

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Strategic Planning Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 1 November 2022

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 9.32 am and ended at 4.56 pm. The meeting was adjourned at 12.20 pm and reconvened at 12.45 pm, adjourned at 13.02 pm and reconvened at 1.45 pm and adjourned at 3.10 pm and reconvened at 3.15 pm.

50 Public speaking

Mr Ray Levy spoke on item 10 – Consultation on the draft East Devon Local Plan – updated draft as follows:

“I would like to raise my objections and concerns about the recent inclusion of AONB land south of the Heathfield Estate known as Honi_01, as an option for development within the new draft local plan.

This site was recently subject to two previous planning applications which were roundly and unanimously rejected by the town council and East Devon District Council delegated officers with nearly 200 letters objections from residents across Honiton and beyond. I would encourage the committee to review its multitude of refusal reasons which the majority should still stand and give adequate grounds for removal of this site from the draft plan.

Looking at the developer’s latest presentation it suggested constructing 79 dwellings, this would indicate it’s still a significant development within an AONB and would set a precedent not only for this developer to gain further expansion into the adjoining fields, which would require construction regardless, due to the need for access to this centre field site, but also for clear future expansion across to other adjoining areas in this, and other localities.

The land at this site rises steeply from the northern existing residential boundary, which already increasingly suffers from run off from the site, flooding gardens and driveways due to increasing climate change, and building over this will only exacerbate the issue.

The other major concern due to its steeply rising topography, will be the loss of privacy and amenity to the current residents all along the boundary, as these proposed two story properties will be positioned to gain full advantage of views across to the Blackdown hills AONB (basically ripping up one AONB to give owners views to another!) quite an odd way of preserving our beautiful natural environment. The Developers would also use the fact it’s within an AONB as their unique marketing strategy, negating the fact they destroyed part of it in the process.

We are aware of the pressures on the authority to provide enough land to develop for future housing, but AONB and National parks should always be the last resort, not just included to make up numbers to meet erroneous government targets.

These areas are of great importance to our economy and the enjoyment of all residents and visitors and should be preserved at all costs. Your own draft plan goes to great lengths about protecting and enhancing our outstanding landscapes, biodiversity, habitats and species, which this site has in abundance, so this inclusion for development seems to greatly contradict your own document.

Could the committee or officers also confirm if Natural England or East Devon AONB were consulted about a variation order with regards to the redrawing of the Settlement boundary on the latest policy map to include this site or the development of it?

I thank the committee for allowing me the opportunity to speak this morning and hope you can reverse your decision to include this beautiful area for development prior to consultation.”

Councillor Jane Chanot, spoke on behalf of Farringdon Parish Council on item 8 – New Community Options Appraisal raising concerns for option 1 which would take over the Farringdon area, with small hamlets being surrounded by this proposal and the possibility of Farringdon being renamed which is a real concern for residents who lived in the well-established village. Option 1 would also surround the Hill Barton Industrial Estate and residents take issue about what was happening on the estate with the extent of growth, noise pollution, odours and other pollutions which was being considered a suitable place for families. Councillor Chanot asked Members to carefully consider Option 1 advising Hill Barton Industrial Estate was a blight on the area and would also be a blight on any development that comes forward. She raised concerns that Members would be making decisions without seeing the area first and suggested Members should take the opportunity to come see for themselves the beauty of Farringdon and the Hill Barton area.

Dr Sally Basker, Chief Executive, Exeter Science Park spoke on item 10 – Consultation on the draft East Devon Local Plan – updated draft as follows:

“Let me start by noting that, in previous consultancy roles, I have had to produce similar length documents to support policy development and I understand how difficult it is. I’d like to commend the authors for their work.

We are fully supportive of the Economic Strategy and look forward to playing our part. I welcome more land being allocated to Exeter Science Park; as we approach critical mass, companies will need rather than want to be at the Park. It is important to ensure that strategic policies do not curtail the “current approach to development” which is being promoted in the plan.

I refer now to strategic policies 9, 10, 11, 12 and 16.

With regard to strategic policy 10, might I suggest that the name of the park is Exeter Science Park: the physical park exists, the legal entity exists, the brand is strong, the trademarks have been registered.

Exeter Science Park Ltd is a small or medium-size enterprise that is already blessed with governance, regulation and complex, multi-party agreements. Therefore, with regard to strategic policies 9 and 10, I suggest the Local Plan should reference, rather than selectively quote from, existing agreements such as the Outline Planning Permission, the Gateway Policy and the District Heating Master Agreement. The latter incorporates checks to encourage competition.

Again in strategic policies 9 and 10, I draw mental comparisons between the phrase 'highest standard' in a property context and 'best endeavours' in a legal context. We will need a range of facilities to meet user needs as they emerge to drive growth. If standards have to be mentioned, I suggest they are well-defined and measurable like BREEAM Excellent, Net Zero or EPC A+.

My last comment on strategic policy 10 concerns 'non-businesses or business that do not accord or align with Science Park objectives'. It is unclear what is meant by 'non-business' or 'Science Park objectives'. Again, I suggest that the Local Plan should reference the Outline Planning Permission and Gateway Policy. This should be sufficient.

While we are pleased to see land being identified for business or technology park use to the north of the Park and between the Park and Sowton Village. Our preference would be the extension south towards Sowton, preferably with a physical link to the Science Park to benefit from the existing community and facilities, to maximise the synergy between new residential communities and employment opportunities, and to support links north and south of the A30.

Finally, regarding strategic objective 16, I note we have already identified the desire to connect to the Clyst Valley Regional Park in our draft future vision.

We are keen to engage with and support this process."

Councillor Alasdair Bruce, spoke on behalf of Feniton Parish Council spoke on item 10 – Consultation on the draft East Devon Local Plan – updated draft as follows:
"I put forward the comments below in a final attempt to highlight many of the inconsistencies in the draft before you.

You will all no doubt be aware of the Environment agency objection to planning development based on the pollution generated from run off into the river systems heavily loaded with nitrates and phosphates to name but two. There is nothing in the draft that will guarantee that any future developments will be required to stand alone when it comes to controlling water related issues for a given development. And, after the shocking images of sewerage discharge in Cornwall on Sunday for no obvious reason, this issue is of paramount importance. It encouraging to note that our cabinet member Cllr Jung has stated he would support a reduction in surface runoff linked to any future developments and would seek to refuse it if not. However, he also correctly points out that the current NPPF frame does not allow us to refuse, which is nonsense, to use his own words.

A number of councillors and parishes have already highlighted for you, the inconsistency of site selection based solely on whatever developers bring forward for consideration. The point has been made that many potential sites, which could also attract support from their respective communities, have been overlooked. This shows how the sustainability test which is applied to all planning applications is glaringly missing in the tests applied to potential sites in this draft. How on earth can we have a twin track system like this in planning, the same rules should apply across the board. The basis of a sustainable development is enshrined in good planning, and during the course of your meetings I, and the parish, have consistently demonstrated that Feniton is not a sustainable location for large scale development. I had hoped that given this, and the clear conclusions drawn from the super enquiry of 2014, that there would have been a selection of sites that better reflect the modest 10% of growth that this very committee proposed for Feniton. So, at the very least, this committee must include a clear

statement in the consultation draft that only a 'modest' level of growth is anticipated for Feniton, in line with other Tier 4 settlements in the settlement hierarchy that underpins the plans strategy.

Our communities are now going to be asked to rank sites with no terms of reference or access to the kind of information that would be available for an individual application. Even if this exercise had been set up properly, there seems to be no guarantee that their observations or recommendations would be taken seriously. So, in order to get the best, and most representative result from the consultation, Feniton must be given the opportunity of a facilitated public meeting using a robust methodology in order that the community can state its preferences for development in Feniton, and rank the 2nd best sites as resolved by your committee at its Oct 7th meeting. There is a major concern that to rely simply on online responses will not truly reflect the needs and aspirations of the community, nor that everyone has, or wishes to use, the internet. Further, after the unambiguous statement by the Secretary of State Mr Gove, that "new developments should have the consent of local communities" "the consultation mechanism needs to be even more open and transparent than is currently planned.

There are also a number of meetings coming up between Cllrs, parishes and senior officers regarding the special status given to Feniton and Whimble in this draft. These also must be face to face meetings rather than zoom. It must also follow that common sense must prevail that the draft cannot proceed until these meetings, and recommendations flowing from them are incorporated into the draft. So I must call on the committee to pause publication of the draft until these meetings are conducted. To do otherwise renders them pointless. Again, as has been mentioned by others, we are not up against the clock here with 9 years left to run on current plan.

In conclusion there are simply too many outstanding issues for this committee to realistically plough forward with the public consultation phase. I in no way wish to belittle the considerable work undertaken so far by the members and officers, but if it's not ready it's not, and a delay at this stage will make for a stronger planning policy going forward, and one that actually reflects the real needs of our communities rather than the greed of developers and land owners. We should be known as a council that values community need over corporate greed.

Councillor Geoff Jung, Portfolio Holder for Coast, Country and Environment spoke on item 10 – Consultation on the draft East Devon Local Plan – updated draft as follows: "The meeting today is probably the crunch decision on how this area will look for our children and our children's children. That's why getting this vital Local Plan right is so important.

It's also vital that we provide the best communications and information, so residents business, farmers and landowners know what we are doing and why.

Just a couple of internet chatter remarks I picked up last week.

Question to one of our MPs

"How do the farming community feel about EDDC being allowed to build houses on agricultural land near Exeter Airport? And what are you doing to stop EDDC and TDC building all their housing estates as close to Exeter's borders as they can?"

Clearly the questioner was not aware the housing number requirement is provided by government

The MPs answers

“Many do have understandable concerns. Ultimately, I have no power as the MP to intervene in local planning matters, but I have been working on planning legislation which is working its way through Parliament. We do need more homes, but we need to build them in the right places with infrastructure first.”

Clearly the MP doesn't accept any blame for the concerns raised.

This exchange implies that that it's the Councils of Teignbridge and East Devon are solely responsible to build loads of communities adjacent to Exeter, and the Councils are to blame for building them with infrastructure afterwards (if at all!) These comments really do not help cooperation and cohesion!

We have got to get the real reasons out there, of why we most build these extra communities and more and more estates, and why its close to Exeter, and why green fields, and why infrastructure like roads, transport, health, education, and the protection of habitat and biodiversity all be required.

Remember, our MPs are working on new planning legislation which we are led to believe will reduce this Planning Authorities powers even further, not enhance, so its vital we get this plan through before the goal posts are changed again.

This local plan is suggesting a new Community, the plan is saying we need the infrastructure, the plan says we need more health care, a new sewage works, more schools, and further protection to our remaining countryside.

But we as a District Council are trying to remedy the missing jigsaw pieces from the last but one local plan with obtaining the promised finances for the Dinon Way extension, we are trying to resolve the issues at Cranbrook by providing the long promised green energy for the centralized heating, plus we have started the eagerly awaited town center. We are now delivering the award-winning concept to improve and enhance substantial areas of West End countryside with the Clyst Valley Regional Park.

So, at the same time of providing the missing infrastructure from the last 40 years we now need to ensure that we don't leave the vital infrastructure to be completed by our children or their children.

That's some challenge, but we most do it, and I believe if we and Central Government work together, rather than simply requiring us to provide planning permission for over 950 dwellings a year every year, and at the same time remove funding not only for infrastructure but even down to the running costs to this council, that challenge is made even more difficult.

We have a staffing emergency, we have had a Covid emergency, we have a climate change emergency, we have a housing emergency, and now we have an economic emergency.

This new local plan is not only about resolving the housing emergency, but it will also provide the vital steppingstone to overcome all our other emergencies.

For my portfolio, the plan is still sparse on Environmental, Biodiversity and Nature gain issues, but once we have identified the housing locations these plans will follow, and if I have anything to do with it, they will be substantial, but they will be deliverable.”

Questions raised by Members included:

- A request was made for the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management to answer Mr Levy’s question about the redrawing of the settlement boundary for Honi_01. In response the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised that Honi_01 had been covered in the site assessment work but due to an error the settlement boundary had previously been omitted. He clarified it was not a new site;
- Clarification sought on why there was no engagement with Exeter Science Park. In response the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management acknowledged that more engagement was needed and was happy to work closely with the Science Park;
- Clarification sought on the AONB boundary. The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised they were not looking to change the AONB boundary but to ask them to consult on the draft Local Plan;
- We are currently in a bad position to move forward with the draft Local Plan which has been heavily structured by officers and which has had very little input from our key authorities and enterprises with input to our policies;
- Clarification sought on Councillor Jung’s comments “the plan is still sparse on environmental issues” and what should be done. In response Councillor Jung advised that environmental protection should have been done first and then the development around the protection.

51 **Minutes of the previous meetings**

The minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee held on 29 September, 4 October and 7 October 2022 were confirmed as a true record.

52 **Declarations of interest**

Minute 56. New Community Options Appraisal.

Councillor Dan Ledger, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Property would be next door to proposed development.

Minute 56. New Community Options Appraisal.

Councillor Philip Skinner, Directly relates Non-registerable Interest, Close associate of the owners of Greendale Business Park and Hill Barton Business Park.

Minute 57. East Devon Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment 2022.

Councillor Dan Ledger, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Lives next to where development is being proposed.

Minute 57. East Devon Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment 2022.

Councillor Paul Hayward, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Employee of Axminster Town Council.

Minute 58. Consultation on the draft East Devon Local Plan - updated draft.

Councillor Paul Hayward, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Employee of Axminster Town Council.

Minute 58. Consultation on the draft East Devon Local Plan - updated draft.

Councillor Philip Skinner, Directly relates Non-registerable Interest, Close associate of the owners of Greendale Business Park and Hill Barton Business Park.

53 **Matters of urgency**

There were no matters of urgency.

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

There were no confidential/exempt items.

55 **Presentations from invited developers/agents/landowners promoting sites in the west end of the district**

Mark Dyson, Mark Dyson Property & Nick Wheeldon, Waycotts
GH/ED/56 – Land at Coxes Farm, Sidmouth Road, Clyst St Mary

The landowner owns and lives at the property known as “Denbowe”, and has an interest in the Langdon Business Park, both at the NW side of the site. These properties have the potential to add to the submitted land, to form part of a larger development, either as further commercial or mixed use, or to access the overall site. Otherwise there is a good access directly onto the speed restricted zone of the A3052, with good visibility for and of oncoming traffic in both directions. This is level site, slightly sloping to the west end with loamy and clayey soils. The site is tree-lined to the SW boundary and between the two land parcels. The site lies in Environment Agency’s Flood Zone 1, at very low risk of flooding. A low voltage power line on poles, crosses the western part of the site.

This 8.63 ha (21 a) site, which has been put forward in the landowner’s updated (2022) HELAA submission for employment use and now it is suggested it would be ideal for a mixed employment and residential use. At least 2 ha (5 a) at the western end already has a semi-industrial outlook, bordered as it is on two sides by commercial development, the Langdon Business Park to the North and the Enfield Digester site to the South. Access will either be directly from the A3052 or through the existing business park. The remaining 6.63 ha (16.3 a) could be allocated as residential development, SANGS and public open space (POS) delivering up to 150 residential units with a viable percentage of affordable housing. The development would also include naturalised SuDS features, cycle ways and other community facilities to benefit the local area.

Mark Dyson, Mark Dyson Property & Nick Wheeldon, Waycotts
Clge_03 – Land at Clyst Road, Clyst St Mary & Clg_05 –
Land to the west side of Blue Ball, Clyst St Mary

Both sites are under the same single ownership bordering the M5 and separated from each other by Old Rydon Lane.

Clg_03

The land shown comprises 1.75 ha (4.3 acres) which is the subject of this submission. The whole land parcel (SX9690 5266) includes a further frontage strip of about 30m wide totalling approx. 0.75 ha which belongs is represented by Nick Wheeldon. This has been selected by officers for consideration separately under reference Clge_04.

The site is gently sloping, south-facing land on light, well drained soils with frontage to the motorway on the west side and to previously developed residential land to the North. There is a wide neighbouring evergreen shelter belt immediately to the South screening the existing light industrial site there.

The 1.75 ha part would be suitable for 40-50 residential units, including a reasonable viable percentage of affordable and self-build housing. This represents a medium density development to include Public Open Space, naturalised SuDS features and

probably a LEAP play area. The density and type of development would be comparable to existing development immediately opposite, on the east side of the motorway.

Should the 0.75ha (1.9 a) of frontage land (Clge_04) be included at the same density, an additional 17-21 residential units could be appropriate subject to agreement by the parties.

Clg_05

This land in question abuts the M5 motorway, is well screened by mature trees and bushes, and lies at a somewhat lower level. The land has light well-drained soils and according to the EA flood maps is in Flood Zone 1 at very low risk of flooding. The site amounts to approximately 0.80 ha and forms a shallow valley gently sloping to south west and north east. The soil itself is well drained land and is currently in horticultural production.

Access from Clyst Road is by way of a single lane track owned by the landowner. Up to five large detached dwellings could be accommodated each with 0.16 ha using the existing access and a cul-de-sac layout. It is considered that this type and density of development is appropriate for this area where plot sizes of existing housing on the neighbouring land to the south are similar.

It is possible that the land could be better developed in conjunction with neighbouring land to the north and east, using access for higher density residential/commercial development although the neighbouring land owners have not yet been approached.

Questions raised by Members:

- Confirmation sought on the number of houses and whether there would be affordable housing provision for Clg_05. Mr Dyson advised it would be five large houses as the access road was narrow and there would be no affordable houses on this site as it was under the threshold.

Daniel Rogers, Bell Cornwell

Farr_02 – Land at Waldrons Farm, Sidmouth Road, Farringdon

- Broadly a 'T' shaped site suitable for mixed use development;
- The site sites east of the Hill Barton Industrial Estate area;
- Wide frontage on the A3052 and A30;
- Existing bus stop located a short distance from the site which serves the A3052;
- Access from the A3052;
- Pylons run east to the site
- Parsonage Lane runs west of the site;
- The site is relatively flat and self-contained within the landscape;

Questions raised by Members:

- Clarification sought on how the proposed development would fit within the Farringdon Neighbourhood Plan. Mr Rogers advised at this stage there were no development proposals for this site;
- Clarification sought on the pylons. In response Mr Rogers advised the pylons located east of the site followed just outside the site boundary.

Nick Matthews, Savills

Greendale Business Park Expansion

- Home to circa 1,600 employees in a wide range of businesses in a well landscaped location hidden from public view;

- Approx. 21 ha.
- Located very close to all new settlement options;
- A new roundabout could be introduced to alleviate the issues of traffic;
- Provision of attenuation could be introduced to alleviate the issue of flooding and drainage within the site;
- Landscaping provided to limit views and to provide an in-house environment
- Economic benefits would include a range of different types of employment that could create approx. 1,368 permanent jobs across a range of sectors;
- Opportunity to obtain biodiversity net gain through enhancement of the landscape and tree planting around the business park;
- Energy sustainability of the proposed new buildings with the potential to change of the diet of the existing AD Plant to incorporate some of the food waste which is currently transported out to Somerset to provide further power to the expansion site;
- Opportunity to put solar panels on roofs of the business park to avoid solar panels on greenfield land;
- Potential for battery storage.

Councillor Philip Skinner left the meeting and did not take part in Members question time.

Questions raised by Members:

- Clarification sought on the highway issues along Sidmouth Road and how would the volume of traffic be dealt with. In response Mr Matthews advised that potential improvements had been investigated and the opportunity to co-locate the employment with new homes to reduce the impact;
- In response to the comment about the AD Plant Councillor Jung clarified that he was not aware of any discussions with Devon County Council and that East Devon had a 5 year contract for its food waste. In response Mr Matthews said he did not mean to mislead Members and advised there was still a benefit;
- Clarification sought on the different coloured areas on the landscape impact slide. Mr Matthews advised it related to the zone of theoretical visibility which were areas of where there was a possibility of seeing the site.

Councillor Philip Skinner returned to the meeting.

Jeff Richards, Turley

- Key strategic location in West End'
- Opportunity for 8,000+ homes;
- Vehicular access points taken from two points on the A30 and three points along the A3052;
- The opportunity for a new sustainable transport link between the A30 and A3052;
- Creation of three new neighbourhoods, each with a local centre and primary school;
- Plentiful recreation routes, sports and play facilities;
- 20ha. Of new employment land;
- 11ha. Secondary school site;
- 185ha. SANGS;
- Creating connectivity between existing key routes and corridors as part of expanded network in West End;
- Potential for clean growth initiatives linked to transport such as interchange points and charging hubs;
- Significant links to existing employment area and further onsite delivery;

- Facilitate delivery and expansion of regional green space
- Good accessibility in respect of the proximity to and the ability to directly connect with other significant part of the West End;
- Significant opportunities for enhanced GI network including well located Regional Park extension;

Councillor Philip Skinner left the meeting and did not take part in Members question time.

Questions and comments from Members:

- Clarification sought on how to alleviate sewage issues. Mr Richards advised more work was required to identify a solution
- Clarification sought on the highways mitigation. In response Mr Richards advised the ability to interlink the access from the A30 to the north and the A3052 to the south of the site as well as an opportunity to introduce a park and ride scheme and potential for a strategic road interchange.
- Reassurance was sought to avoid splitting the two sites by a major road. Mr Richards advised the road would be the heart of the development with the opportunity for a transport corridor;
- How is the road and essential infrastructure going to be paid, when will it be delivered and what will be delivered. In response Mr Richards advised the delivery of 2,500 homes would pay for the road and would be delivered to serve the homes built. Other infrastructure provision would include a local centre and primary school;
- Clarification sought on road distances and whether it was 'as the crow flies' as the location was remote from a railway station and a poor bus service. It was confirmed 'as the crow flies';
- This is likely to end up as a dormitory town to serve Exeter;
- Are there further proposals to support public transport? Mr Richards advised bus connections to this part of East Devon could be looked at and the landowners would be happy to work with DCC.
- Clarification sought on how the parcels of land would be managed and the timescales. Bloor homes would submit an outline planning application and Master Plan for the whole development to include strategic design codes which would come forward to deliver quality homes.
- The Chair sought clarification from the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management about the Council's constraints to ensure the delivery a development corporation model with landowners and developers. The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised there were a lot of lessons to be learnt from Cranbrook and for the need for Members to consider a suitable delivery vehicle that helps deliver a new community which has yet to be done. There are other options including a Master Developer or to secure land for development in partnership with developers but all options need to be assessed and brought to Strategic Planning Committee in due course if Members agree the new community option.
- Clarification sought on whether the total of 6,000 houses could be delivered within the Local Plan period up to 2040. Mr Richards advised it was deliverable because there was a house builder on board but it takes time. 2,500 homes was the figure proposed by the Council as a reasonable figure to be delivered. More houses could be delivered but this would depend on how quick consent was granted.

Councillor Philip Skinner join the meeting.

Bethan Haigh, Boyer Planning

Clg 28 – Land at Addlepool Farm, north and south of Woodbury Road, Clyst St George

- The site extends to circa. 38ha.
- Located either side of Woodbury Road (B3179) between the villages of Clyst St George and Ebford;
- 1.6km from Topsham & 8km from Exeter;
- Circa. 3.4km from the East Devon AONB and close proximity to the Clyst Valley Regional Trail;
- Opportunity to provide approximately 700 dwellings to meet the new Part L and Future Homes Standard,
- To include private and affordable homes and a balance of community and recreation facilities;
- Key benefits include:
 - Walkable neighbourhood;
 - Primary School and Sports Provision;
 - Allotments;
 - Significant areas of public open space;
 - Highway improvements;
 - Single land ownership;
 - Provision of housing in the short-medium term
- Potential for a new bus route through the development;
- Opportunities to extend public access into the site;
- Important views to be retained;
- Opportunity for habitat enhancements (including community orchard);
- No technical or environmental constraints.

Questions raised by Members:

- Clarification sought on health service provision. Ms Haigh advised that engagement with the residents of Clyst St George would be encouraged to help understand what they would like to come forward which could include health care, retail of a flexible working space;
- How will you deal with sewage? Ms Haigh advised although they were only in the first stages of this proposal they would liaise with the relevant utility providers to ensure adequate provision;
- Can the suggested infrastructure be provided on just 700 houses? Ms Haigh advised it was understood that it could be provided alongside the highways mitigation and 35% affordable housing.

56 **New Community Options Appraisal**

Prior to the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management presenting his report Councillor Mike Allen called a point of order with a request to change the order of the agenda items to discuss item 10 first so that the Committee could have an opportunity to vote whether to delay the draft Local Plan in order that it could be modified as a two stage process which would allow a proper consultation with town and parish councils prior to the public consultation. The Chair advised that in his opinion he could see no justification to why the agenda items should be changed in order to defer an item for later discussion. He reminded Members that the public were watching online and would expect the Committee to follow the published order of items. A discussion then followed between the Chair and Councillor Allen and in response to that discussion the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised it had been listed in the particular way to follow a logical order as there was a need to discuss the new community first as it was a key component to what goes into the draft Local Plan

and the HELAA which was a key evidence document would also need to be discussed before the draft Local Plan.

The Chair took the decision to adjourn the meeting for lunch.

The meeting resumed and the Chair sought clarification from Councillor Mike Allen as to whether he wanted to move forward with his proposal to change the order of the items. In response Councillor Allen advised that he no longer wished to proceed with his proposal.

The Committee considered the report that updated Members on the summary of work undertaken by consultants to assess the 3 options obtained from the Call for Sites for a new community that would form part of the spatial strategy for the new Local Plan.

The 3 options were:

- Option 1 – land between the A3052 and A30, around the Hill Barton Business Park and up to Exeter Airport
- Option 2 – spans the A3052 and the southern part of option 1 and the east of Crealy and Greendale Business Park
- Option 3 – South of the A3052 north east of Clyst St George

The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management acknowledged some key issues raised from the morning's presentations including landscape impact for Greendale Business Park, sewage capacity and its implications and highways capacity, which he advised, had all been addressed in the assessment work.

The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management highlighted that out of the 3 options identified it had been officer's opinion that options 1 and 3 had scored higher, with option 1 slightly ahead. As both options scored very closely it was considered appropriate to consult on both of these options although only one of them would be allocated.

Councillor Skinner briefly addressed the Committee and then left the room. He did not take part in the debate or vote.

The Chair addressed the Committee advising he would like to do each recommendation separately and welcomed comments from Members on recommendation 1 – agree in principle of a new community forming a key element of a strategy for growth in the new Local Plan.

Discussion covered:

- Prime agricultural land needs protecting and this is where the new community is proposed – cannot support.
- Sadly these are the only options to fulfil the housing requirement. We are in this position as we are below the Government's national requirement;
- Still have concerns with infrastructure, this should not be an afterthought;
- Do not support development on vast areas of greenfields;
- Houses should be built to the best standard to help tackle the climate emergency and less damage to the environment;
- Agree in principle to the proposed new town as it would be close to employment opportunities which would help to reduce the need to commute;

- Government targets are forcing us to make a decision we do not want to. A suggestion was made to show the council's reluctance in a form of words in the recommendation as follows:
"in order to meet Government's housing targets the Council agrees to the principle of a new community forming a key element of a strategy for growth in the new Local Plan";
Agree in principle to the new community as this will help reduce development in every area in East Devon;
- The new town is needed if we are going to think about the future. This could be an opportunity to build an excellent new community

RESOLVED:

1. In order to meet the required Government's housing targets Members agreed to the principle of a new community forming a key element of a strategy for growth in the new Local Plan;

The Chair welcomed comments on recommendation 2 – views are sought on the vision statement for the new community included within this report.

Discussions covered:

- Clarification sought on an implementation of a revolving infrastructure fund. The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management saw the infrastructure fund as a means of delivering infrastructure as part of the delivery vehicle which should emphasise the key point of a timely delivery ahead of development;
- The need for aspirations for the climate emergency;
- Support high income expectation as its close to Exeter Airport and the Science Park;
- It was suggested that the following wording to be included in the Strategic Objectives under Section 7 "a timely delivery of infrastructure at the first opportunity";
- It was suggested that the second sentence should read "delivering up to 8,000 high-quality equitable homes with an equitable range of tenures" to ensure everyone in the community can find a suitable house;
- This is no detail on low energy homes. It should be part of the vision that these homes should be very low demand on energy resources. The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised that as zero carbon was a key policy it would be automatically translated into the new community but acknowledged it was a good point to capture for the new community.

Councillor Dan Ledger proposed, seconded by Councillor Ben Ingham that the vision statement for the new community should include the following:

- zero carbon;
- timely delivery of infrastructure at the first opportunity, and
- delivering up to 8,000 high-quality equitable homes with an equitable range of tenures.

RESOLVED:

Members agreed that:

- "zero carbon" be included in the proposed version of the vision statement;
- amend the second sentence to read "delivering up to 8,000 high-quality equitable homes with an equitable range of tenures";

- under the heading Strategic Objectives/Design Principles No. 7 A truly sustainable self-sufficient settlement incorporating homes, local employment, shops, community amenities, public realm and open space include the words “a timely delivery of infrastructure at the first opportunity.”

The Chair welcomed comments on recommendation 3 – agree to consult on a proposed new community with option 1 identified as the preferred approach and option 3 as an alternative option for consultation. Option 2 would be identified in the consultation but as an option that has been discounted at this stage.

Discussion covered:

- Clarification sought on option 2 and whether the harm outweighs the development value or would the option return after the consultation as a sub section. The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised option 2 would fall away unless the consultation shows we need to look at the option again. He addressed the significant issues identified in option 2 referring to page 61 in the report.
- Clarification sought on the rationale for officers not supporting option 2. It was advised it had been assessed on a traffic light system consistent to previous assessments;
- Clarification sought on the expectation about when the Committee would see a draft of the Water Cycle Study. It was advised it would be brought to Strategic Planning Committee by the end of the year;
- All 3 options have the same highways issues. It was advised the key issue was that option 1 spans between the A3052 and the A30 which would provide a link road between the two major roads and potentially alleviate traffic on the Clyst St Mary roundabout
- Option 3 includes the industrial estate which is noisy and smelly and is not suitable for families;
- What does utilities mean? This means utilities such as gas, sewage, network and broadband connections
- Clarification sought about why the assessments were not done on a weighting system. As there were pro’s and con’s with a weighting system it was decided to focus on how each site scored on an equal basis.
- How can we make a difference when there is so little difference with the scoring? A suggestion was made for both options to go out to consultation. The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised it was their intention for the public to be consulted on the first and second choice options.
- The Chair sought clarification whether options 1 and 3 could go out on an equal basis. There was no reason why both options could not go out on an equal basis
- Reference was made to the scoring matrix and how the margins for options 1 and 3 were so close;
- Suggestion to include option 2 as a consideration as this would fit within the council’s climate emergency strategy;
- Evidence shows that option 3 is significantly better than option 2 as half of option 2 is within option 1;

The following recommendation was proposed by Councillor Ingham and seconded by Councillor Moulding.

“That Strategic Planning Committee consider option 1 as the preferred option and options 2 and 3 as alternative options”

RESOLVED:

To agree to consult on a proposed new community with option 1 identified as the preferred option and options 2 and 3 as alternative options for consultation.

57 **East Devon Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment 2022**

The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management presented a report that updated Members on further work that had been done on the East Devon Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) to satisfy Government guidelines. Members noted that the majority of information provided had also been provided as an interim report at the 3 May 2022 meeting however since this meeting there had been a further call for sites with all the key findings being incorporated into this report.

In response to a request to check the numbering of the 2022 call for sites the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised this would be checked paying particular attention to West Hill.

RESOLVED:

1. That the East Devon Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment November 2022 report for use as evidence for the purposes of the new Local Plan and other spatial plan making, for development management, and in support of achieving East Devon District Council's corporate objectives be endorsed;
2. That delegated authority be given to the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management in consultation with the Chair of Strategic Planning Committee, to finalise the HELAA for consultation. To include making any minor changes to correct possible factual or grammatical errors, ensure links to background reports are made and other minor amendments that do not materially change content.
3. That the East Devon Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment November 2022 report be published on the Council's website as part of the new Local Plan evidence base.

58 **Consultation on the draft East Devon Local Plan - updated draft**

The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management presented the report which addressed the issues raised by Members at a previous meeting and addressed the need for resources for face to face engagement events during the plan consultation period.

The report highlighted the track changes summarising the main changes. The most significant changes were:

- Policy 2 – housing numbers have been recalculated to record preferred allocations and 2nd best allocation sites (previously just preferred sites were listed);
- Policy 8 – a preferred site is identified (shown on the Policies Map) for a new town on the western side of East Devon (alternative not preferred site options are also shown);
- Policy 21 – Honiton – Policy is amended to include two additional areas of land for allocation for housing development on the western side of Honiton (the officer intent was to have shown these as allocations but they were omitted from the 1 October draft);

- Feniton and Whimple – in line with conclusions reached at Strategic Planning Committee on 7 October text has been added to clarify that the plan does not suggest or allocate land to accommodate a strategic scale housing development at these two villages;
- New policies are inserted into the plan in respect of:
 - Telecommunications development;
 - Contaminated land;
 - Pollution control
 - Aerodrome safeguarding areas;
 - Vehicular access to sites and land; and
 - Service yards.

Members noted that the sustainability appraisal was an ongoing piece of work and further evidence gathering would extend into 2023.

Members' attention was drawn to section 6 of the report which detailed the resource implications for face to face engagement in the main towns between mid-afternoon to early evening. The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management welcomed Members comments on how this could be facilitated and advised enquiries had already begun on venue availability. Members' views were also sought on whether to include other areas including Feniton and Whimple following a request received from Feniton Parish Council for an event in their parish as a result of the scale of growth proposed.

The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management referred to the recommendations noting that the third recommendation had excluded Cranbrook as it has its own Local Plan and would not be included in the new Local Plan.

Councillor Philip Skinner who spoke before the Committee went into debate addressed the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management and sought clarification why Plymtree had not been included with Feniton and Whimple as he would like the village to have the same opportunities as other areas and how the face to face drop in session would be conducted and whether it would cover wards. In response it was advised that Feniton and Whimple had been included following a resolution by Members at the last meeting. Members did not resolve to include Plymtree. Councillor Skinner left the room and did not take part in the debate or vote.

Points raised during discussion included:

- The detail in section 6 was welcomed. Clarity was sought on officers attending the drop-in sessions as a provisional booking had been made at the Ocean Centre in Exmouth free of charge on 15 November to enable a cross party group of councillors to attend a drop-in session. It would be a shame to cancel if officers were unable to contribute. In response the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised although there was the intention to work together on this there was a need to distinguish between an official council event and an event organised by Members on a political basis. Officers need to attend official council events which Members are more than welcome to attend. Whether officers could attend other events legal advice would be sought;
- The Chair suggested to extend the consultation period to Friday 6 January 2023 to give Councillor Millar time to reschedule the Ocean event;
- It is important we get this consultation right as in the past consultations have not had a good response. This is a massive consultation and just doing it online is not good enough.

- Alternative venues need to be found outside towns as some people cannot travel – villages need to be considered;
- A need to consider mobile libraries;
- The policy on green wedges needs finalising as it is an important policy

Councillor Dan Ledger proposed recommendations 1 and 2 seconded by Councillor Paul Hayward with a further proposal that under recommendation 1 the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management provided clarity on the minor changes

Further comments included:

- The tree policy on page 296 is not a tree policy;
- The green wedge policy needs finalising. Clarification sought on whether the draft Local Plan would be sent out incomplete. It was acknowledged that some areas were less developed than others and further work on the intended wording would be completed after public engagement. Final boundaries for the green wedges would need to be consulted on at a later date and brought to Members next year.
- There was no reference to the employment at West Hill. It was advised that public views would be obtained through the consultation stage.
- Agree with the Chair for the consultation period to be extended to 5 January.
- Why has Honi_01 still been included when it had been rejected twice by the town council – please can this be removed; It was advised Honi_01 was previously resolved by Members to be included in the draft Local Plan as a 2nd choice site;
- Clarification sought about whether there had been conversations to consider a different policy in relation to biodiversity net gain percentages in AONB's.

RESOLVED:

1. Delegated authority be given to the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management in consultation with the Chair of Strategic Planning Committee, to finalise the plan for consultation. To include making minor changes to correct possible factual or grammatical errors, ensure links to background reports are made and other minor amendments that do not materially change content;
2. That the draft Local Plan, as appended to this report and subject to final refinements, for public consultation be endorsed.

The Chair welcomed Members comments on the third recommendation.

Comments included:

- Having only one event in Clyst St Mary is not going to work. To have a coherent structure there needs to be one in Clyst St Mary, Farringdon, Woodbury, Exton, Clyst Honiton, Clyst St George and any other village missed to encompass every surrounding village. In response the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management highlighted the resourcing issues with all the additional events and suggested to remain with Feniton, Whimble and Clyst St Mary and perhaps a special meeting for any village that would be affected by the volume of development
- There is a need to separate the towns from the villages;
- A suggestion was made to extend the consultation to the 8 January which was a Sunday night.
- A suggestion was made for town and parish council drop-in sessions;
- Will there be an opportunity to see CommonPlace before it goes live. The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management was happy to arrange a zoom meeting for councillors to see it;

- We need a consultation for the new community;

Councillor Ingham proposed the third recommendation as written, seconded by Councillor Richard Lawrence with an additional proposal to read as follows: “that the period for consultation responses would end on Sunday, 15 January 2023”

RESOLVED:

3. That Strategic Planning Committee does wish to proceed with proposals for face to face drop in consultation events in each of the main towns and further events in Feniton, Whimble and Clyst St Mary;
4. That the period for consultation responses be extended to end on Sunday, 15 January 2023 be agreed.

59 **Proposed response to consultation on the evolving Local Plan for Torbay**

The Committee was asked to consider the proposed response to Torbay Council’s local plan consultation as set out below.

“Thank you for providing the opportunity for East Devon District council to comment on Torbay Local Plan 2022 – 2040: ‘A Landscape to Thrive’ (your local plan consultation that concludes on 21 November 2022). I would advise that this council has no specific comments to make on the current consultation. There appears to be no evidence published to support the approach to housing numbers or how the proposed shortfall would be addressed and so we are unable to comment other than to reiterate points raised in the previous round of consultation that we set out below and would request you fully take into account in respect of your future work on plan making”

RESOLVED:

That the Council respond to the Torbay Local Plan Consultation advising of concerns around their current policy position in respect of housing provision in line with the text set out in this committee report be agreed.

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
B Ingham
R Lawrence
D Ledger
A Moulding
E Rylance
P Skinner

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

J Bonetta
A Bruce
P Faithfull

G Jung
P Millar

Officers in attendance:

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

Councillor apologies:

S Chamberlain
M Howe
G Pratt

Chairman

Date: