi\_07 and consider increasing allocations elsewhere in Honiton.

Ben Luxton from Stags spoke on behalf of the landowners for Honi\_12 and expressed disappointment on the proposal to remove the allocation saying he did not agree with the officer recommendation as the site was fundamentally deliverable. He addressed the main issues, advising that the access was fully supported via Honi\_07 from Weatherall Road and that the landowners were happy to proceed with the policy as drafted. Mr Luxton disagreed with the heritage concerns at the site sits further away and benefits from strong existing buffers and which could also be potentially facilitated referring to the previous speaker's suggestion of heritage mitigation for Honi\_07. He suggested that appropriate policy wording could be amended to require a full heritage assessment at the planning stage which would address the heritage and landscape concerns.

Stuart Lees, a Honiton resident spoke about a petition he had put together objecting to Honi\_18 with over 80 signatures from residents and that every single person expressed their concerns about the traffic flow and the safety of the A35 as it comes down into Honiton and he urged the Committee to go back and look at this in light of strong public opinion to rethink the flawed traffic plan as the road is not safe, extremely busy and dangerous.

Simon Coles presenting the site owners spoke about Honi\_18 and acknowledged the residents' concerns about road safety. He advised that although there had been no highway objections raised by the Highways Authority he suggested that the road speed could be reduced to slow down the traffic coming down the hill and that the landowners would maintain full and meaningful engagement with the community when the time comes if the allocation is retained.

Bethan Haigh spoke on behalf of Taylor Wimpey promoting GH/ED/39a and GH/ED/39b and supported the officer's recommendation to increase the allocations advising that technical evidence shows that these increases can be comfortably accommodated. She advised that planning permission had already been granted for GH/ED/39a and that the landowner was currently preparing an outline planning application for GH/ED/39b advising that Devon County Council were supportive of the proposed transport strategy that includes signaling under the railway bridge, and extending the footpath into Honiton.

Questions and comments from Members included:

- In response to a question about the public transport for the Northcote Area it was advised that this would be resolved at the planning application process stage.
- A Honiton Ward Member questioned why the Ward Members and Honiton Town Council had not been consulted about Honi\_18 when it was agreed to be reconsidered. The Ward Member also suggested that the public had been kept in the dark about the plan when the site was sneaked in last year. In response the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy & Development Management advised that it had been acknowledged in the report that the site was not part of the Regulation 18 consultation, but it was part of the Regulation 19 consultation which had undergone a lot of publicity.

- It was questioned whether the long of difficult process of the local plan had confused the public as some sites that the public thought were safe had ended up in the plan. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management sympathised with the public trying to engage and following the process and agreed that there were lessons to be learned with the different stages of the consultation.

Councillor Mike Howe proposed the officer recommendation as written which was seconded by Councillor Olly Davey.

Further comments included:

- Heavy traffic comes along Kings Road, and the visibility is horrendous.
- In response to the question about where would the 30mph speed limit be extended to slow down the traffic for Honi\_18, the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management did not have the answer but reminder members that the Police and the Highways Authority were happy in principle so it would be hard to reject the site on highway safety grounds.

The following amendment to the motion was proposed by Councillor Colin Brown proposed and seconded by Councillor Kevin Blakey. Councillor Brown advised that he could not support the officer recommendation as in his opinion Honi\_07, Honi\_12 and Honi\_13 were closer to amenities with good bus services, it was close to the train station and within walking distance to the town centre.

To retain Hon\_7, Honi\_12 and Honi\_13 as a combined allocation in the plan.

Comments made by Members on the amendment included:

- It was suggested that as St Michaels Church was the issue it would be better to look at the sites separately instead of all together to see if the heritage impact can be mitigated.
- The landscape impact is high for Honi\_13 compared to Honi\_07 which is a very sustainable site.
- To assist with the debate the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management provided some context to how the heritage and landscape impacts differed between the three sites. This included Honi\_07 being the most sensitive on the historical environment and both Honi\_12 and Honi\_13 being more sensitive on the National Landscape.

Councillor Paul Hayward supported Honi\_7 and Honi\_13 as allocations as these two sites combined could provide some residential dwellings that were in keeping with the heritage assets and proposed a further amendment to retain Honi\_07 and Honi\_13 and to remove Honi\_13, seconded by Councillor Mike Howe.

The Chair sought advice from the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management who advised that he stood by his previous comments as including these sites in the plan could not be justified.

**RESOLVED:**

1. To remove Honi\_12 as an allocation in the Local Plan.
2. To retain Honi\_07, Honi\_13, Honi\_18, GH/ED/39b and GH/ED/39a as allocations in the Local Plan.

## **SEATON**

### **Seat\_13a – land west of Axeview Road.**

Proposed use: residential 39 dwellings

Main issues:

Archaeological interest on the site for the adjacent Roman and earlier settlement at Honeyditches Scheduled Monument

Main issues addressed

Further archaeological work to be undertaken.

Officer Recommendation:

That should archaeological work come back and set out a robust case to allow for development in the site Seat\_13a should be allocated in the plan. If not, the allocation should be deleted.

### **RESOLVED:**

That should archaeological work come back and set out a robust case to allow for development in the site Seat\_13a should be allocated in the plan. If not, the allocation should be deleted.

## **FENITON**

### **Feni\_08 – land adjacent to Beechwood.**

Proposed use: residential 83 dwellings

Main issues:

Flooding

Sewage

Traffic

Sustainability

Main issues addressed

Although the site originally performed well in assessment especially its location and public transport one key change is that planning permission was granted on appeal for land at Colestock Road which had previously been rejected. During that appeal the Council defended refusal based on concerns about the scale of growth in Feniton being a tier 4 settlement, but the Inspector considered that the level of growth was appropriate which the Council must now take into consideration.

Officer Recommendation:

Retain Feni\_08 as a housing allocation for 83 dwellings

### **Otry\_20 – land to the south east of Bridge Cottages**

Proposed use: employment 4.64 hectares

One of the few villages' employment sites allocated for development in the plan and would be consistent with the spatial strategy to increase settlement self-containment and meet the needs of the community with no significant adverse development impacts.

Officer Recommendation:

Retain Otry\_20 as an employment allocation.

Public Speaking

Olly Ansell from Grassroots Planning spoke on behalf of the landowners and applicant for Feni\_08 advising that a planning application was currently submitted in line with the allocation for 60 dwellings and to include 50% affordable housing and a sustainable drainage system to reduce the volume of water flowing off the site.

Honiton Ward Member, Councillor Roy Collins reminded the Committee that the land around Feniton where the developments are proposed was either grade 1 or grade 2 agricultural land which would grow good crops.

**RESOLVED:**

Retain Feni\_08 as a housing allocation for 83 dwellings and retain Otry\_20 as an employment allocation.

**WHIMPLE**

Whim\_08a – land west of Bramley Gardens  
Proposed use: residential 50 dwellings

Main issues:

Green wedge

Flood risk

Impact on wildlife

Lack of safe pedestrian access and procedural issues in allocation

Main issued addressed

Further flood modelling will be needed and would come forward through any planning application process.

Although there was a slight incursion into the Green Wedge the Committee previously concluded that this would not materially impact on those issues.

Officer Recommendation:

Retain Whim\_08a as a residential allocation of 50 dwellings

Whim\_11 – land at Station Road

Proposed use: residential 33 dwellings

Main issues:

Flood risk

Impact of protected trees

Traffic and pedestrian safety

Land of Local Importance designation

Main issued addressed

Revised policy wording to reflect the comments about the Land of Local Importance

Further flood modelling will be needed and would come forward through any planning application process.

Officer Recommendation:

Retain Whim\_08a as a residential allocation of 50 dwellings

Public speaking

Simon Coles from Carney Sweeny representing the landowners for Whim\_08 and Whim\_11 concurred with the reports advising that the sustainable developments would provide much needed affordable housing. He confirmed that all the technical surveys

and assessment would be undertaken on both sites to demonstrate safe walking routes to the village centre, ecology etc and to alleviate the risks of flooding he advised that all new homes would be kept outside of the flood zone. He also advised that Whim\_08a would also be an opportunity to create a highly attractive corridor of green and blue infrastructure. The landowners are committed to fully engage with the parish council and the local community to help get things right and to help create a community orchard and provide safe connections to the village centre.

Justin Shaw, a resident of Whimble acknowledged the challenges the Committee faced and acknowledged the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management response about whether Green Wedge provides a moratorium on planning and housing development in the area. He appealed to the Committee to decline Whim\_08 referring to Green Wedge and coalescence between Cranbrook and Whimble and sought clarification about where the expansion of Whimble would stop. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management was unable to confirm what would happen to Whimble in future Local Plans and was unable to confirm what planning applications might come forward but did give reassurance that there was a substantial Green Wedge between Whimble and Cranbrook to prevent coalescence from happening. In response Mr Shaw advised that even a small loss of a Green Wedge could set a precedent to suggest it is ok to gradually chip away and if it happens on both sites, over time, it could lead to two areas merging. By allowing even a small erosion now, are we accepting that future outcome?

Councillor Yarwood representing the parish council made representation on behalf of the residents of Whimble advising that the concerns previously raised by the community still stand and were on record. One of the most pressing concerns is about pedestrian safety and as this is already a serious issue in the village a speed watch initiative was launched due to dangers posed by traffic entering and exiting the village which has at least 4 or 5 key pinch points where the road narrows to a single lane and no pedestrian footpaths.

On behalf of the residents Councillor Yarwood asked:

How will the council mitigate the increased risk to pedestrian safety? New developments often use shared surfaces to slow down traffic and reduce the separation between cars, pedestrians and cyclists.

How will footpaths be introduced in areas where roads are already too narrow for safe walking? This is a common issue in many villages as there is often a lack of footpaths in tier 4 settlements, particularly on narrow lanes. However as vehicle speeds in villages are usually low many people are comfortable walking along these lanes.

How will the inevitable hard landscaping from new homes and parking areas not increase flood risk? Hard landscaping can be designed to allow water to drain properly using sustainable drainage systems.

Councillor Todd Olive spoke about Whim\_08 and acknowledged the concerns raised about Whimble merging with Cranbrook. He said in his opinion 50 houses that had been previously agreed for this site was too many especially considering the findings in the latest flood risk assessment and proposed two changes to the policy which was seconded by Councillor Brian Bailey.

The two changes were:

- to add wording to ensure development does not cross the western ridgeline, which visually separates Whimble and Cranbrook
- to reduce the number of homes from 50 to 30 which was more appropriate for the site's size and character

Councillor Blakey, Ward Member for Cranbrook supported the proposed amended policy wording as this would mean a visual split between Cranbrook and Whimple and that the roof lines for the new development in Whimple should be kept down to a level so that the view on the ridge line remains the same and which would be feasible with the topography that already exists.

Councillor Howe did not support the proposed wording to reduce the number of houses from 50 to 30 as this number had not been properly assessed and suggested an amendment to change in the wording 'up to a maximum of 50' which would then allow the planning application to determine the quantity.

The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management explained that officers had applied a consistent methodology when assessing housing numbers across all sites. He expressed support for Councillor Howe's suggestion, noting that it aligned with this established approach.

The Chair of Planning Committee also supported Councillor Howe's revised policy wording, noting that officers had confirmed the proposed number was a reasonable allocation for this site.

The Planning Solicitor provided some further guidance and strongly recommended support for Councillor Howe's amendment advising that there did not appear to be a clear rationale for selecting 30 dwellings and that in contrast specifying 'up to 50 dwellings' would align with officer's advice that offers a more consistent approach.

In light of the advice received Councillor Olive, as the proposer accepted the amendment made by Councillor Howe, which was also accepted by Councillor Brian Bailey, as the seconder.

**RESOLVED:**

Retain Whim\_08a as a residential allocation subject to revised policy wording:

- to add wording to ensure development does not cross the western ridgeline, which visually separates Whimple and Cranbrook
- include wording 'up to a maximum of 50 dwellings which was more appropriate for the site's size and character

Councillor Todd Olive left the chamber for site allocation Whim\_11 and did not take part in the discussions or vote.

**RESOLVED:**

Retain Whim\_11 as a residential allocation for 33 dwellings.

**Clge\_25a – next to Darts Farm.**

Proposed use: employment

Main issues included:

Flood risk

Highways

Archaeology concerns

Main issues addressed

Awaiting additional information for the archaeology on the site

Officer Recommendation:

Wait for further information before drawing conclusions on the potential allocations for this site.

**RESOLVED:**

To wait for further information before drawing conclusions on the potential allocations for the site.

16 **East Devon Local Plan - Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMAs)**

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

17 **East Devon Local Plan - Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation**

The report presented to the Committee outlined the current position and proposed changes regarding gypsy and traveller site provision within the Local Plan, including risks, policy amendments and site allocations.

The Local Plan identifies a need for 29 Gypsy and Traveller pitches over the plan period which would be met through 15 pitches at the second new community, 5 pitches east of the M5 and 15 pitches at Cranbrook. Although this addressed the quantity it did not address the timing and it was noted that most pitches would not be delivered in the first five years. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised that to address the short-term gap site Brcl\_26 – Langaton Lane, Pinhoe had been proposed however due to unresolved issues and the absence of a willing landowner it was now recommended that site Brcl\_26 be removed from the plan and to rely on windfall sites in the short-term.

In addition to the deletion of site Brcl\_26 it was also recommended to make some changes to Policy HN09: Gypsy and Traveller Sites as set out in the report which represented the objections received, including a representative of the Gypsy and Irish Travellers and new travellers in Devon and Cornwall and a Charity called Traveller Space.

Comments and questions from Committee Members included:

- Clarity was sought on the policy changes to HN09 and whether long-term vacancy sites should be protected regardless of the current need, especially with the new town development increasing availability. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised there is a clear need for these sites now and that need will remain unmet until new communities are fully established. It was suggested that the sites that have been left vacant were due to wealthy landowners having no intention of using them which in practice means the Council has already lost those sites.
- We need to be minded that sometimes travellers do not want to use the sites that local authorities have allocated for them. It can appear pointless and a waste of time doing all this work for something that is almost superfluous.

**RESOLVED:**

That site allocation Brcl\_26 be deleted from the Local Plan and to amend the related plan policies as set out in the report.

18 **East Devon Local Plan - Duty to Co-operate**

The report presented to Committee summarised the duty to cooperate current position which identified key actions needed to progress the plan.

These included:

- Housing requirements – uncertainty from other local planning authorities about whether they will be able to meet their housing requirements.
- Employment land - East Devon objected to employment land provision in the Exeter Regulation 19 plan on the basis that it failed to allocate. Members noted that discussions were progressing on Statements of Common Ground to set out the respective positions of the two authorities and delegated authority was sought to the given to the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management to sign it.
- Transport issues related to growth in the West End – work is ongoing on the Greater Exeter Transport Study and will be brought before Committee at the next meeting.
- Implications of additional traffic for the Pebblebed Heaths – work is ongoing working towards a Mitigation Strategy and will be brought to Committee in due course.
- Water quality – Additional work is still needed to be completed to align with the current site allocations in the Local Plan and to understand the impacts on transmission infrastructure.
- Green and blue infrastructure.
- Control of pollution.
- Water quality issues.

The Chair strongly endorsed the recommendations as set out in the report and proposed the recommendations subject to an amendment to the fourth recommendation to read:

4. That Strategic Planning Committee note the update on the Water Cycle Study and agree to include a strategic policy on water quality, as generally described in paragraph 6.3 of this report, the details of which would be finalised following the completion of the water cycle study.

Comments and questions by Committee Members included:

- Clearer wording in the policy is needed to help major developers understand what is required to improve the water environment. This would ensure expectations are understood and met.
- Struggling to understand the Exeter City Council comments on pages 108 and 109. What is meant by 'Greater Exeter' as there is no defined area? In response the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management explained that it dates back to the Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) during the work on the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan which covered the whole area of Devon.

## **RESOLVED:**

1. That the issues highlighted in the report be noted, particularly those matters that remain unresolved.
2. That the addition of explanatory text to the local plan to deal with any future significant under delivery of housing in East Devon, or requests from other authorities to help meet their unmet housing requirements, as set out in paragraph 2.3 of the report be agreed.
3. To note that there continue to be concerns with Exeter City Council's approach to employment land provision in the Exeter Plan which are being clarified through a



Statement of Common Ground. Delegated authority to be granted to the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning to sign a Statement of Common Ground with Exeter City Council which reflect the Council's position as previously agreed by the Committee.

4. That the update on the Water Cycle Study be noted and to include a strategic policy on water quality, as generally described in paragraph 6.3 of this report, the details of which would be finalised following the completion of the water cycle study be agreed.

## 19 **East Devon Local Plan - policy for wind farms and turbines**

The report presented to Committee provided further information on policy options for addressing proposals for wind turbines and wind farms in East Devon.

The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management reminded the Committee that as the new NPPF published in 2024 had introduced a greater support for wind energy and removed the need for specific area allocations it was proposed to adopt a criteria-based policy which would respond to Historic England's feedback, align with the evolving direction of national policy and address the committee's discomfort with identifying specific areas.

Comments from Members included:

- Do not agree with the comments from Historic England as it does not mean they will not be tested again at the planning stage just like solar farms are.
- Could the Council take a hybrid approach and have a criteria-based policy as this way we are not endorsing them outright? In response the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised that this could potentially open up other sites to come forward and was less restrictive but that it would not be technically viable other than on a small domestic basis.
- Support was expressed for a criteria-based policy.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the changes to the plan in respect of wind turbines and wind farms as set out in the report be endorsed.

### **Attendance List**

#### **Councillors present (for some or all the meeting)**

B Bailey  
J Bailey  
K Blakey  
C Brown  
O Davey  
P Fernley  
P Hayward  
M Howe (Vice-Chair)  
B Ingham  
Y Levine  
T Olive (Chair)  
H Parr

#### **Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)**

R Collins  
P Faithfull  
N Hookway  
M Rixson

**Officers in attendance:**

Ed Freeman, Assistant Director Planning Strategy and Development Management  
Matthew Dickins, Planning Policy Manager  
Damian Hunter, Planning Solicitor  
Wendy Harris, Democratic Services Officer

**Councillor apologies:**

D Haggerty  
G Jung  
A Bailey (non-committee member)

Chairman .....

Date: .....