

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of Strategic Planning Committee held online via zoom on 9 November 2021**

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

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 5.06 pm

#### **42 Public speaking**

The following statement was read out on behalf of Mr Paul Smith of Cranbrook, in relation in minute 49 Site promoter presentations to Strategic Planning Committee:

“I note with interest that in December 2021 the Strategic Planning Committee is to consider a draught of the Councils emerging Local Plan in relation to future planning strategy. This will present members with the opportunity for a complete review of existing strategy and development criteria.

Clearly with 359 HELAA site submissions, Committee must rely heavily upon officer’s initial assessment as to suitability/viability.

During your deliberations upon Site Promotion Presentations, I would remind you of EDDC 2021 public consultation process re future vision for the District which identified equally held opinions between those who favoured continuance of concentrated large scale urban extension of existing towns, and those who saw the merits of controlled development of smaller villages and communities.

There appears to have been an acceptance that the large volume house developer will always receive the lion’s share of Committee’s time and consideration. The outcomes the electorate are experiencing is an increasing loss of greenfield land, involving urban sprawl, and creeping coalescence which threatens the identity of surrounding communities.

The NPPF does not preclude controlled development within AONB, and such applications should not automatically be dismissed, in the development is to meet localised housing need.

Additionally, Government guidance and directive is to give greater consideration to small & medium sized developments as well as for self & customised builders.

Development of Brownfield sites are preferable to loss of greenfield.

I would ask that you consider these issues within your deliberations today.”

#### **43 Minutes of the previous meeting**

Members were content to accept the minutes of the consultative Strategic Planning Committee meeting held on 5 October 2021.

In addition, Cllr Rylance requested that updated population figures for Broadclyst were used for the draft Local Plan.

Cllr Millar requested that the issue of limiting clusters of fast food outlets would be considered further; in response Members were reminded that no firm conclusions had been reached and that there was still an opportunity to debate the issue as part of the discussion on the working draft of the Local Plan.

#### **44 Declarations of interest**

Minute 48 Site Promoter Presentations.

Councillor Olly Davey; Personal; Member of Exmouth Town Council

Minutes 48 and 49

Councillor Jess Bailey; Personal; Member of Devon County Council

Minutes 47 to 50

Councillor Mike Howe; Personal; Member of Bishops Clyst Parish Council

Minute 47 Exeter Local Plan Issues

Councillor Eleanor Rylance; Personal; Resident and Member of Broadclyst Parish Council

Minute 49 Coastal Change

Councillor John Loudoun; Personal; Ward Member of Sidmouth Rural that includes coastline

Minute 49 Coastal Change

Councillor Paul Millar; Personal; Ward Member of Exmouth Halsdon that includes coastline

45 **Matters of urgency**

None.

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

None.

47 **Exeter Local Plan Issues**

The Committee received a report outlining the proposed response to consultation by Exeter City Council on their new Local Plan. The report detailed the responses to the consultation questions, deemed as appropriate to provide as a response. The consultation document did not raise any specific issues as causing direct concerns for East Devon; however the Service Lead for Planning Strategy and Development Management highlighted the response to question 4 of the consultation.

The committee debated:

- Concern over impact of any planned development on the edge of the city, particularly in terms of protecting landscape that fell within the District but could be impacted by development on the District border. In response, the Service Lead reminded the Committee that Exeter City Council were not yet consulting on specific sites. An idea of what could be in their draft Local Plan could be gleaned from their published document Liveable Exeter (2019) available at [www.liveableexeter.co.uk](http://www.liveableexeter.co.uk) ;
- Include in the response to ECC that there should be reference to developing a travel plan that looks to resolve the issues around access to the M5; and to look to work with ECC and DCC in helping to improve the commuter routes into and out of Exeter;
- Clyst Valley Regional Park needs protection from any city border development;
- Increase tower blocks in city to reduce commuting.

**The Strategic Planning Committee noted the proposed response to the Exeter City Council Local Plan Issues consultation, with comments raised through discussion at committee.**

48 **Site Promoter Presentations to Strategic Planning Committee**

The report before the committee set out the rationale for accommodating requests by developers to present to the committee their proposals. The timetable, although later than originally planned, was felt to be a better fit for hearing proposals after the committee had considered the working draft of the Local Plan.

The committee considered the meeting format of receiving the presentations, and criteria for those presentations in order to maximise the benefit of the event.

The committee discussed:

- Flexibility on amount of time per presentation, as some sites may require more detail and questioning;
- If the criteria for assessing sites could include the advanced provision of infrastructure;
- Give every opportunity to all those putting sites forward, in order to evidence clearly at inspection stage of the Local Plan that full consideration has been given;
- Welcomed the event being run virtually; suggestion of earlier start to fit more into a single day;
- Focus on mid-scoring sites;
- Run over more than one day as necessary

A separate issue, although not directly related to the agenda item, was discussed following a request by Cllr Howe for any development in the West End to be held back until the extensive sewage issues were resolved by South West Water. He outlined the experiences of raw sewage by his constituents, and his efforts to seek further information from SWW through a meeting with them and the local MP.

Discussion on this issue covered:

- Sympathy with residents in many areas of the District where the sewage system was not adequate to cope with demand and storm events;
- Urgent issue to resolve for residents now, and to plan for future development, particularly relating to the Blue Ball pumping station;
- Preventing sites coming forward at the West End would have implications for the five year land supply and the remainder of the District;
- Importance in discussing future growth with all key stakeholders, so that work to resolve the issue would also offer up solutions to deal with rise in demand as the District population increased, and ensure that the necessary infrastructure was in place for that growth;
- Issues were apparent for large scale works on sewage systems across the District;
- Taking a motion to full Council on the issue;
- Referring SWW to the Scrutiny Committee;
- Ensure robust policy in Local Plan on sewage disposal.

**The Strategic Planning Committee noted the proposed arrangements for a Special Strategic Planning Committee meeting to hear presentations from developers and site promoters of sites being considered for allocation in the new Local Plan, with the addition of holding the meeting over two days and with focus on those middle ranking sites following site suitability scoring.**

The committee were presented with a planning policy topic paper on coastal change, for the purpose of obtaining feedback, specifically on formulating policies for Coastal Change Management Area's (CCMA) required under the NPPF, which will be part of the Local Plan. Such policies should look to guide what development will be appropriate in areas at risk of coastal change, and deal with any associated actions, such as facilitating roll back or safeguarding essential infrastructure.

The topic paper set out best practice policy extracts, and potential CCMA policy scenarios.

The debate covered:

- Data from Plymouth University covered a worse case scenario;
- Beach Management Plans were being developed to provide engineering solutions for flood protection and to slow cliff erosion;
- A supplementary planning guidance document on this issue could be developed once the Local Plan was adopted or at least submitted for inspection;
- IPCC recommend that no building should now take place on coastlines; should the authority look to standards set in other countries whereby living accommodation is on the first floor or higher;
- Could the housing number figure be renegotiated in light of the restricted area for development due to AONBs and coastline limitations? In response, the Service Lead advised that he was unaware of any authority that had successfully challenged their housing allocation.

**The Strategic Planning Committee noted the Coastal Change topic paper and provided feedback to inform the development of coastal change policies in the draft Local Plan.**

## 50 **Local Plan Climate Emergency Policy Approaches**

The committee received a report outlining measures for action in response to the climate crisis. The proposed approach for policy in the new Local Plan covered:

- Raising standards for new development
- Encouraging renewable energy and battery storage
- Making use of existing opportunities for utilising waste heat
- Tackling embodied carbon
- Adaption to the effects of climate change
- Implications for neighbourhood planning

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Action and Emergency Response outlined to the committee her views on the approaches required, including:

- All developers to build properties to a high level of energy efficiency, particularly because any retrofit to existing buildings is of high cost;
- Mandatory walking and cycle paths
- Include tree planting as requirement for the benefit of wildlife corridors
- Welcomes approach for embodied carbon, seeking to abolish the demolition of existing buildings so that existing foundations are utilised;
- Avoiding development on flood zones

Debate included:

- Differing forms of batteries available, such as compressing and releasing air;

- Electric cars were only part of a solution, and hydrogen combustion engines were the way forward for larger vehicles and plant and machinery;
- Concerns regarding zoning of solar and wind locations, as having a map of areas where solar and wind options could be considered was concerning to rural residents; utilising roof areas on existing buildings was a better option. In response, the setting out of location of such areas was explained as a requirement under the NPPF and the location related to where there was connectivity to the grid as well as suitable conditions for optimum energy production. Control over what could be delivered in those zones would be through a criteria based policy; there was also reference to solar panels on roofs within the proposed approach;
- Promotion of solar panels on roofs should be undertaken before considering further solar farms within the countryside;
- Community solar schemes exist in some areas of the District and should be encouraged further for future schemes;
- Higher building standards would lessen the need for energy from district heating networks;
- Travel plan requirements for new developments should include walking and cycling routes, as well as integration with public transport networks; a holistic approach was required to planning transport options for the future;
- Further development of the proposed approaches should be fully considered by the relevant Portfolio Holders;
- Include other means of carbon capture into the Local Plan; the committee were reminded that any plans relating to marine life did not fall into the remit of the Local Plan; control through the planning process could not provide for all climate actions – as an example, planning a forest would not require planning permission;
- Recent Government consultation on building standards suggests that these may fall to building regulations and therefore the standard can be improved further, but an outcome on this is still awaited;
- District heating systems are promoted because they provide the infrastructure to enable them to connect to other renewable energy sources as they become available;
- NPPF is not currently that ambitious for climate actions; any draft Local Plan must comply with the NPPF;
- Look to include microgeneration from water sources such as rivers where possible;
- Look to retain planting schemes around solar farms so that wildlife benefit increases over time. Such schemes should include detail on biodiversity net gain;
- Limit the scale of commercial anaerobic digesters. In response the committee were informed that further research would be required in order to establish what an acceptable scale would be;
- Further debate and finessing of the proposed approaches was still possible as the draft Local Plan was progressed.

**1. The Strategic Planning Committee notes the initial approaches to tackling the climate emergency through the local plan as set out in the report subject to amending the approach suggested under section 5 on Encouraging renewable energy and battery storage as follows:**

“5.5 It is proposed that in order to maximise opportunities for delivering renewables and provide certainty to the industry, suitable areas for solar and wind energy are proposed. This approach was also strongly supported in the Issues and Options consultation and it would equate to a significant uplift in support for renewables, which matches the

Council's ambition to tackle the climate emergency. Suitable areas proposed must be subject to clear biodiversity net gains.

5.6 In addition, a policy of general support for renewable technology, including community energy schemes in other parts of the District will be supported, subject to an assessment of impacts

5.7 However Industrial scale anaerobic digesters are not considered suitable developments, and agreement to the scale of such digesters is subject to further evidence coming forward."

**and welcomes further member contributions.**

## **2. The Strategic Planning Committee requests a further report on this subject**

### **Attendance List**

#### **Councillors present:**

D Ledger (Chair)

O Davey (Vice-Chair)

M Allen

P Arnott

J Bailey

K Blakey

P Hayward

M Howe

B Ingham

A Moulding

G Pratt

E Rylance

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

D Bickley

C Brown

B De Saram

P Faithfull

S Jackson

G Jung

R Lawrence

J Loudoun

P Millar

V Ranger

M Rixson

E Wragg

#### **Officers in attendance:**

Ed Freeman, Service Lead Planning Strategy and Development Management

Shirley Shaw, Planning Barrister

Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor (and Deputy Monitoring Officer)

Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer

Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

#### **Councillor apologies:**

S Chamberlain

P Skinner