

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the consultative meeting of Strategic Planning Committee held online via zoom on 3 May 2022**

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

The meeting started at 2.00pm and ended at 3.13pm

#### **106 Public speaking**

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

#### **107 Minutes of the previous meeting**

Members were happy to accept the minutes of the consultative Strategic Planning Committee on 5 April 2022.

#### **108 Declarations of interest**

Minute 111. Housing Need and Site Assessment Update.  
Councillor Jess Bailey, Personal, Devon County Councillor.

Minute 111. Housing Need and Site Assessment Update.  
Councillor Mike Howe, Personal, Bishops Clyst Parish Councillor.

Minute 111. Housing Need and Site Assessment Update.  
Councillor Paul Hayward, Personal, Employed as Clerk to All Saints and Chardstock Parish Councils and Axminster Town Council.

Minute 111. Housing Need and Site Assessment Update.  
Councillor Philip Skinner, Personal, Known to FWS Carter & Sons and Stuart family and owns a piece of land that is in the HELAA process.

Minute 112. 2022 East Devon Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment - Interim results.  
Councillors Dan Ledger and Paul Hayward, Personal, Member of the HELAA Panel.

Minute 112. 2022 East Devon Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment - Interim results.  
Councillor Eleanor Rylance, Personal, Broadclyst Parish Councillor.

Minute 112. 2022 East Devon Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment - Interim results.  
Councillor Jess Bailey, Personal, Devon County Councillor.

Minute 112. 2022 East Devon Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment - Interim results.  
Councillor Mike Howe, Personal, Bishops Clyst Parish Councillor.

Minute 112. 2022 East Devon Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment - Interim results.  
Councillor Olly Davey, Personal, Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 112. 2022 East Devon Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment - Interim results.

Councillor Paul Arnott, Personal, Colyton Parish Councillor.

Minute 112. 2022 East Devon Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment - Interim results.

Councillor Paul Hayward, Personal, Employed as Clerk to All Saints and Chardstock Parish Councils and Deputy Clerk to Axminster Town Council.

Minute 112. 2022 East Devon Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment - Interim results.

Councillor Philip Skinner, Personal, Known to FWS Carter & Sons and Stuart family and owns a piece of land that is in the HELAA process.

#### 109 **Matters of urgency**

There were no matters of urgency.

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

There were no confidential/exempt items.

#### 111 **Housing Need and Site Assessment Update**

The report presented to Members provided an update on changes to the local housing need figure for East Devon. The increased figure of 946 homes per year took into account the affordability ratio which had risen to 10.88 in 2021 compared to 10.08 in 2020 illustrating that housing prices had increased more than earnings making housing in the district less affordable. The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management reminded Members that Council had raised these concerns in February and had resolved to write to the Rt. Hon Michael Gove MP to highlight these concerns. The letter and response from the Minister of State for Housing were appended to the report.

The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised that the detailed assessments were continuing on each of the sites put forward through the call for sites and the HELAA panel. He sought Members guidance on how to move this forward and whether Officers should focus their attention on potential site allocations in and around the main towns which would help meet the Councils Spatial Strategy and Members aspirations.

Members were reminded of the resolution at the Strategic Planning Committee meeting held on 28 February 2022 to set aside more time for presentations from developers and site owners. Members' views were sought on how to accommodate these presentations as detailed in paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5 in the report. It was suggested that the two day presentations to hear from remaining parties to present their sites should be allocated shorter time slots if the developers/landowners were presenting smaller sites.

Points raised during discussion included:

- The affordability ratio does not work. Building more houses does not reduce the house prices. The Chair agreed and advised that the Government would need to change the standard methodology for it to make a difference;

- The response from the Minister of State for Housing on Members concerns about the standard method for calculating housing need is disingenuous as it implies it is in the Council's control which it is not.
- As detailed in the response by the Minister of State for Housing support was shown for the paragraph as follows: 'The NPPF says local authorities should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlement homes. They should support housing development on under-utilised land by, for instance, converting space above shops and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure'. This response suggests there is too much burden on our villages as well as our greenfield sites when we should be looking at our towns;
- Reference was made to Exeter City Council's urban capacity study and the need to commission the same work to help understand how much vacant land there is in East Devon as well as land owned by East Devon District Council instead of focusing on Greenfield sites. In response the Chair confirmed that work was currently being done district wide to bring forward potential sites owned by the Council. It was highlighted that as Exeter had more industrial heritage there was more potential to develop on brownfield sites which East Devon did not have;
- Suggestion was made to look at car parks and council owned assets in town centres; In response the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised that all potential sites must come forward through the call for sites phase to enable Members to consider them through the Local Plan process and hoped he would see a number of council owned sites come forward through the process;
- Concerns raised that the provision of additional housing would put a strain on primary and secondary schools and health facilities;
- There is a need to secure a higher proportion of affordable housing;
- There is a need for a balance between employment land and housing land. Employment land within towns is key to ensure towns are sustainable.
- Concerns raised about development on Green Wedges. The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised that further work was being done which would be brought to a future meeting;
- The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management acknowledged Members concerns about the need to consider brownfield sites before greenfield sites and reminded Members about windfall sites and said a large number of these do come forward each year which are often on brownfield sites and although the number was difficult to predict they would come forward at a reasonable rate and would be factored into the housing numbers;
- Concerns raised about sewage and the need for sewage infrastructure to be in place first before any development. It was suggested that South West Water needs to be involved in the site assessment work and for a map to be produced that highlights which sites connects to which sewage works. It was advised that an independent water cycle study was being commissioned to provide advice about planned water infrastructure and phasing to enable growth.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That the update to the local housing need figure and its implications as detailed in the report be considered;
2. That detailed site assessment work for sites being promoted for allocation in and around the main towns be brought to the Committee for consideration in the early summer be recommended;
3. That arrangements be made for two further day long virtual sessions for presentations from site promoters and developers of sites in and around the main

towns, to be held before Members formally to consider the site assessment work, which would include shorter presentations for the smaller areas and slightly longer presentations for the larger areas be recommended.

112 **2022 East Devon Housing and Economic Land Availability  
Assessment - Interim results**

The Chair addressed the Committee and apologised for the lateness of the appendices and highlighted the information in the report was merely to note.

The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management presented the report that detailed the interim results of the draft 2022 East Devon Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) Part 1. It was confirmed that through the HELAA assessment 339 sites that were available and suitable had been identified so far. This included the sites submitted in the 2021 call for sites and the 2017 call for sites with a potential capacity of around 31,000 homes across the district.

Strategic Planning Committee Members noted the contents of the report and also noted Part 2 would be brought to Committee late summer/early autumn.

**Attendance List**

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

D Ledger (Chair)  
O Davey (Vice-Chair)  
P Arnott  
J Bailey  
K Blakey  
P Hayward  
M Howe  
A Moulding  
G Pratt  
E Rylance  
P Skinner

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

M Chapman  
B De Saram  
P Faithfull  
G Jung  
M Rixson  
H Parr

**Officers in attendance (for some of all the meeting)**

Ed Freeman, Service Lead Planning Strategy and Development Management  
Shirley Shaw, Planning Barrister  
Wendy Harris, Democratic Services Officer  
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer  
Nicola Cooper, Solicitor  
Mark Williams, Chief Executive

**Councillor apologies:**

S Chamberlain  
B Ingham  
R Lawrence

Chairman .....

Date: .....