

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of Strategic Planning Committee held at Council Chamber Blackdown House on 22 October 2019**

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

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 2.40 pm (The Committee adjourned at 12.45 pm and reconvened at 1.18 pm)

#### **18 Public speaking**

Richard Brown spoke on minute 27 – Glover Review of Protected Landscapes in England as a member of the Dorset and East Devon National Park team and welcomed the report. He advised the National Park and National Park brand would attract investment, jobs, higher value economy, heritage and cultural year-round tourism and promote local produce and welcomed the opportunity to evolve the AONB into a National Park that would benefit the environment, communities and economy.

#### **19 Minutes of the previous meeting**

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

#### **20 Declarations of interest**

Minute 23 – Minutes of Community Infrastructure Levy Working Party of 17 September 2019.

Councillor Nick Hookway, Personal, Exmouth Littleham ward had applied for Community Infrastructure Levy funding.

Minute 23 – Minutes of the Community Infrastructure Levy Working Party of 17 September 2019.

Councillor Philip Skinner, Personal, Ex pupil of Exmouth Community College.

Minute 27 - Glover Review of Protected Landscapes in England.

Mark Williams, Personal, Previously employed as a Solicitor for North Moors National Park and Deputy Solicitor for Yorkshire Dales National Park.

#### **21 Matters of urgency**

There were no matters of urgency discussed.

#### **22 Confidential/exempt item(s)**

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

#### **23 Minutes of the Community Infrastructure Levy Working Party of 17 September 2019**

The Committee was asked to consider the recommendations of the Community Infrastructure Levy Members Working Party held on 17 September 2019.

The Service Lead for Planning Strategy and Development Management briefly outlined the purpose of the Working party and presented the report outlining the two key projects that had been identified.

The recommendations of the Working Party were:

1. That a contribution of 44% of the total estimated cost of the project, up to a maximum of £1.5m to contributed to the expansion proposal at Exmouth Community College;
2. That a contribution of £400k be made to Devon County Council subject to a significant contribution from Exmouth Town Council.

Points raised during the discussion included:

- Funding for Exmouth Community College was needed desperately.
- The college played an important role for social wellbeing.
- Clarification sought on the nature of the expansion. It was advised it was for a block of 16 additional classrooms.
- The college was three times the average size of a school in England.
- Concerns raised about the need for a further secondary school in the East Devon area.
- Concerns raised about using CIL money for infrastructure that should be funded by central government which could set a precedent for the future. It was suggested an amendment to the recommendation be considered it reflect as a 'one off'. In response it was advised the Community Infrastructure Levy had been adopted specifically to support these types of developments and members were advised it would not be an issue for setting a precedent.
- Concerns raised about setting a precedent for future funding for any DCC Highways projects. In response the Chief Executive advised each application would be considered on its own merits and fell within the CIL Regulations.
- It was suggested the rules of CIL be circulated to the committee to help understand what CIL is for.

**RESOLVED:**

1. **that a contribution of 44% of the total estimated cost of the project, up to a maximum of £1.5m be contributed to the expansion proposal at Exmouth Community College;**
2. **that a contribution of £400k be made to Devon County Council subject to a significant contribution from Exmouth Town Council.**

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**Greater Exeter Strategic Plan - updated scope and timetable**

The report presented to the committee sought members' agreement to the proposed scope and timetable for the production of the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP) to ensure that it proceeds in a way that meets the objectives of the four councils.

The Service Lead for Planning Strategy and Development Management outlined the revised timetable drawing Members attention to proposed milestones and different scopes considered. Members noted the Leadership Group supported scope 1.

Points raised during discussion

- Clarification sought on the legal implications if we go beyond the review date for the Local Plan review. It was advised problems would only occur if our policies

were out of date in terms of the National Planning Policy Framework so the need to progress the review as quickly as possible was important. Evidence does show we are progressing the review and have a plan for completing the work. The Chief Executive outlined 3 principle strategic risks which could affect the five year time requirement and suggested the Planning Inspectorate would give the benefit of the doubt because evidence shows we are progressing the review.

- Concerns raised about why members are bound to a timetable that has been set for us which members do not understand it fully. The Chairman of the CIL Working Party, Councillor Mike Howe briefly outlined the process of the GESP and advised members it was their choice to agree at Full Council.
- Concern raised about GESP debates being behind closed doors and the need to be made aware in advance of decisions made.
- Concerns raised about the weak Member Reference Forum which only met as and when needed and should be held on a more regular basis to feedback to members. In response the Service Lead for Planning Strategy and Development Management advised a programme of five meetings between now and June 2020 had been set up and agreed members had not been engaged as much as intended which would be addressed going forward by providing diarised dates in advance.
- Members noted an error in the recommendation which should read Appendix A.
- It was suggested a minor amendment be made in the recommendation to bring back to Strategic Planning Committee before finalised.

**RESOLVED:**

**that the proposed scope and timetable for the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan as detailed in the report and summarised in Appendix A will include the wording “there will be an expectation that the Member Reference Panel make regular reports back after each meeting of the Reference Panel to Strategic Planning Committee” be agreed.**

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**Garden communities and delivery vehicles**

The Committee considered a report presented by the Projects Director summarising the importance of having effective delivery vehicles/mechanisms in place to ensure the delivery of high quality places within the District and to seek members support for Garden Communities status to demonstrate real leadership of place and to ensure the necessary tools and resources were in place. The Projects Director advised that a prospectus would be available shortly from MHCLG providing details of a proposed delivery and innovation fund.

Discussion covered:

- The lack of reference to build quality and minimum build standards. A lot of people were having problems with the quality of the build of houses. In response the Service Lead for Planning Strategy and Development Management advised there was a government Building Regulations review taking place to reform building control standards. The Chief Executive highlighted that the most recent Queen’s Speech included proposals to bring forward a New Homes Ombudsman.
- The need to consider housing design for all stages of life.
- Clarification sought on the delivery of circa 12,000 new homes within Clyst Villages. In response the Chief Executive advised the total requirement for new homes was the allocation from government. Exeter committed to 8,000 and 12,000 had been allocated to East Devon on the basis of projected number from

GESP of the Local Plan in the North West Quadrant Review of Local Plan going forward.

- Concerns raised about major building companies that make large profits by producing some of the smallest houses in Europe which compromise resident's health and wellbeing. The Service Lead for Planning Strategy and Development Management agreed this was an issue and advised it would be addressed in the Local Plan Review and is already being addressed at Cranbrook through the introduction of minimum space standards in the Cranbrook Plan.
- Clarification sought on the potential role of a New Town Development Corporations. The Chief Executive advised it was a response from the Government to look at practical issues of bringing forward and delivering larger scale allocations. It would be for the Council to work up a proposal that fits our circumstances and to take this forward.
- It was suggested to use East Devon Homes to set the standards in terms of producing high quality homes.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. that the importance of having effective delivery vehicles/mechanisms in place at the earliest stage possible in order to support the development of high quality places be acknowledged;**
- 2. that the principle of submitting a bid to the forthcoming MHCLG Delivery and Innovation Fund and exploring the creation of a locally led development corporation and for details of these to be reported to Members as they are developed is endorsed.**

**RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:**

- 1. that support for the Exeter and East Devon garden communities status be confirmed.**

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**Climate Change Emergency - A planning response**

The report presented to the Committee addressed the current policy position with regard to climate change emergency on the proper planning of the district and drew members' attention to the 6 areas of climate change risk identified by the UK's Committee on Climate Change.

The Service Lead Planning Strategy and Development Management summarised the main policies that would seek to address climate change and the potential implications of setting these policy requirements.

Discussion covered:

- Members welcomed measures to improve efficiency.
- The need to focus on durability of homes. Houses need to be sustainable. The Service Lead Planning Strategy and Development Management concurred with the comments and would include this in the response to the consultation on future homes standard.
- Eco credentials need to be at the highest level.
- Don't accept anything less than the very best.
- It should be a requirement for solar panels to be fitted on all new homes.
- The need for affordable houses with the maximum green credentials.
- Members concurred with Councillor Howe's suggestion to include an additional recommendation for the council to give added weight to all environmental policies

in the current local plan and future local plans because of the declared climate change emergency.

**RESOLVED:**

1. that the approach detailed in the report of addressing climate change through the review of the Local Plan using the standards set in the Cranbrook Plan as a starting point and setting new standards within the framework to be established through the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP) be endorsed;
2. that the proposed uplift in energy efficiency standards for new homes in the current government consultation on “The Future Homes Standard” be supported;
3. to canvass government to introduce even higher energy efficiency standards for new developments through the building regulations and to provide clearer guidance and reduce the onus on local authorities to evidence a need for climate change policies be considered;
4. that the Council works in partnership with landowners, conservation groups and other public and private sector bodies to deliver more tree planting projects in the district to assist with carbon off-setting and enable biodiversity enhancements be agreed;
5. that added weight be given to all environmental policies in the current local plan and future local plans because of the declared climate change emergency.

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**Glover Review of Protected Landscapes in England**

Members debated and agreed to hear Councillor Arnott’s proposed motion to Full Council on 23 October 2019.

The motion read as follows:

“That the council writes to thank Julian Glover and his team for the Glover Review into National Parks and AONBs and advises him of its next steps, the letter to be copied to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Theresa Villiers MP, and to the Leader of Devon County Council, Cllr John Hart.

That the council welcomes the historic recommendation on page 121 of the Glover Review which states:

“We received submissions on the case for several other AONBs to become National Parks too. The two that stand out as leading candidates are the Cotswolds AONB and the combined Dorset and East Devon AONBs”

That the council supports the formation of a cross party working group of up to 12 members to make contact as soon as possible with representatives of the proposed Dorset section of an East Devon/Dorset National Park to arrange a meeting at Blackdown House no later than January 30th 2020 in order to engage with and understand the issues and opportunities which would arise from a new National Park. That this working group makes an initial report to the Overview Committee in March 2020.”

In response Members voted to debate the item.

The Chief Executive outlined the reasons why the report had come before the Strategic Planning Committee and advised members about setting up a working party to look at the implications of going down the National Park route.

Discussion covered:

- Need to consider climate change – carbon capture.
- The need to fight for what we want and not to wait for others to decide.
- A National Park has purposes and duties.
- A National Park promotes tourism which is essential for economy.
- A National Park gives a landscape led local plan.
- A proposal was made to change the wording in the two recommendations.
  1. That members research all the recommendations of the Glover report on protected landscapes in England.
  2. Resolve to review the Governments response to the recommendations; and note that the Chilterns, the Cotswolds and the Dorset and East Devon AONBs are potential candidates for future designation as National Parks.
- More research is needed.
- Exmoor and Dartmoor National Parks are internationally recognised which needs to be encouraged.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. that members research all of the recommendations of the Glover Report on protected landscapes in England be resolved;**
- 2. to review the Government's response to the recommendations; and note that the Chilterns, the Cotswolds and Dorset and East Devon AONBs are potential candidates for future designation as national parks be resolved;**
- 3. that the Strategic Planning Committee hold a special meeting open to all members to consider and debate the issues regarding the possible creation of a National Park.**

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## **Draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning document**

The Service Lead Strategic Planning and Development Management presented the report drawing members' attention to the 22 responses received from the public. Members noted the comments had been taken into account in revising the Draft Supplementary Planning Document.

Discussion covered:

- Clarification sought on the 20% uplift. Does this mean affordable housing will become less affordable? In response the Service Lead Strategic Planning and Development Management advised it did raise a fundamental issue and that sites should be valued on policy requirements.
- Is the value of the land stopping landowners coming forward with their land for development? From experience and past viability appraisal work it is the landowners' expectations of land value that exceeds what the council considered reasonable.
- Concerns raised for the need to build more housing that is bungalow style.
- A mixture of occupancy houses was needed.
- Less than 10% of housing in East Devon is affordable.
- Affordable sheltered housing is vital for people that are disabled to live in.

- Smaller built social housing close to one another creates social problems. Pepper potting is better for social housing.
- Discussion on the SPD is premature until the housing needs workshop arranged for the 19 November with all members has been held so that this discussion can inform the final document.

**RESOLVED:**

**that consideration of the Draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document report be deferred to the next Strategic Planning Committee on 17 December 2019.**

29 **Custom and self-build housing**

The Committee received an invitation from Councillor Ledger to visit a high specification custom build house in his ward.

The Service Lead Planning Strategy and Development Management presented a report on previous work undertaken by the Housing delivery task and finish forum and asked Members to consider ways to encourage more custom and self builds in the district.

The Service Lead Planning Strategy and Development Management drew members' attention to the options for developing planning policies and additional planning related initiatives and options for a corporate approach.

The Committee were supportive of the custom and self-build housing report and points raised during discussion were:

- This is an opportunity to provide housing that will be of a high quality.
- Should parts of land in large developments sites be made available for self-builds so that so that local builders can purchase the land to build self-build housing for local people?
- Setting the plot passports to the highest standard.
- Concerns raised about funding being limited to £500,000. The need to be able to use money available to deliver a number of houses.
- The need to consider on a site by site basis.

**RESOLVED:**

1. **that consideration to the various options highlighted in sections 6 and 7 of the report exploring how the Council can support people wishing to build their own home in East Devon be given;**
2. **that a bid is made to the Capital Strategy and Allocation Group for £1m to be committed to the purchase of land and the delivery of serviced self-build plots for sale be agreed.**

30 **Housing Monitoring update to year ending 31 March 2019**

The Committee considered the Service Lead Planning Strategy and Development Management's report outlining the latest monitoring figures on housing completions and projections and setting out the five year land supply calculation to year end March 2019. Members noted houses delivered was up on the previous year, seeing 929 completed homes as opposed to 826 in the previous year and 724 the year before that, averaging 915 over the planning period so far.

Points raised during discussion covered:

- Concerns raised about what if developments don't come forward.
- Clarification sought on what was happening with the Housing Company. In response the Chief Executive advised the Housing Company was set up to purchase houses already built but was looking into amending the business plan to include the purchase of land.

**RESOLVED:**

1. **that the residential dwellings completion data and future projections for the district be noted;**
2. **that the confirmation of a Five Year Land Supply but also that the Five Year Land Supply figure has dropped since the last report be noted.**

**Attendance List**

**Councillors present:**

S Bond (Chairman)  
N Hookway (Vice-Chairman)  
M Allen  
O Davey  
S Hawkins  
P Hayward  
M Howe  
F King  
D Ledger  
T McCollum  
A Moulding  
E Rylance  
P Skinner

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

P Arnott  
P Faithfull  
S Jackson  
G Jung  
H Parr  
V Ranger  
M Rixson

**Officers in attendance:**

Matthew Dickins, Planning Policy Manager  
Ed Freeman, Service Lead Strategic Planning and Development Management  
Alison Hayward, Senior Manager Regeneration & Economic Development  
Shirley Shaw, Planning Barrister  
Mark Williams, Chief Executive  
Andrew Wood, East of Exeter Projects Director  
Wendy Harris, Democratic Services Officer

**Councillor apologies:**

F Caygill  
G Pratt



Chairman .....

Date: .....