

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Strategic Planning Committee held at Online via the zoom app on 27 April 2021

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 2.03 pm and ended at 4.41 pm. The meeting was adjourned at 3.45 pm and reconvened at 3.50 pm.

124 Public speaking

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

125 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee meeting held on 30 March 2021 were confirmed as a true record.

126 Declarations of interest

Minute 129. Initial feedback report - Local Plan issues and options consultation. Councillor Eleanor Rylance, Personal, Broadclyst Parish Councillor.

Minute 129. Initial feedback report - Local Plan issues and options consultation. Councillor Kevin Blakey, Personal, Cranbrook Town Councillor.

Minute 129. Initial feedback report - Local Plan issues and options consultation. Councillor Mike Howe, Personal, Bishops Clyst Parish Councillor and an owner of a business in Bishops Clyst.

Minute 129. Initial feedback report - Local Plan issues and options consultation. Councillor Paul Arnott, Personal, Colyton Parish Councillor.

Minute 129. Initial feedback report - Local Plan issues and options consultation. Councillor Paul Hayward, Personal, Employed as Clerk to All Saints, Chardstock and Newton Poppleford & Harpford Parish Councils. All are consultees to the Local Plan.

Minute 129. Initial feedback report - Local Plan issues and options consultation. Councillor Sarah Chamberlain, Personal, Braodclyst Parish Councillor and a resident of Broadclyst Station.

Minute 130. Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Consultation feedback report. Councillor Eleanor Rylance, Personal, Broadclyst Parish Councillor.

Minute 130. Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Consultation feedback report. Councillor Eleanor Rylance, Personal, Known to one of the respondents.

Minute 130. Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Consultation feedback report. Councillor Kevin Blakey, Personal, Cranbrook Town Councillor.

Minute 130. Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Consultation feedback report. Councillor Mike Howe, Personal, Bishops Clyst Parish Councillor and an owner of a business in Bishops Clyst.

Minute 130. Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Consultation feedback report.
Councillor Olly Davey, Personal, Known to two of the respondents.

Minute 130. Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Consultation feedback report.
Councillor Paul Arnott, Personal, Colyton Parish Councillor.

Minute 130. Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Consultation feedback report.
Councillor Sarah Chamberlain, Personal, Braodclyst Parish Councillor and a resident of
Broadclyst Station.

Minute 131. Scoping and vision report for the new Local Plan.
Councillor Eleanor Rylance, Personal, Broadclyst Parish Councillor.

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Councillor Kevin Blakey, Personal, Cranbrook Town Councillor.

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Broadclyst Station.

Minute 132. Local Plan engagement with site promoters through the Local Plan process.
Councillor Eleanor Rylance, Personal, Broadclyst Parish Councillor.

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business in Bishops Clyst.

Minute 132. Local Plan engagement with site promoters through the Local Plan process.
Councillor Olly Davey, Personal, Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 132. Local Plan engagement with site promoters through the Local Plan process.
Councillor Paul Arnott, Personal, Colyton Parish Councillor.

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Councillor Paul Hayward, Personal, Employed as Clerk to All Saints, Chardstock and
Newton Poppleford & Harpford Parish Councils. All are consultees to the Local Plan.

Minute 132. Local Plan engagement with site promoters through the Local Plan process.
Councillor Sarah Chamberlain, Personal, Braodclyst Parish Councillor and a resident of
Broadclyst Station.

Minute 133. Call for Evidence: permitted development rights.

Councillor Mike Howe, Personal, Bishops Clyst Parish Councillor and an owner of a business in Bishops Clyst.

Minute 133. Call for Evidence: permitted development rights.
Councillor Paul Arnott, Personal, Colyton Parish Councillor.

Minute 134. Clyst Valley Regional Park masterplan.
Councillor Eleanor Rylance, Personal, Broadclyst Parish Councillor.

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127 **Matters of urgency**

There were no matters of urgency.

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

There were no confidential/exempt items.

129 **Initial feedback report - Local Plan issues and options consultation**

The report presented to the Committee outlined the initial feedback received to the local plan issues and options report consultation that ran from 18 January 2021 to 15 March 2021.

Members noted a further feedback report would be presented to the Committee in June 2021 following a more detailed review of the written comments received.

From the 658 responses received detailed in appendix 1 appended to the report, the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management drew Members attention to some of the comments received which included:

- Two thirds of respondents were supportive of the objectives for the plan;
- There was an even split between the single plan option and the multiple plan option;
- A wide support and consensus was shown for energy efficiency measures with much support for requiring net zero carbon development;
- 60% of respondents supported the idea of identifying land specifically for renewables development, such as, solar farms;
- There was a clear support for the need for housing for all stages of life;
- There was a clear support for home working;
- There was strong support for jobs growth across all the sectors;
- There was a good support for a range of town centre uses, in particular, community and leisure centres and a mix of commercial uses;
- There was a clear consensus for the importance of good design and protecting heritage, countryside and the natural environment.

Points raised during discussion included:

- Comforted to see that people want more home working. This statistically could be signs of patterns of change in the employment market due to Covid-19. It was suggested that going forward the council should be tackling people's desire to work from home more through the planning system.
- Less people travelling to work by car would help climate change by reducing emissions.
- Looking forward to a more detailed report to help understand some of the statistics. Reference was made to the statistics to question 8 on page 25 considering the age range that completed the survey was mostly older people. The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management agreed the age range could be better in terms of engaging with the younger population and advised he was in discussions with the Communications Team about how this can be done with future consultations.
- The need to compare the demographic referred to in paragraph 7.3 on page 7 to the demographic of people in East Devon to help provide the appropriate housing requirements.
- Clarification sought on whether there was any questions that should have been asked. In response the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised in hindsight perhaps some of the split responses to some of the options could have been different but in general he could not think of any specific questions that could have been asked.
- Clarification sought about how and when more detail can be put in the consultation about what people really think about the options available to them. In response the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised people will be able to engage more during the draft plan stage when considering the potential site options for allocations.
- A suggestion was made to split the consultation down into individual questions to avoid the heaviness of the volume, scope, language and presentation which could appear quite daunting. In response the Service Lead Planning Strategy and Development Management said he was looking at ways of presenting the consultation differently in future by using different software to make it clear and more flexible for people
- Interest was shown to see whether there was any significant differences between the different age groups. The Service Lead Planning Strategy and Development Management said he would look into whether responses could be further analysed by age group etc.

RESOLVED:

That the initial feedback received in consultation responses to the Local Plan issues and options report be noted.

130 **Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Consultation feedback report**

The Committee considered the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management's report outlining the feedback received to the consultation on the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal scoping report.

Members noted the comments received to the consultation were summarised in appendix 1 appended to the report.

The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised Members that in light of the comments received he proposed some minor amendments to the scoping report.

RESOLVED:

That delegated powers be afforded to the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management to make changes to the Sustainability Appraisal scoping report to address comments made in feedback received as detailed in Appendix 1 to this report.

131 **Scoping and vision report for the new Local Plan**

The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management presented his report that sought Members views on the proposed single plan approach that would incorporate the strategic elements and development management policies that Members had previously agreed in principle. He also sought Members views on an early steer on the scope and vision for the new local plan in order to move forward on the issues of the highest priority.

Members noted the comments received to each of the options were summarised in the appendix on paragraph 2.6 of the Issues and Options Consultation appended to the report.

The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised the Committee that Officers preferred the single plan approach because they felt it was the simplest option of moving the plan production forward with the shortest timescale. He advised that nearly two thirds of respondents overall also supported the single plan approach.

To assist Members with the discussion on the vision of the local plan the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management drew Members' attention to the vision that had been developed for the GESP as an example how it could be articulated. He advised that Members' views were vital for the local plan to assist with developing a strategy and policies that met Members' aspirations and could be key to gaining government funding for key projects needed to deliver the plan. He also drew Members attention to paragraph 9.2 in the report that would assist with discussions and help focus thoughts.

Before moving to Committee the Chair reminded Members that as this was one of the main agenda items he emphasised the need for all Members to give their answers to the questions in paragraph 9.2 and to also provide their views on the vision of the local plan.

Committee Member discussion covered:

- Concerns raised that a single plan had been attempted before and had never been fully completed. A fast local plan completed within a year would not allow time to form policies, particularly around town centres which would need a lot more depth and thought.
- Clarification sought about whether a single plan was designed to be one component of a multi-level plan. In response the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management clarified that a single plan would bring together strategic elements that would have been part of GESP that would form the core strategies with the local level allocations and development management

policies. He advised supplementary planning documents and development plan documents could still be produced to deal with issues that may arise.

- Prefer a single plan that sits within the National Planning Policy Framework that has the flexibility to include new policies in response to evolving situations.
- Reference was made to question c) on page 141 and agreed that the GESP vision should be carried forward into a new local plan.
- Reference was made to question g) and to find a way to provide attainable homes for people and a new way of thinking was welcomed in the local plan to take a greater lead and responsibility in delivering houses that people can actually afford and to look at different ways of working with developers to achieve this.
- Reference was made to question d) and the importance of including the economic benefits of the culture, leisure and tourism sectors.
- Reference was made to question g) and the importance of better public transport that works in conjunction with each other. Cheap parking permits for railway stations to enable people to travel to work without breaking the bank. In response the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised although public transport services was beyond the control of this council as a planning authority the council could seek to fund projects like the passing loop on the Exeter to Waterloo line through the collection of infrastructure funding from developments.
- Support for additional supplementary documents.
- The need to make sustainability and carbon reduction priority objectives
- Reassured that many of the respondents were supportive of our aims to tackle environmental and climate change.

The Chair thanked the Committee and provided a sum up of the comments received which had climate change as the top priority followed by the delivery of green infrastructure and suggested that this could be at the expense of affordable housing emphasising the need for more social housing in the district.

In response to the reduction of affordable housing some Members raised concerns and addressed the need to provide housing for people and that if this was the Council's steer there was a need to send a clear message that the council still believed in affordable housing but was also looking into innovative ways of delivering social housing.

The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management addressed the need for both market and affordable housing in the local plan and drew Members' attention to government requirements to deliver affordable housing and advised there will always have to be an element of affordable housing for the local plan to be found sound.

The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management sought Members' views on the following questions in paragraph 9.2 that had not been commented on and to further assist he suggested providing a draft vision for Members to consider at a future meeting.

- Were Members happy to incorporate elements of the GESP vision into the local plan?
- Were there any particular growth and development agendas that we should be following or avoiding?
- Is there a particular focus between economic, environment and social aspirations?

Further comments from Committee Members included:

- All aspects of the GESP should be considered as it was a significant piece of work that covered planning requirements and strategies at a much greater level.
- There would be better funding for infrastructure if we can integrate with Exeter City Council, Devon County Council, Teignbridge District Council and Mid Devon Council in the same way as the GESP.
- The need to incorporate climate emergency and zero carbon development into the new local plan.
- Would like to see an emphasis on economic activity being local because it has both an economic and environment advantage. Small businesses tend to grow faster into bigger businesses.
- The need to ensure farming is enhancing rather than damaging the environment.
- The need to invest at economic rental opportunities in towns and villages across the district.
- Clarification was sought on the progress of the joint strategic body set up with Exeter City Council, Teignbridge District Council and Mid Devon District Council. In response the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development advised a lot of work was going on in the background working on details of governance arrangements, a timetable and resourcing for that plan and advised that a report would be provided to Members on progress at the June meeting.
- Emphasis on the need to put climate change and infrastructure together. If infrastructure is not in place when new homes are built then people will have to drive. Infrastructure needs to be built at the right speed.
- The need to consider whether we need an implied or overt commitment to social housing.
- A suggestion was made to include social housing as a recommendation.

It was proposed by Councillor Thomas, seconded by Councillor Davey that recommendation 3 be amended to read:

That Members consider the Council Plan as a vision for the future of the district which identifies initial key priorities and outcomes for the future Local Plan production.

In response the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised discussions had been helpful and that he did appreciate Councillor Thomas' comment about the relationship with the Council Plan but said he believed the Local Plan needed a vision of its own that focused on the planning outcomes. He raised a concern that the adoption of the Council Plan was still a couple of months away which could delay the Local Plan.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That, in principle, the approach of producing a single Local Plan only that covers all key planning policy matters be endorsed.**
- 2. That the consultation responses to the proposed objectives for the new Local Plan and confirm that these remain the objectives that they wish the plan to focus on be considered.**
- 3. That the Council Plan as a vision for the future of the district which identifies initial key priorities and outcomes for the future of Local Plan production be considered.**

The Committee considered the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management’s report that sought Members’ views on options about how to engage with site promoters through the plan production process to ensure there was appropriate engagement in an open and transparent way.

The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management gave an overview of each of the following five options:

1. No engagement;
2. Written engagement only;
3. Engagement through site specific meetings;
4. Engagement via a working party or other group;
5. Engagement through Strategic Planning Committee only.

The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised the Committee that Officers preferred option 5 which would reduce the impact on resources overall whilst being open and transparent.

Committee Members discussion included:

- Clarification sought about how landowners and agents were informed in the previous Local Plan. In response the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised it was through site specific meetings which was of limited benefit and did not meet the current Council’s aspirations for more openness and transparency.
- Clarification sought on whether the council would be following up to find out if sites found through HEELA, GESP and Neighbourhood Planning processes were still available. In response the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management confirmed those sites were still in the process and the site promoters would be contacted as they progress through the process.
- Disagree with Recommendation 2. A suggestion was made to consider a hybrid option between option 3 and 5 to enable the Ward Members to be given an opportunity to speak to the developers. In response the Chair advised that the special Strategic Planning Committee meeting would be open for all Members to attend.
- The need to consider the legal implications between the relationship with Strategic Planning Committee and Development Management.
- Concerns raised about whether there was much point at this early stage bringing sites forward. In response the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised that bringing the sites forward now would help officers refine the area for development and give developers an opportunity to present to the Committee later in the year after the Committee has discussed the strategy of the plan.
- Support shown for option 5.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the proposed options for engaging with developers and site promoters on production of the Local Plan be considered and to pursue option 5 as detailed in the report be agreed.**
- 2. That a special meeting of the Committee be held in November to hear presentations from those developers and promoters who wish to present their site to Members be agreed. The detailed arrangements for the meeting to be delegated to the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Strategic Planning.**

133 **Call for Evidence: permitted development rights**

The Committee considered the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management’s report that outlined the Council’s response to a new Government Inquiry to the Government’s Call for Evidence in relation to Permitted Development Rights.

Members’ noted the new development rights include allowing offices to change to residential uses, barn conversions to dwellings shops and to hotels which has a knock on impact for developers to exploit these rights as a fallback position in order to obtain planning permission.

Members’ attention was drawn to the Call for Evidence questions and responses detailed in paragraph 1.3 on page 174 noting the responses were generally quite negative due to the undesirable outcomes in terms of unsustainable developments in inappropriate locations.

Councillor Geoff Jung, the Portfolio Holder Coast, Country and Environment supported the report. He spoke about his dislike for Permitted Development Rights and his dislike for unsustainable developments in the countryside.

Points raised by Committee Members included:

- We are ending up with developments in the countryside that are in desperately unsustainable locations. If you have enough money to buy a site and sit on it for three years you can end up building a very nice house in the countryside that does not meet our targets for delivering housing for local people that need them.
- Suggestion made to reflect that Permitted Development Rights was a way of reducing administration in the planning system.
- Comment made about the omission of Article 4 Directives and clarification sought about its use across East Devon. In response the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised East Devon did not have many Article 4 Direction as they were not easy to do as they have to be agreed by the Secretary of State.
- Frustration about the negativity of barn conversions which does allow redundant buildings to be brought back into use to provide homes for a young person. There should be ways in the Local Plan to look at how we respond to applications for rural redundant buildings and to bring them back into use.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be agreed and that the report forms the basis of the response to Government on the Call for Evidence Inquiry be agreed.

134 **Clyst Valley Regional Park masterplan**

The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management presented a report by the Green Infrastructure Project Manager on the Clyst Valley Regional Park Masterplan that Members had previously agreed to go out for public consultation at Committee on 20 October 2020.

Members’ noted the 241 responses received to the consultation were summarised in the appendices provided in the report as background links and had been addressed and incorporated into a final version of the document which was appended to the report.

The majority of comments were supportive of the work with the main concerns coming from a range of landowners and developers who were concerned about proposals that affect the boundary of the Clyst Valley Regional Park and indicative proposals for future expansions of the park.

The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised a number of amendments had been made to clarify the status of those projects that are outside the regional park boundary and that the recommendation shows that the masterplan would only be used as a guidance document on planning applications that lie within the boundary of the regional park.

The Chair welcomed Simon Bates, the Green Infrastructure Project Manager, to the meeting and opened up comments from non-Committee Members.

Councillor Geoff Jung, the Portfolio Holder Coast, Country and Environment spoke about the need to protect and enhance the countryside which was important for climate change and one of the main drivers for the Clyst Valley Regional Park. He supported moving forward with the new Local Plan to recommend the expansion of the park in the areas that had been identified.

He thanked all of the team for their work, with a special thank you to Naomi Harnett and Simon Bates for their hard work and dedication for this project to become a reality.

Comments made by Committee Members included:

- Support was shown for the Portfolio Holder Coast, Countryside and Environment's comments and a suggestion was made that his comments should be a starting point for the Local Plan.
- Wholeheartedly supported. If we are serious about wildlife and the environment we cannot keep these policy boundaries cutting across wildlife habitats as this would put a lot of wildlife in further jeopardy than it already is.
- Councillor Arnott thanked all the Officers that had worked on the Masterplan including Councillor Geoff Jung and Councillor Mike Howe and said it was an extremely good report highlighting the emphasis on the history and cultural aspects.
- Clarification sought on the timescales for infrastructure for the Clyst Valley Trail and developments in Broadclyst to link Cranbrook, Broadclyst Station and Exeter. In response the Green Infrastructure Project Manager advised that a revised delivery plan would be presented to Committee in the summer to include an off-road trail. He also advised that the link between Mosshayne and Westclyst would be the first to come forward at a cost of in the region of £2m which would link people in the new homes at Westclyst and Pinhoe with the Science Park and Skypark and would hopefully be completed within the next year.
- Clarification sought on the timescales on linking Cranbrook with the Westside of Exeter. In response the Green Infrastructure Project Manager advised that Devon County Council were working on a new link between Cranbrook and Exeter alongside the railway line with the planning coming forward this year.

In response to the comments made the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management reassured Members and confirmed it was important to look at the boundaries of the Clyst Valley Regional Park holistically through the Local Plan process.

RESOLVED:

That the Clyst Valley Regional Park Masterplan as a guidance document to inform the future delivery of the Regional Park and to support decision making on planning application within the policy boundary of the Regional Park be approved.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

D Ledger (Chair)
O Davey (Vice-Chair)
P Arnott
K Blakey
S Chamberlain
P Hayward
M Howe
A Moulding
G Pratt
E Rylance
I Thomas

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

D Bickley
S Bond
I Hall
M Hartnell
G Jung
M Rixson
J Rowland

Officers in attendance:

Ed Freeman, Service Lead Planning Strategy and Development Management
Shirley Shaw, Planning Barrister
Wendy Harris, Democratic Services Officer
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer
Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor (and Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Simon Bates, Green Infrastructure Project Manager

Councillor apologies:

M Allen
J Bailey
P Skinner

Chairman

Date: