

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the consultative meeting of Strategic Planning Committee held at Online via the zoom app on 9 August 2022**

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

The meeting started at 9.30 am and ended at 4.50 pm. The meeting was briefly adjourned at 11.30am and reconvened at 11.35am and adjourned again at 2.10pm and reconvened at 2.45pm.

#### **16 Public speaking**

Councillor Ian Barlow, on behalf of Sidmouth Town Council, welcomed the council's approach to consulting and listening. He acknowledged the council's difficulty in meeting the Government's expectations for housing allocations and hoped that the proposed allocations for the towns had been done practically rather than each town having to take a share. He advised that Sidmouth Town Council objected to all the suggested sites as they fell within the AONB and said that under national policy development should only be considered if it cannot be developed elsewhere. Strong objection was expressed for Sidm\_06 at Sidford as not only was it within the AONB but was protected under Policy 3 of the Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan and he urged Members to look again for potential new sites. On a personal point of view Councillor Barlow welcomed the new administration and hoped they would listen and act for the good of the people and make the right decisions and not just the easy ones.

Councillor Roger Giles, on behalf of Ottery St Mary Town Council, offered his condolences for the loss of Councillor Val Ranger. He said she was a lovely exceptional councillor and will be missed very much. On behalf of Ottery St Mary Town Council he expressed concern for the level of housing and sites proposed and reminded Members that Ottery St Mary had already seen 25% more development than any other town in the current Local Plan and that the town was less sustainable than others. He referred to Exmouth advising that it was ten times the size of Ottery St Mary and had only been allocated a growth of less than 2%. He strongly opposed the inclusion of Otry\_09 (GH/ED/28) which the Planning Committee had previously refused stating that the reason for refusal was that the proposed development was located in the countryside, outside of the built up area boundary with no planning policy support for residential development in this location.

Andy Roberts, on behalf of the North East Exmouth Residents Group, spoke about Lymp\_10 and Lymp\_15 expressing concern that the sites were unsustainable as they were a long way from almost all facilities and he did not understand how any footpath could be provided from the site down Hulham Road. He advised that the North East Exmouth Residents Group acknowledged the issues Members faced regarding constraints and restrictions but could not understand about the lack of strategic thinking and focus that would help reduce building more houses in Exmouth. He urged Members to focus on providing additional homes through development at the proposed new town near Hill Barton with a much higher target number of dwellings in the plan period. He also urged Members to look harder at brownfield sites and encouraging landowners in Exmouth town centre to develop affordable houses that were sustainable.

Margaret Leppard, on behalf of the Seaton Flood Working Group, asked that in light of recent extensive flooding in Seaton and adolescent sustainable drainage technology in new builds would the Strategic Planning Committee apply the precautionary principle and

consider innovative ways of liberating and using existing housing stock. She advised the geology of Seaton was unchanged since 2010 and that South West Water advised that the soil in Seaton impedes drainage, raising concerns that the current planning guidance only uses basic calculations for water attenuation over a development site and therefore urged Members to be extremely cautious about further housing development in Seaton.

Michael Searle, a resident of Seaton referred to Seat\_03 and Seat\_05 – East and west of Harepath Road Seaton and sought clarification about why it was being considered to build in the Green Wedge space that has been protected by the Local Plan, when planning permission had been refused four times in the past. He raised the following concerns

- Lack of infrastructure in the town as well as the already stretched schools, doctors and dentists.
- Flooding in Harepath Road, Seaton Wetlands and Buttercup Close and sought clarification about flood prevention.
- The dangerous Colyford to Seaton road and asked whether Members had considered whether exits onto this winding and narrow road was acceptable.
- There were multiple brownfield sites in Seaton that had been allowed to stand empty for years.
- Seaton Wetlands are important for tourism, people and wildlife including the flight path of the Bechstien's bats.

The Chair thanked the public speakers and acknowledged all their concerns raised advising these would seriously be taken into consideration.

Councillor Geoff Jung, Ward Member for Woodbury & Lympstone advised that residents living close to the 'Lympstone and Exmouth gap' had concerns especially for Hulham Road which was a green gateway into Exmouth. The Lympstone and Exmouth gap must be preserved at all cost.

Councillor Marianne Rixson, Ward Member for Sidmouth and Sidmouth Town Councillor advised that Sidmouth had no sites suitable for development and felt that sites that were in the pipeline or likely to happen should take precedence over any pink level sites.

Councillor Phil Twiss, Ward Member for Honiton acknowledged that Honiton needed to take its share on houses and favoured a designation for key worker accommodation.

Councillor Dan Ledger, Ward Member for Seaton who was a neighbouring resident to Seat\_02 spoke about this site not being deliverable from evidence through the HELAA process and highlighted three key issues as to why it was not, drainage, deliverability and access. He also raised a concern that this was the main flight path for the protected bats from the Beer Quarry Caves which had been discussed at the last meeting.

Councillor Fred Caygill, Ward Member for Exmouth sought clarification about sewage pipes and whether the council could take South West Water or the developers to task if new pipes being fitted into old pipes were not fit for purpose. In response the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised that serious conversations were needed with South West Water and other infrastructure providers but before these conversations can happen we first need to understand where to accommodate growth. In terms of planning applications South West Water will be consulted and any concerns will be addressed.

Members accepted the minutes of the consultative Strategic Planning Committee on 12 July 2022.

18 **Declarations of interest**

Minute 21. Presentations from invited developers and agents promoting major sites at Tier 1 & 2 settlements which are recommended for allocation or as second choice sites for allocation by officers.

Councillor Jess Bailey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, As a Devon County Councillor, as Devon County Council will be presenting a site in Ottery St Mary.

Minute 21. Presentations from invited developers and agents promoting major sites at Tier 1 & 2 settlements which are recommended for allocation or as second choice sites for allocation by officers.

Councillor Paul Hayward, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Employed by Axminster Town Council; site GH/ED/83 is immediately adjacent to the estate where I live.

Minute 22. Site selection for the emerging East Devon Local Plan 2020 - 2040 - interim findings at Tier 1 & 2 settlements.

Councillor Dan Ledger, Affects and prejudicial Non-registerable Interest, Neighbouring resident for site Seat\_02 and during the course of the meeting withdrew Affects and prejudicial Non-registerable Interest after review of map originally declared for Axmi\_07 father rents land from Axminster Carpets.

Minute 22. Site selection for the emerging East Devon Local Plan 2020 - 2040 - interim findings at Tier 1 & 2 settlements.

Councillor Jess Bailey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, As a Devon County Councillor, Devon County Council's site in Ottery St Mary will be part of discussions.

Minute 22. Site selection for the emerging East Devon Local Plan 2020 - 2040 - interim findings at Tier 1 & 2 settlements.

Councillor Olly Davey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Resident of Exmouth.

Minute 22. Site selection for the emerging East Devon Local Plan 2020 - 2040 - interim findings at Tier 1 & 2 settlements.

Councillor Paul Hayward, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Employed by Axminster Town Council.

Minute 22. Site selection for the emerging East Devon Local Plan 2020 - 2040 - interim findings at Tier 1 & 2 settlements.

Councillor Paul Hayward, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Employed by Axminster Town Council; Sites GH/ED/83 and GH/ED/83 are immediately adjacent to the estate where I live.

Minute 22. Site selection for the emerging East Devon Local Plan 2020 - 2040 - interim findings at Tier 1 & 2 settlements.

Councillor Philip Skinner, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Exmo\_Local Plan Rep Site - Land north east of Old Bystock Drive.

Minute 22. Site selection for the emerging East Devon Local Plan 2020 - 2040 - interim findings at Tier 1 & 2 settlements.

Councillor Philip Skinner, Affects and prejudicial Non-registerable Interest, Exmo\_07 - Bystock Court, Old Bystock Drive.

Non-Committee Member

Minute 21. Presentations from invited developers and agents promoting major sites at Tier 1 & 2 settlements which are recommended for allocation or as second choice sites for allocation by officers.

Councillor Sarah Jackson, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Interest withheld under Section 32 of the Localism Act 2011.

Minute 22. Site selection for the emerging East Devon Local Plan 2020 - 2040 - interim findings at Tier 1 & 2 settlements.

Councillor Sarah Jackson, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Interest withheld under Section 32 of the Localism Act 2011.

19 **Matters of urgency**

There were no matters of urgency.

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

There were no confidential/exempt items.

21 **Presentations from invited developers and agents promoting major sites at Tier 1 & 2 settlements which are recommended for allocation or as second choice sites for allocation by officers**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and announced that as Chair he was proposing to amend the first recommendation for the proposed site allocations to read as following:

That the Strategic Planning Committee recommend that the proposed site allocations in this committee report may proceed to consultation.

The following presentations were presented to Members.

Coral Curtis, Grass Roots Planning

GH/ED/83 – Land at Chard Road, Axminster

- Site boundary is 8.46 hectares (21 acres) of agricultural land;
- Existing access to football club from A358;
- River Axe on northern boundary and railway line on western boundary;
- Hedgerows dividing the site;
- Pedestrian footpath within site boundaries provides easy access to town centre and train station;
- Main constraints include:
  - The site slopes downwards north and west into the River Axe;
  - Access from the A358 with additional points for connectivity from the site into the existing footpath;
  - Two existing Pill Boxes on the site;
  - Weycroft Hall Grade I and Weycroft Manor Grade II Listed Buildings located off site;

- Proposal for 150 dwellings including affordable in a highly accessible and sustainable location;
- Pedestrian links to existing footpaths;
- Proposed access from the A358/Chard Road will provide new access to football club and new floodlights and ball stop fencing proposed for the club;
- Biodiversity net gain of 35% habitat units and 10% hedgerow units.

Questions raised by Members included:

- Clarification sought about why the proposal was for 150 dwellings when the emerging Plan states 100 homes and employment land. In response Ms Curtis advised it was on the assumption it would be a residential led scheme but sought advice from Members about whether there was a need for employment land.
- Clarification sought about whether the permissive path leading from Weycroft to Millwey Rise would be retained. In response it was confirmed the path on the eastern side would be retained.
- Clarification sought on the length of time to establish a wetlands mitigation site adjacent to the proposed site. Ms Curtis advised it would be delivered at the same time as the development and the mitigation would incorporate a reed bed matting system which would take effect immediately.
- Clarification sought on what percentage of affordable housing would be delivered and whether there would be a travel plan. Ms Curtis advised the percentage would be determined by the Local Plan viability assessment.
- Clarification sought about whether there would be sufficient funds for other infrastructure after installing the wetlands mitigation. Ms Curtis advised that calculations show that the infrastructure requirements can be delivered.
- Clarification sought about whether there were plans to turn the permissive path down to Weycroft Bridge into a pavement. Ms Curtis advised this could be taken into consideration.

Sarah R Smith, Rapleys & Charlotte Sythes, The Crown Estate (TCE)

GH/ED/80 – Land east of Axminster

- Proposal for up to 300 dwellings served off a shared access from Lyme Road extending over Sector Lane to deliver 75 homes on Persimmon land and 225 on TCE land to south of Mill Brook;
- Green infrastructure, publically accessible open space and new pedestrian/cycle links;
- Opportunity to provide significant biodiversity net gain and carbon offsetting land;
- A route for a link road can be safeguarded within TCE land should the Council secure funding to deliver a north/south link road in the future;
- Opportunity to provide on-site mitigation for the phosphate nutrient issue through wetland planting scheme.

Questions raised by Members included:

- Clarification sought on the density per acre figure for the area where the two attenuation points had been moved. In response Ms Smith advised they were looking to achieve somewhere between 30 to 35 homes per hectare.
- Clarification sought on whether the mitigation measures proposed would ensure development on the eastern side of the site. Ms Smith advised that current work done by a renowned phosphate mitigation consultant shows that the design for the relief road can be maintained whilst still having sufficient land to deal with the proposed mitigations.

- Clarification sought on what are the proposed plans for the mitigations and how long will this take. Ms Sythes could not specify how long it would take but assured Members it would be brought forward in advance of any development.
- Clarification sought on the flood risk that will affect the rest of Axminster. Ms Sythes advised that they would be proposing a mixture of integrated wetlands.
- Clarification sought about whether there would be sufficient funds for other infrastructure after installing the wetlands mitigation. Ms Smith advised that through looking at different viability assessments they were comfortable they could deliver a policy compliant scheme which included affordable housing.
- Clarification sought on the phosphate statistics and increase in density calculations from the original plan. Ms Smith advised that the original density was approximately 25 to 30 houses per hectare which is a marginal increase and if the site was to go forward for development then additional information would be provided.

Simon Collier, Collier Planning & Graham Hutton, Baker Estates

Gitti 06 – Hayne Farm, Hayne Lane, Honiton

- The site comprises of a complex of redundant farm buildings and concrete hard standing;
- Adjoins land which is currently under development by Baker Estates;
- Within walking distance of the services, facilities and employment opportunities;
- Proposal for up to 37 dwellings including affordable housing and open space;
- Vehicular access can be gained from the adjoining development;
- Infrastructure is already being provided on the adjacent site which is under construction.

Questions raised by Members included:

- Clarification sought on whether there would be contamination issues with the moving of the farm buildings. In response Mr Hutton advised that all risks would be managed and acknowledged the site investigation report did identify asbestos which would be dealt with in the proper manner but no other contaminants had been identified that would pose a risk to residents.
- Clarification sought whether it was outside the AONB and if it is would it affect the appearance of the AONB. Mr Hutton advised it did sit outside the AONB with no impact on the appearance.
- Clarification sought about why the access route went onto a busy road. Mr Hutton advised that the access route went through the existing development and not onto Hayne Lane.

Jon Williams, DCC

Otry 09 (including GH/ED/28) – Land at Thorne Farm, Ottery St Mary

- The site can deliver up to 150 residential units and substantial open space and wildlife area;
- The site needs to provide a primary school and expansion space for Kings School;
- The Neighbourhood Plan identifies an area of 2.99 hectares to be preserved for community use and education;
- The proposed draft working Local Plan encapsulates an area of 10.3 hectares including 20 residential units, community and education uses;
- Proposal to deliver 3.4 hectares of space for education and community use;
- DCC wish to absolutely preserve a site for a future primary school of between 210 and 420 places;
- In excess of 600 primary school aged children in Ottery St Mary and only 420 school places;

- Future of Tipton St John Primary School still in jeopardy;
- Limiting the amount of development to circa 20 houses severely impacts on funding that can be brought forward to fund a primary school;
- Allocation to neighbouring land on the south side of the site could produce up to 200 houses;
- The site is accessible with direct access to the A30;
- Incorporates new footpath/cycleway connections to town centre without crossing major roads;
- Provides additional open space and wildlife site;

Questions raised by Members included:

- Strategy 24 and Policy 25 of the Local Plan defines housing on that site. In response Mr Williams advised that the provision of a primary school could only be funded by the houses as there is currently no DFE funding available.
- Clarification sought on how many houses were proposed on the site. Mr Williams advised that the Local Plan currently suggest 20 houses but it would be useful to have up to 150 houses in order to provide the school.
- Clarification sought on a contribution to the expansion of health facilities. Mr Williams advised DCC were happy to have discussions with the NHS in terms of a contribution.
- Clarification sought on how DCC would address the landscape impact that the Planning Committee had previously refused planning permission on. It was advised that DCC would consider screening with tree planting.
- Clarification sought on DFE funding. In response Mr Williams advised there had been a long history of trying to get DFE funding without success for 10 years.
- Clarification sought on the flood risk. Mr Williams confirmed that Tipton School was in flood zone 3 and had flooded five times and that the Environmental Agency had contacted them to advise that the risk of flash flooding would cause serious harm or death to children.

Jon Williams, DCC

Honi\_06 – Former Millwater School, Honiton

- Current building is in poor condition and cannot be re-used;
- DoE have provided consent for the majority of the site to be released from education use;
- Part of the site will be transferred to Littleton Primary School to be used as play area but is also suitable for future school expansion;
- The current access would be re-used and improved.

Questions raised by Members' included:

- Clarification sought on whether DCC have had discussions with the council's Housing Task Force about a joint partnership development. Mr Williams advised that DCC were happy to have discussions but as permission had only come through from the Department of Education in the last few weeks nothing had been done with this site.
- Clarification sought on how materials will be recycled following demolition. Mr Williams said there would be some possibilities of recycling including wood but in terms of plastics and roofing there would be limited ability.

Jozie Bannister, Tetrattech & Jake Sprague, Taylor Wimpey

Honi\_10 – Land at Ottery Moor Lane, Honiton

- All noise impacts can be mitigated to acceptable levels by:
  - orientation of dwellings to ensure amenity space shielded

- internal layout
- double glazing
- mechanical ventilation
- Access through Mountbatten Mews;
- Ahead only junction to avoid Ottery Moor Lane;
- Strong active travel connections;
- No impact on road network and travel plan prepared;
- Proposal for 21 houses including 8 x 3-bed 7 x 4-bed and 6 affordable homes with a mix of 2-bed and 3-bed);
- Provision of a public open space;
- 10% biodiversity net gain with retention of existing trees and hedgerows;
- No amenity impact on existing residents.

Questions from Members included:

- Concerns raised about the noise levels and clarification sought on the maximum number of decibels that is allowed for people to enjoy the outside spaces. Ms Bannister acknowledged the proximity of the A30 and advised that through noise consultants they had designed the houses with gardens behind to minimise road noise and were happy acceptable noise levels would be achieved through the layout.

Richard Grant, Origin3 & Zoe Knott, Gleeson Land

Honi\_01 – Land at Heathfield, East of Hayne Lane, Honiton

- Two access options from Sidmouth Road and Honeysuckle Drive;
- In easy reach of the train station and the town centre with Tesco located approximately 500 metres away;
- The main constraint is that it is within the AONB and previous planning permission had been refused on that basis;
- Opportunity to enhance screening of existing residential areas through new tree planting on the northern boundary;
- Important natural features should be retained within the new landscape framework;
- Opportunities for strengthening native planting along the southern boundary to create a transition zone with countryside to the south;
- Retained hedgerows to maintain field structure;
- The site is available and deliverable;
- Gleeson are committed to undertaking a landscape led approach to developing a scheme which will have no significant impact on the AONB and for this reason potential layouts or number of homes have not been proposed. These will be set by the landscape analysis to be undertaken if the site proceeds to a draft allocation.

Questions raised by Members included:

- Clarification sought as to why this development should go ahead when previous permissions had been refused. Mr Grant advised that it was fair to say that the previous applications did not try to address the AONB landscape constraints. If this allocation was successful Gleeson would be very much committed to produce a scheme which responds to this.

Amy Roberts, Bell Cornwell

Exmo\_17 (including Exmo\_09 and Exmo\_15) – Land south of Salterton Road, Exmouth



- The site is located on the eastern side of Exmouth with a long road frontage directly onto Salterton Road with good public transport links;
- Liverton Business Park is opposite the site to the north;
- In close proximity is Tesco Superstore and Lidl and other retail accessible by existing pedestrian routes;
- Site boundary is 30.85 hectares with a potential residential development area of 14.55 hectares and potential employment development area of 1.76 hectares;
- Within the AONB but can be managed;
- Potential to accommodate 400 to 450 dwellings comfortably with substantial areas of landscaping infrastructure green space of approximately 15 hectares;
- Delivery of biodiversity net gain;
- Opportunity to alleviate Sandy Bay Caravan Park traffic by providing a new direct link up to Salterton Road;
- Possibility for a new access off Castle Lane;
- Potential pedestrian and cycle routes.

Questions raised by Members included:

- Reassurance that a traffic consultant had been sought to address all the additional traffic and the biggest pinch point by McDonalds. In response Ms Roberts advised that at this stage the analysis done was high level and acknowledged more detailed advice was needed from other consultants and Clinton Devon Estates would be working alongside Transport Consultants.
- Clarification sought on how many houses will be affordable. In response Ms Roberts advised that Clinton Devon Estates were happy to discuss this with EDDC in a very pragmatic way.
- Reassurance was sought about whether the infrastructure would be suitable for the number of houses proposed. It was advised that once it was understood the development worked technically all other detail would be worked out in due course.
- Clarification sought about the traffic issue and whether Clinton Devon Estates would be willing to meet with Exmouth Town Council, East Devon District Council and Devon County Council to maximise the potential for cycle connectivity. Ms Roberts confirmed that Clinton Devon Estates acknowledged this was an important issue and would be willing to engage.
- Would the developer consider providing a park and ride scheme? In response Ms Roberts advised she would raise this with Clinton Devon Estates.

David Seaton, PCL Planning

Exmo 20 – Land at St Johns, Exmouth

- Proposal for delivery of circa 75 dwellings in an initial phase of development with a latter phase to deliver a further phase of a similar size;
- The proposed development will have no, or negligible impact on the AONB;
- The site is well related to the existing Liverton Business Park, visually well contained and has no negative impact upon the setting of St Johns Church;
- The site is suitable for a discreet residential development, well linked to nearby employment uses;
- Close proximity to schools, recreation space and local facilities;
- The improved pedestrian and cycle linkage between Bystock and St Johns to the Salterton Road employment area would be beneficial for existing as well as new residents;
- Access from the southern boundary of the site can be achieved via the existing residential estate roads of Southern Wood and Meadowview Road;

- No significant trees will be impacted with the creation of the proposed access route;
- A secondary emergency access could be achieved via the existing access track to St Johns Road with potential for secondary pedestrian and cycle access.

Questions raised by Members included:

- Clarification sought on the number of affordable houses. Mr Seaton advised it would be in line with the council's policy on affordable housing.
- Clarification sought on whether the developers would be open to the development being done in a different way. In response Mr Seaton advised they would be delighted to further discussions to bring forward a mix of houses that everybody wants to see.

David Seaton, PCL Planning

Lymp 14 – Coles Field, Hulham Road, Exmouth

- The Coles site is well defined with existing field boundaries containing the areas proposed for development;
- Proposal for 59 dwellings;
- It can be accessed from the existing Goodmore's Farm site so no new road junctions onto the primary road network need to be created;
- Four existing oak trees can be retained as part of the development;
- There are no infrastructure or other constraints;
- It can deliver a policy compliant level of affordable housing provision;
- 10% biodiversity net gain.

The following question was raised by a Non-Committee Member:

- Clarification sought on why this land had been put forward as previously it had been deemed unsuitable due to impact on the natural environment and wildlife. Mr Seaton referred to the Goodmore's Farm being consented but was not aware that the Coles Field was part of that scheme at the time. He advised that initial assessments relating to that site have been completed and all the trees will be retained and are prominently positioned within the development. It was advised there was no heritage impact stemming from the development on any listed buildings or the setting.

David Seaton, PCL Planning

Land west of Hulham Road (South east of Point in View)

- The site lies to the west of Hulham Road (to the north of Woodlands Drive and to the south of Summer Lane);
- The site is well suited for residential development and will complement the existing dwellings to the east of Hulham Road;
- The existing field access provides good visibility in both northerly and southerly directions;
- Widening of this existing access would provide a suitable access to the site;
- The site is well insulated from its neighbouring fields with hedgerows at the shared boundaries;

Questions raised by Members included:

- Clarification sought on whether the footpath running directly across the southern edge would be provided with screening. It was confirmed screening would be provided.
- Clarification sought on whether the developers would be willing to go above the minimum level of affordable housing. In response Mr Seaton advised he could not

answer the question at this stage until the exact policy compliant figures were known.

Jamie Grant, Persimmon Homes  
GH/ED/79 & Sidm\_01

- The site measures 17.5 acres and is situated within the north west of Sidmouth, just off the A3052;
- The potential for approximately 150 houses;
- Existing hedgerows will be retained and incorporated into the design where possible with a 2m management strip of grassland outside of the curtilage of property owners;
- Loss of arable land will need to be compensated for by planting of species rich grassland which should be achieved in Public Open Space and hedgerow management strips on site;
- A buffer zone could potentially be part of the flood alleviation scheme and will include a Devon hedgebank, trees or mature scrub running north west to south east at 10m away from the boundary;
- A drainage feature should be replanted with mixed scrub wherever possible;
- Freehold ownership;
- Open market, first homes and affordable homes;
- Opportunity to enhance biodiversity;
- Provision of a comprehensive drainage strategy which could alleviate existing flooding issue.

Questions raised by Members included:

- Clarification sought on the size of the proposed dwellings and whether Persimmon Homes would be prepared to exceed the minimum 25% of affordable homes. In response to the sizes of the mixed units Mr Grant advised that Persimmon Homes would focus on the smaller units and was confident about meeting local needs. In terms of the number of affordable homes Mr Grant advised it would depend on viability and whether there would be areas of concern but for a starting point the number of houses would be policy compliant;
- Clarification sought about whether it would be possible to have air source heat pumps powered by solar panels. It was advised that ground source provision was being considered.
- A concern was raised about the flooding in the area and clarification was sought on the drainage ditches and where would the discharge go to. In response Mr Grant advised that it was the velocity that was the issue so providing the bunds and mechanisms would slow the rate of the water into the brook and not divert them as suggested.

22 **Site selection for the emerging East Devon Local Plan 2020 - 2040 - interim findings at Tier 1 & 2 settlements**

Before introducing Ed Freeman, Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management to present his report the Chair reminded Members of his proposal to change the first recommendation in fear that Members would not be ready to endorse the preferred sites.

The first recommendation would read as follows:

That Strategic Planning Committee recommend that the proposed site allocations in this committee report may proceed to consultation.

The Committee considered a report from the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management that provided Members with further detail on the process for considering which sites should be allocated for housing development in the emerging Local Plan.

He addressed the morning's developer presentations and acknowledged Members key concerns were about landscape designations, environmental impacts, infrastructure provision and the delivery of affordable housing and advised these would need to be mitigated through the planning process and the Community Infrastructure Levy. A further key concern was about the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and how much weight should be given. He acknowledged this important issue and referred Members to the reference in the national planning policy framework on page 14 of the agenda.

Members were reminded at the last meeting the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised there had been a significant shortfall in housing delivery. He referred to the net housing supply forecast table in paragraph 5.3 and advised that following further officer assessments of the towns this figure had now doubled and emphasised the need for Members to be flexible when considering the sites in each of the towns.

The Chair addressed the Committee about today's meeting and asked Members for a direction of travel and suggested the following recommendations:

That Strategic Planning Committee:

1. Recommend that the proposed site allocations in this committee report may proceed to consultation, including the second best sites;
2. Notes that the sites are not agreed by the Council at this stage but are suitable for consultation

The majority of Members endorsed the proposed recommendations advising it was important to try and get as many sites as possible at this stage before considering tiers 3 and 4 which had less facilities.

Members' comments included:

- Frustration was expressed about the urban capacity study that lacked the attention needed to the major town centres where value, economy and homes could be delivered;
- A suggestion was made to look at compulsory purchases;
- There was a need to have discussions on individual towns before going out to consultation;
- From the morning's presentations a concern was raised about the extent of urban sprawl of greenfield development;
- Concern was raised about inaccuracies in the calculations for the 20 minutes neighbourhood. It was suggested they should be based on 800 metres to take into account 10 minutes to walk into town and 10 minutes to walk back and not 1600 metres as stated;
- The Chair sought clarification from the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management about the consultation stage of the Local Plan. He advised there could be a number of ways of engaging with the public and suggested it could potentially be done as a series of preferred allocations or perhaps the responses for the sites could be collated on an online mapping system which could be viewed by location. All other allocations would sit in a

separate document so as not to overwhelm members of the public wanting to comment. This would then be fed back to Members by a detailed collated report early next spring;

- A suggestion was made in addition to the recommendation to have a clear statement about the council's principles of giving greater weight to conserving Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- The new town needs to be considered properly;
- A suggestion was made to go with officer's advice on preferred sites and second choice allocations as detailed in the appendices but to also give further consideration to the remaining sites. Taking Axminster as an example in the appendix officers had selected Axmi\_01, GH/ED/81 and GH/ED/82 as sites not to be allocated - it would be these sites that Members would further consider and if merited would be put in the 'yes' pile and all others discounted.

The Chair, acknowledging that discussing each town would be a time consuming process and raising concerns about delaying the consultation stage sought advice from the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management about whether scheduling an additional meeting early September would leave enough time for the consultation in October. In response he advised it was possible but would be tight as there was still a huge amount of work still to be done.

The Chair invited Members to comment on whether they agreed with the current rejected for site selections for Axminster or whether they could have potential.

Comments included:

- Axmi\_01 – Land off Musbury Road, Axminster  
Agree with officers advice that the site should not be allocated for housing but part of the site used for employment;
- Axmi\_09 – Great Jackleigh Farm, Axminster  
Currently listed as a 2<sup>nd</sup> best allocation but could come forward to a preferred allocation (issues with an ancient monument and accessibility);
- Axmi\_10 – Scott Rowe Building, Axminster Hospital, Chard Street  
Extra care housing could be considered for this site;
- GH/ED/81 – Land east of Axminster – Site 2  
Agree with officer advice that the site should not be allocated.
- GH/ED/82 – Land east of Axminster – Site 3  
As this land sits behind the industrial estate this land had previously been suggested for employment sites with a buffer to protect Weycroft Manor from noise;
- GH/ED/83 – Land at Chard Road, Axminster  
Concerns about flooding and the retention of the permissive path;

Further comments included:

- Axminster had already seen a 30% of growth and is at breaking point. It is the smallest town and is expected to take the biggest hit with a further 1,115 houses. Axminster cannot cope with the volume of houses without a relief road and other infrastructure to support it.
- There is a need to focus on employment as well as housing;
- Clarification sought on whether sites would go out for consultation without the landscape sensitivity completed. The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management acknowledged some landscape sensitivity summaries had not been completed but confirmed they all would be completed before going out to consultation;

- Clarification sought on the accessibility assessment and whether being within 1600 metres of services and facilities was correct. It was advised that the 1600 metres was agreed as part of the methodology of the HELAA and was an accurate measure;
- Clarification sought about inconsistent housing numbers proposed between the council and developers. It was advised the council's numbers were calculated on HELAA methodology and some developers had probably calculated their numbers on the basis that infrastructure or mitigation would have been accommodated off-site;
- There were inconsistencies in the assessments. GH/ED/82 should be used for industrial space for businesses to expand but was turned down due to its proximity to Weycroft but GH/ED/83 was acceptable even though it was closer to Weycroft;
- A suggestion was made for the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management to bring forward to the next meeting a brief on the new town. The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised he was happy to provide a verbal update on the new town as well as a verbal update on brownfield sites within town centres.

Councillor Mike Allen and seconded by Councillor Mike Howe proposed the officers' recommendations for Axminster to go out to consultation including the addition for site GH/ED/82 to be considered for employment purposes.

The Planning Barrister reminded Members to take the vote as a straw poll for each town and that when all the sites had been discussed Members would vote again incorporating all the straw polls.

**The majority of Members were in support of recommending the officers' recommendations for Axminster to go out to consultation including the addition for site GH/ED/82 to be considered for employment purposes.**

The meeting was adjourned.

### **Attendance List**

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

P Arnott (Chair)  
O Davey (Vice-Chair)  
M Allen  
J Bailey  
K Blakey  
P Hayward  
M Howe  
B Ingham  
R Lawrence  
D Ledger  
A Moulding  
G Pratt  
P Skinner

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

M Armstrong

F Caygill  
M Chapman  
B De Saram  
P Faithfull  
M Hartnell  
N Hookway  
S Jackson  
G Jung  
J Loudoun  
P Millar  
M Rixson  
P Twiss  
E Wragg

**Officers in attendance:**

Ed Freeman, Service Lead Planning Strategy and Development Management  
Shirley Shaw, Planning Barrister  
Wendy Harris, Democratic Services Officer  
Damian Hunter, Planning Solicitor  
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

**Councillor apologies:**

S Chamberlain  
E Rylance

Chairman .....

Date: .....