

Report to: Strategic Planning Committee



Date of Meeting: 5 December 2023

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Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

New Community Options Appraisal

Report summary:

This report follows Members consideration of various iterations of a draft Local Plan which have proposed allocating land for a new community on land within East Devon that lies to the east of Exeter. Members at their meeting on the 1 November 2022 agreed to the principle of a new community forming a key element of a strategy for growth in the new Local Plan. It was then resolved to consult on the 3 options for the new community with option 1 identified as the preferred option and options 2 and 3 as alternative options. A draft plan was consulted on between November 2022 and January 2023 on that basis.

This report seeks to consider the responses on the new community options received through the draft Local Plan consultations as well as revisions that have been made to the assessment of the 3 options undertaken by consultants which have been amended in light of further work undertaken.

It is clear from the revised assessments that of the 3 options identified option 2 continues to score markedly lower than the other two options. Options 1 and 3 continue to score very closely, however further work considering matters of sustainable accessibility and highways impact has widened the gap in scoring in favour of Option 1.

Members are asked to consider the work undertaken to date and determine which of the 3 options they wish to pursue.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

That Members:

Agree that option 1 forms the Council's preferred approach for a further new community and the consultant group should be instructed to progress their work in master planning this option, developing a preferred delivery model and business case.

Reason for recommendation:

To determine a preferred option for a new community so that work in developing these proposals can be progressed alongside the on-going production of the new Local Plan such that a clear masterplan and delivery model for the new community can be presented for comment as part of the Regulation 19 consultation on the Local Plan.

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Democracy, Transparency and Communications
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Tourism, Sports, Leisure and Culture

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk;

Links to background information [1. SPC New Community Report.pdf \(eastdevon.gov.uk\)](#);

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
- A greener East Devon
- A resilient economy

Background

At Strategic Planning Committee on the 1 November 2022 Members resolved that:

“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 accompanying report detailed the background of these proposals back to a report to Strategic Planning Committee on the 4 September 2018 where the need for such a development was first formally identified. This was followed by a report to Strategic Planning Committee on the 8 March 2022 which sought to summarise the work that had taken place in the meantime on developing new community proposals. Consultants had been appointed to help to undertake work in considering a new community and the report summarised the commission as follows:

- 1) “Review of options for the choice, form and location of new community proposals – a number of large scale proposals have been promoted through the initial call for sites process. The commission will help to ensure that there is a robust evidence base to inform the selection of development proposals in terms of the ability to secure key outcomes in line with the NPPF considerations.

The options review will need to consider key infrastructure such as:

- transport infrastructure both within and around the site including impacts on the major road network and the ability to promote active travel and a choice of modes of transport.
- energy infrastructure and the ability to support zero carbon development.

- green infrastructure including the ability to mitigate potential impact on key habitat sites and to provide biodiversity net gain.
- community infrastructure, for example to support improved health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Connections to key services such as electricity, water, drainage and broadband as well as community and other infrastructure needed to support the development.

A full understanding of what infrastructure is needed and the associated costs will be required to assess the viability and deliverability of each option. The review will also need to consider the parties involved in each option and the governance arrangements and delivery vehicles they propose.

- 2) Vision– to work with Council officers and members to develop a 30 year vision for a new community in the district which sets out the Council's requirements in the form of a set of criteria against which the options and their proposed delivery vehicles can be assessed.
- 3) Initial Options Appraisal – to use the vision and criteria developed at stage 2 to assess the major development options and make an initial recommendation to be considered alongside a draft Local Plan for consultation.
- 4) Masterplan – Following consultation on the draft Local Plan and consideration of responses to each of the options if a proposed site for allocation is identified then the consultant team will then be expected to undertake a master planning exercise for this site in consultation with key consultees and through a process of community engagement.
- 5) Preferred delivery option/model – this will include all necessary stakeholder engagement to help define the preferred option for the delivery vehicle to bring forward the preferred new community option.
- 6) Business case – to include final modelling of infrastructure costs, indicative viability assessment and long term stewardship and legacy arrangements.

Key outputs from the work to include:

1. Transport Assessment – This will need to consider the impact of each of the proposed new community options on transport infrastructure taking into account other growth planned for within the area including as yet undelivered growth in the adopted Local Plan and Cranbrook Plan as well as that emerging through the production of the new Local Plan. Impacts on all forms of transport will need to be considered including impacts on the county and strategic road network which will need to be considered in consultation with the County Highway Authority and Highways England. The county council have an up to date traffic model of the area which will be made available. This can be used to test options for mitigating the impacts of growth on these networks. The capital and revenue costs of doing so will also need to be understood through this work alongside the alignment with the Exeter Transport Strategy 2020 – 2030.
2. Infrastructure Requirements Report – A detailed report covering all of the infrastructure requirements of the 3 new community options with a breakdown of the costs involved of connecting to key pieces of infrastructure. The report will need to identify where there are key benefits of one option over another as a result of its proximity to key infrastructure connections or where differences in capacity mean that one site is easier/ less costly to connect than another. The infrastructure requirements to be informed by the visioning work.
3. Vision Document – A document produced following workshop sessions with officers, members and partners detailing a high level vision for any new community within the west

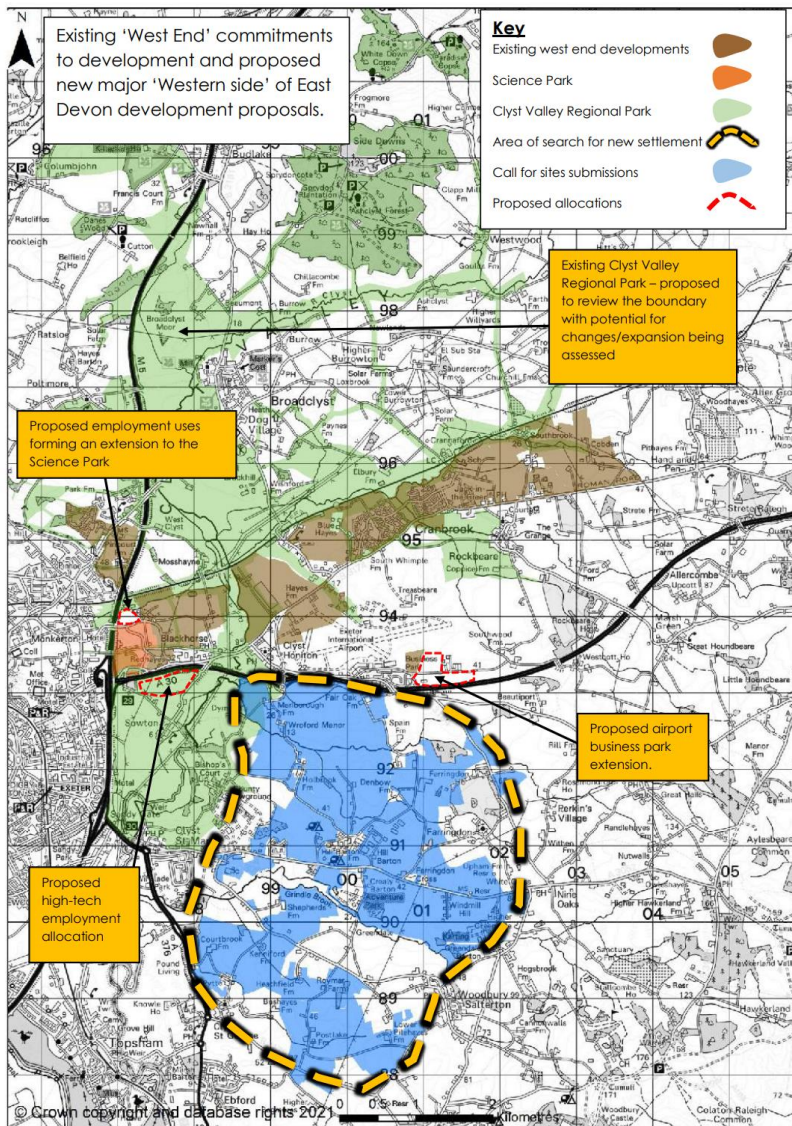
end of East Devon. The report to include key objectives for the community and a purpose and role for the settlement as well as setting out a criteria so that each of the options can be scored in terms of how well they would deliver against the vision.

4. Initial Options Report – An assessment of each of the 3 new community options against the agreed vision document and the criteria within it taking into account the gathered evidence on infrastructure costs, proposed delivery vehicles, transport implications etc such that a clear recommendation is made of which option will best deliver on the Council's aspirations. It is expected that this will be published as part of the evidence base in support of the consultation draft plan.
5. Masterplan – it is expected that this will provide a strategic level framework in the first instance that can be used as the basis for public consultation and engagement alongside the publication draft of the Local Plan. As such it provide a spatial interpretation of the vision and a foundation for future place making. It will enable further levels of detail, including design codes, to be commissioned in the future.
6. Business case – this will set out the rational for establishing a particular form of delivery vehicles to ensure that the vison for the new community is realised. It is expected that the five case model will be used to develop the business case. The business case will need to fulfil the requirements of section 3 of the 'Guidance on the New Towns Act 1981 (Local Authority Oversight) Regulations 2018' document."

By the time of Members meeting on the 1 November 2022 this work had advanced to stage 3 of the key areas set out above and an initial options report had been provided.

The 3 options

The consultants had refined the options that were originally identified by officers following the call for sites. These were set out originally in the working draft of the Local Plan as shown in blue within an area of search on the plan below:

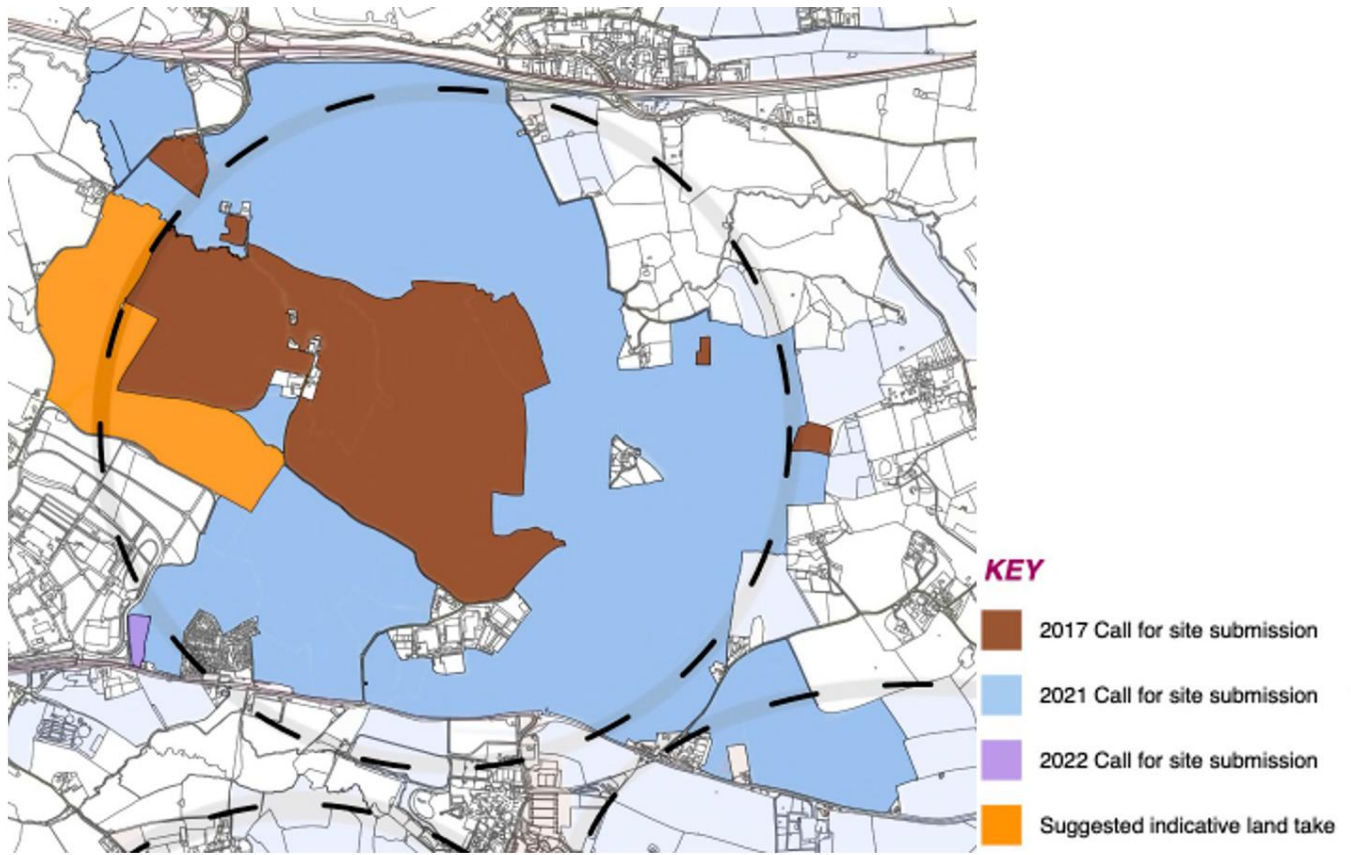


The consultants sought to refine these areas to form 3 equivalent land areas based on the land requirements to establish a community of 8,000 homes. Members will recall that although we are only proposing to allocate 2,500 homes in this plan period it is intended to set out a vision for a large settlement that would be built out into the following plan period post 2040. A lead in time of around 10 years is estimated before development would actually commence and build out rates are generally slow to start due to initial opening up works, connections to infrastructure and ground works that have to come before homes can be built. As a result 2,500 homes by 2040 is considered to be realistic.

A settlement of around 8,000 homes would establish a town which could achieve good levels of self containment and deliver a good level of services and infrastructure to support its community and as a result this is seen as a desirable ultimate size for a new town.

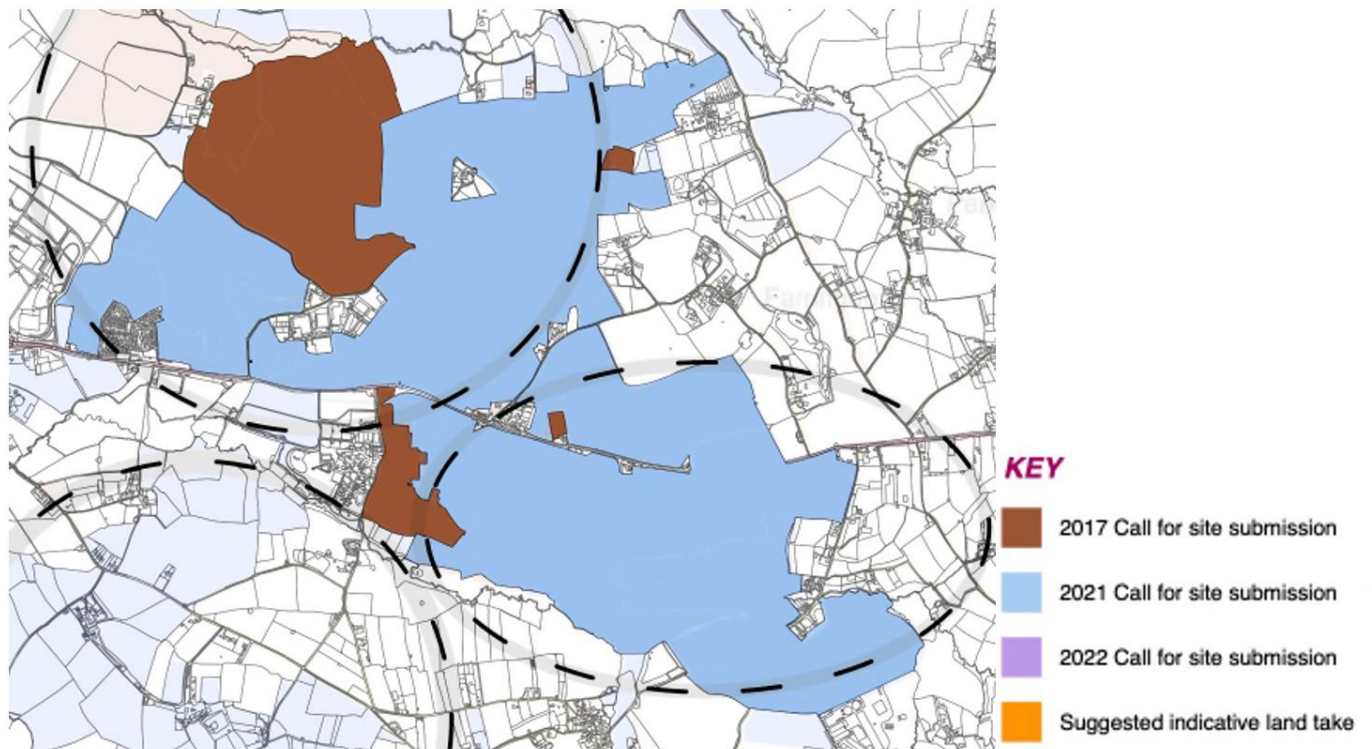
As a result of the consultants work the 3 options were refined to the site areas shown below.

Option 1:



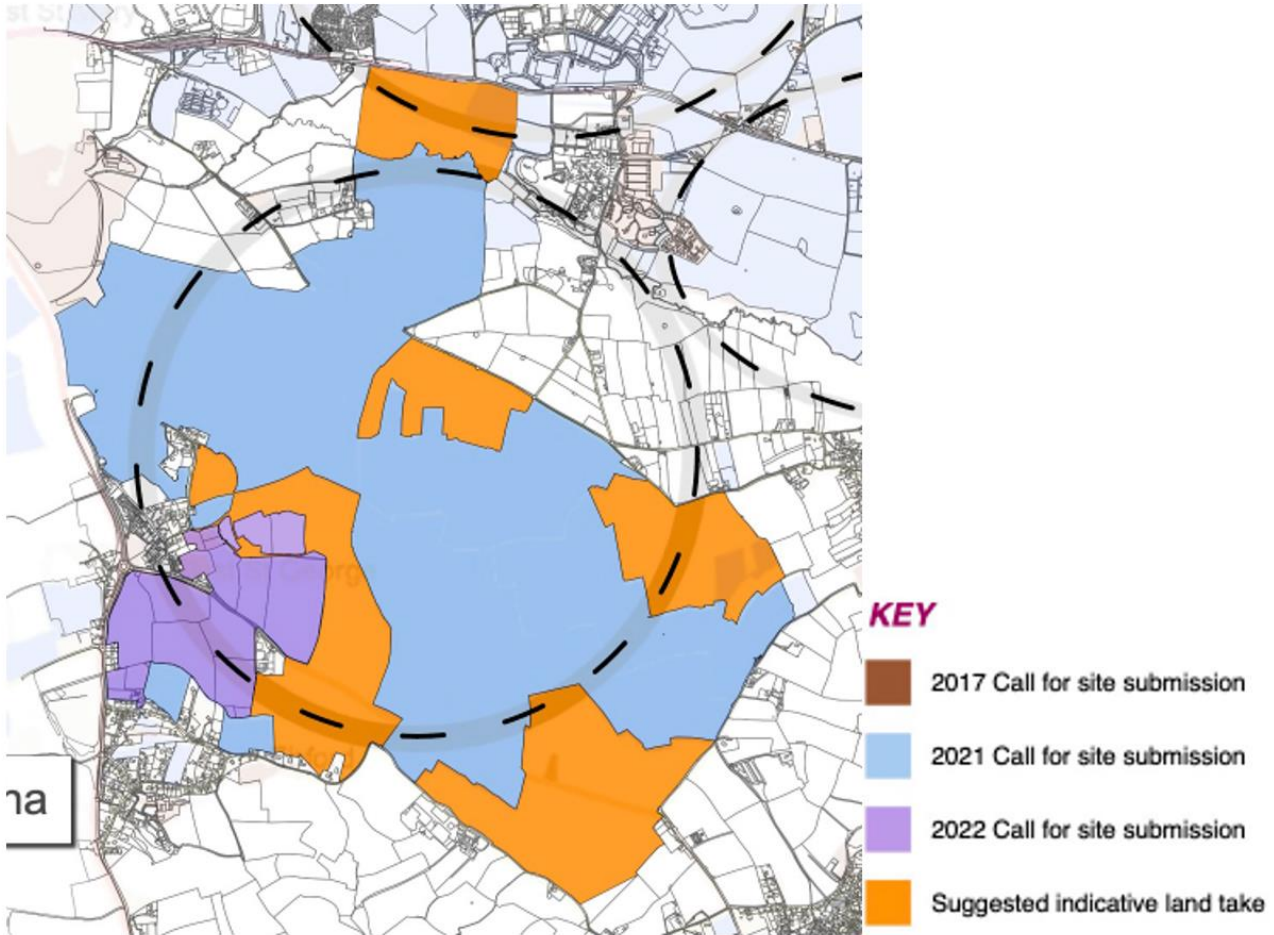
Source: Tibbalds (2022)

Option 2:



Source: Tibbalds (2022)

Option 3:



Source: [Tibbalds \(2022\)](#)

It should be noted that options 1 and 3 include some land that at this point has not been put forward through a call for sites exercise (shown in orange on the above plans). It was also highlighted through consultation on the draft Local Plan that land understood to have been put forward within part of option 1 had not in fact been put forward by its owner and the owner was not in favour of it being developed. Whichever option is taken forward discussions would need to be had with land owners over their willingness to be involved and how this could be addressed. This is however appropriate and not unexpected given the scale of development envisaged albeit areas of land not put forward by land owners have been kept to a minimum. Issues surrounding the availability of land and willingness of land owners have factored into assessments of the deliverability of each option.

Land owners and site promoters were given the opportunity to present their proposals to the committee as part of its meeting on the 1st November with the papers and presentations available at: [Agenda for Strategic Planning Committee on Tuesday, 1st November, 2022, 9.30 am - East Devon](#). Some others parties involved in these sites had previously presented to the committee at their meeting on the 25th January 2022 details of which can be found at: [Agenda for Strategic Planning Committee on Tuesday, 25th January, 2022, 9.30 am - East Devon](#). Members may wish to review these presentations to gain a better understanding of the proposals, however Members should bear in mind that it is intended to undertake master planning work of our own with engagement from stakeholders.

The Options Appraisal

The options appraisal presented to Members in November 2022 sought to assess the 3 options against a series of criteria as per the table below:

Table 2.2 – Assessment Criteria

Landscape sensitivity
Ecological impact/Biodiversity
Sustainable transport
Environmental constraints (flooding, minerals, historic environment, pipelines/cablings etc)
Highways impact
Utility & Net Zero Carbon Infrastructure
Deliverability to include land ownership, presence of businesses/other land uses that need to be relocated and proximity of development to bad neighbours i.e. noise/traffic etc

Source: CBRE (2022)

The assessment has also been informed by a draft vision for the proposed new community which has been arrived at following workshops with Members held on the 26th July 2022 and 10th October 2022. Members reviewed this vision at their meeting on the 1st November 2022 adding in the words in bold below:

*A second new settlement in East Devon with a self-sufficient, healthy and dynamic community with distinctive character. Delivering up to 8,000 high-quality **equitable** homes with an **equitable** range of tenures, places of work and a diverse mix of uses that are easily accessible via sustainable and active travel such that these become the dominant transport modes.*

This new town will be more than just a settlement, it will be an ambitious and highly desirable place that supports the growth of a self-governing and self-sustaining community that establishes its culture at the outset in order to develop and thrive into the future.

The structure of the settlement will promote innovative design that will draw inspiration from the local context, including the unique surrounding historic environment, to create a rich character. Streets and spaces will be designed to encourage social interaction and will be embedded in a well-connected and integrated active travel network with comprehensive links to nearby employment, surrounding countryside and the city of Exeter.

It will be underpinned at its core by sustainability, wellbeing, and healthy living, creating an exemplar zero-carbon town both in terms of self-sufficiency and design and by doing so it will provide a legacy to the benefit of future generations.

This sustainable community will be sensitively and seamlessly integrated with the outstanding East Devon natural environment and contribute to the delivery of the Clyst Valley Regional Park whilst protecting nearby internationally recognised habitats.

It will provide a rich network of substantial open space and diverse landscaping, including areas of enhanced ecology and biodiversity, as well as opportunities for play, recreation and opportunities for food growing.

This vibrant and adaptable new settlement will preserve East Devon's legacy as an outstanding place to live. The use of local materials and labour will be promoted to deliver on local priorities, creating somewhere residents can be proud of and where people of all ages and lifestyles will prosper.

The assessment work as at November 2022 concluded with the following scoring summary:

Assessment Category	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Landscape Sensitivity	2	2	3
Ecological Impact/Biodiversity*	3.4	3.6	3
Flood Risk	4	4	4
Minerals	3	1	5
Historic Environment	3	3	3
Sustainable Accessibility*	3.8	1.8	4.3
Highways*	4.8	4.1	4.6
Utilities*	3	2.3	2.3
Net Zero Carbon*	3.3	2.3	3
Climate Resilience*	2.7	3.4	2.7
Deliverability*	4.5	3	2.5
TOTAL	37.5	30.5	37.4

Source: CBRE (2022) Note: a higher score represents lower potential adverse impact/ higher benefit of each Option.

Key: *Where a number of assessments inform a technical category the average score per option is rounded to one decimal point and feeds through to the cumulative assessment in Section 12.

At that stage the scoring showed that option 2 was a less acceptable option than options 1 and 3 and so it was recommended that this option was not taken forward. Options 1 and 3 scored almost identically but it was recommended that the consultation be undertaken on Options 1 and 3 with option 1 identified as the preferred option. This reflected a number of factors including the greater clarity over ownership and willingness of land owners to bring forward development at option 1 and better opportunities to connect to the electricity network. It also reflected the opportunity to connect to the envisaged heat main interconnector between the proposed energy from waste plant at Hillbarton and the district heat network serving Cranbrook and the enterprise zone sites. This would better enable a low carbon heat network and delivery of zero carbon development. Option 1 was also considered to have the least impact on the highway network which is known to be a significant concern for Members and the communities close to the option sites. These were considered to be significant factors in terms of meeting the vision for the new community and the overall strategy for the local plan.

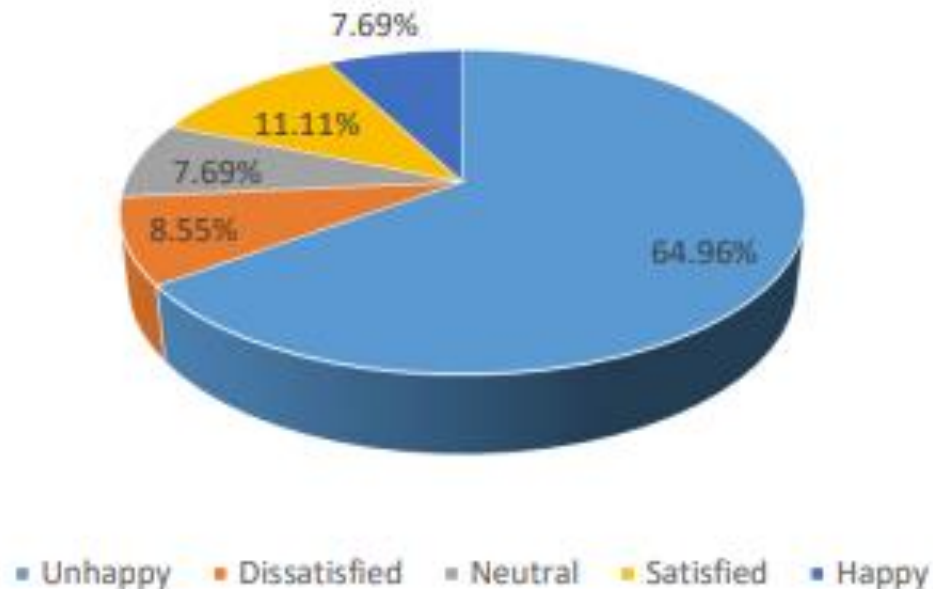
Option 3 when considered at a comparable scale of development to option 1 raised concerns about potential proximity of development to the existing settlements of Clyst St Mary, Clyst St George and Woodbury. It was considered to have a much greater risk of settlement coalescence, albeit overall it would have less landscape impact than option 1.

Members ultimately resolved to consult on all 3 options with option 1 identified as a preferred option and options 2 and 3 as alternative options.

Consultation Feedback

In feedback to the draft plan consultation responses to the development of a second new town east of Exeter were largely negative. In terms of the sentiment scores in the commonplace consultation system the responses to how people felt about this proposal were as follows:

How do you feel about Strategic Policy 8: Development of a second new town east of Exeter?



As can be seen nearly 65% of respondents were unhappy with this proposal and a further 8.55% were dissatisfied with it. This is not entirely unexpected and reflects the scale of this proposed development and its perceived impact on the part of the district close to the east of Exeter. Large scale strategic developments were not welcomed in any locations through the consultation.

Previous reports have sought to set out in detail the case for a new community and links to these are provided at the start of this report for ease of reference. These have previously led Members to accept the need for a new community to form part of the new Local Plan and it is considered that this decision and the reasons behind it remain sound and do not need to be revisited.

Turning to consultation comments on the new town these have been summarised in the consultation feedback report which can be found at: [accessible-reg-18-consultation-feedback-report-spring-2023.pdf \(eastdevon.gov.uk\)](#). The comments on the new community proposals can be found on pages 89 to 103. Many of the comments even when made in relation to a particular option could easily relate to all of the options available with concerns most commonly relating to:

- Lack of a train station and poor public transport overall
- Need for infrastructure and facilities and concerns about their delivery
- The impact on the setting and character of nearby villages
- Impacts on the road network
- Loss of best and most versatile agricultural land
- Increased flooding
- Impact on local wildlife and ecology
- Inadequate cycling facilities
- Impacts on the historic environment
- Destruction of the countryside

- Limited employment opportunities
- Impact on utilities
- Impacts on air quality from additional traffic
- Impact on attractiveness of the area for tourism

In relation to comments on specific options the following comments are highlighted:

Option 1:

Support

- Devon County Council favour option 1 albeit they note that waste and minerals operations at Hillbarton Business Park would impact on part of the site. They note that it would be the least worst option from a transport perspective but still raise concerns about impacts on the road network.
- National Grid also favour option 1 highlighting issues associated with the Exeter Main 132kV electricity line that runs through options 2 and 3 and stating that proposals to divert or underground the line would be highly disruptive and challenging. They say that any proposals that rely on these work would raise an objection from them.
- The Otter Valley Association also favoured this option due to its access to the strategic road network.
- Support Option 1 given its transport connections, access to jobs at the Science Park, Airport, Crealy and Exeter.
- Support Option 1 as it has best access to major roads.
- Landowner of Waldrons Farm (Farr_02) support Option 1 and state their land (also in Option 2) is available to contribute to a new community – this site can be in the first phase as it fronts directly on to the A3052.
- Support Option 1 as it is gently undulating, and no areas that have serious flood risk
- Link road between the A30 and A3052 will improve the local road network.
- Support Option 1 as lots of buses already operate in the area.
- Church Commissioners England support Option 1 as good access via the A30, proximity to commercial uses, complement the CVRP, and landscape, heritage, and ecology impacts can be made acceptable
- Well sited as potential to extend the district heating network from Hill Barton to Cranbrook.
- Essential infrastructure, such as the spine road, should be delivered early to improve housing delivery rates.
- Policy should facilitate an effective consortium approach to ensure all parties have an equal voice.
- Do not support a new town, but Option 1 is best as will have less impact on existing communities.

Against

- No train station within walking distance (unlike Cranbrook) and will add extra load on services such as transport, hospitals, and emergency services.
- This option would destroy Farringdon which is a peaceful village set in glorious ancient countryside – the Fiona Fyfe landscape sensitivity assessment refers to its “distinct sense of timelessness” and states high landscape sensitivity.
- Object to extending the new settlement east of Farringdon Cross, as it will envelop the existing community
- Several Grade II listed buildings will be destroyed by this development.
- Options 1 and 2 have a higher visual impact than Option 3.
- Options 1 and 2 have less infrastructure than Option 3.
- Object to Option 1 as it has very little public transport

- Parish will be split in two by new road from A30 to A3052 which will become a rat run.
- Farrington Residents Association, amongst others, object as contrary to the made Farrington Neighbourhood Plan which allows for 12 extra dwellings
- Object as roads are already too busy, particularly A3052, at Clyst St Mary and M5 J29 and J30.
- Concerned about increase in flooding from surface water run-off in surrounding areas due to new development.
- Insufficient land has been made available for SANGS and biodiversity net gain.
- Object to development east of Farrington Cross as this will destroy rural setting.
- Concerned that already overstretched GP and hospital services will not be able to cover this area as well.
- South West Water are already discharging raw sewage, this will just make it worse.
- Option 1 will adversely affect the historic environment in the area, including 13 listed buildings in Farrington.

Option 2:

Support

- Option 2 is a good location as it already has jobs, retail and public transport.
- Support as provides housing near infrastructure and employment without merging existing villages.

Against

- Object to Option 2 due to landscape impact, particularly on AONB and to north of Woodbury Salterton.
- It will destroy our rural countryside.
- Options 1 and 2 have a higher visual impact than Option 3.
- Options 1 and 2 have less infrastructure than Option 3.
- Otter Valley Association object to option 2 as it would increase traffic through Newton Poppleford and increase congestion on the A3052
- Inadequate road capacity, particularly on the A3052 but also the A376, B3179 and M5 junctions.
- Will have a negative impact on the way of life in surrounding villages.
- Object as biodiversity in the area needs to be protected, including County Wildlife Sites.
- Contrary to Farrington Neighbourhood Plan.
- Development will increase flooding in the area.
- Option 2 is located over a water supply/bore hole where most of Farrington receives its water.
- There is inadequate infrastructure in the area, for example schools, hospitals.
- This will lead to light pollution in Farrington which currently has no streetlights.
- The western and southern areas are reasonable infill, but the north eastern area encroaches into genuine green space.

Option 3

Support

- A landowner supports Option 3 as the best option – it offers good road infrastructure; public transport opportunities including close to rail links; proximity to Exeter city centre; proximity to a range of employment sites, retail and leisure facilities; access to open space.
- Landowner states Option 3 can accommodate a range of mixed uses (housing, employment, open space, leisure healthcare, infrastructure, Clyst Valley Trail) in a phased manner, with cooperating landowners.

- Landowner states that Option 3 can deliver earlier due to presence of rail links, road access and existing infrastructure, unlike the other two options where more substantial up-front infrastructure investment is required to deliver sustainable development.
- A developer (Vistry) support inclusion of Land at Addlepool Farm as forming part of a second option for a new town but consider this site can come forward on its own to accommodate a self-sufficient, sustainable, new village of 700 dwellings and facilities – Vistry submit a Vision Document for this land.
- A landowner (Mr and Mrs Murray) support Option 3 subject to the inclusion of their land of 2.1 acres/22 dwellings at Shephards Farm (map attached to Commonplace response)
- Ebford/Clyst St George has been identified as sustainable by three Appeal Inspectors and EDDC Planning Committee as it has numerous facilities, sustainable travel links, over 500 jobs but no housing to serve them – therefore support Option 3 with a connection north to Option 1 for the future
- Option 3 is the best option as it the least rural and limits the impact on the surrounding area, with better roads and amenities.
- This option has excellent transport links, easy to access popular locations like Exeter and Exmouth.
- Option 3 will benefit local shops in Woodbury.

Against

- Clyst St George Parish Council (PC) object to Option 3 due to the impact on character and setting of the historic medieval village
- Clyst St George PC object due to impact on existing residents.
- Clyst St George PC object as will exacerbate of existing highway and infrastructure problems.
- Clyst St George PC state the boundaries have been drawn without regard for topography or landscape importance. In the detailed response other issues raised include pre existing traffic issues, significant existing road flooding and risk to flood defences and existing properties, proximity to AONB and impact on approach to the village (especially from historic Woodbury Castle), lack of local employment increase in commuting, increase in congestion, lack of school places and other services such as shops.
- Clyst St George has poor public transport with no bus service, there are no safe pedestrian crossings to reach bus number 57.
- Topsham train station is 1.75 miles away has no car parking and too far to walk with no crossing points on route.
- A substantial area sloping north from Clyst St George is affected by flooding, with the ford regularly impassable – development in this area will adversely affect the 15 dwellings at Pytte near the ford.
- The majority of Option 3 is clay soil, surface water run-off is already a problem, including along the B3179, A376, Topsham Road and other local roads around Clyst St George.
- Clyst Valley frequently floods, which is getting worse with climate change – the proposed new settlement will exacerbate this.
- Object as it would ruin the historic medieval village of Clyst St George.
- Roads are already congested at peak times, particularly around Clyst St Mary, the A3052, the A376, B3179 and M5 where there are lengthy traffic queues.
- Absence of pedestrian crossings, combined with current traffic levels, makes it dangerous for pedestrians.
- Building on Option 3 will be detrimental to the western edge of the East Devon AONB, ruining beautiful views to and from Woodbury Castle, and destroying the stunning landscape between Clyst St George and Woodbury.
- South western section of Option 3 will have an adverse impact where it spills over the ridge to Ebford.

- Object as there are limited employment opportunities, residents will need to commute elsewhere e.g. to Exeter, Exmouth, Science Park.
- The primary school in Clyst St George is too small to cope with a new settlement.
- There are no shops in Clyst St George, requiring new residents of Option 3 to travel elsewhere.
- Option 3 is contrary to the Clyst St George Neighbourhood Plan.
- Object as not on the railway line, so will lead to more traffic congestion.
- Will destroy the rural community and just become a suburb of Exeter – small villages of Woodbury, Woodbury Salterton, Clyst St George, Ebford will be dominated.
- SA Report states the reasons for rejecting Option 3, which should be adhered to.
- The gas and electricity network will not be able to cope with this development – Clyst St George is off-grid for gas.
- Object due to increase in noise in the local area.
- Object due to impact upon the numerous listed buildings in the area
- Local GP surgeries cannot cope with existing numbers of patients.

Although a wide range of issues were raised in the feedback to the consultation they are matters considered by the consultants in their work which has now been revised to consider the further work that has been undertaken in particular further work they have undertaken on the issues of sustainable accessibility, highways and land ownership.

Appended to this report is the updated options appraisal report which is accompanied by detailed reports on each of the criteria. Together these documents comprise a comprehensive set of evidence assessing the key aspects of each of the three options to inform a decision on which should be taken forward. The report summarises the scoring of the 3 options against the criteria as follows:

Options Appraisal Technical Assessment – Scoring Summary

Assessment Category	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Landscape Sensitivity	2	2	3
Ecological Impact/Biodiversity*	3.4	3.6	3
Flood Risk	4	4	4
Minerals	3	1	5
Historic Environment	3	3	3
Sustainable Accessibility*	4.3	2	4
Highways*	4.8	4.1	4.6
Utilities*	3	2.3	2.3
Net Zero Carbon*	3.3	2.3	3
Climate Resilience*	2.7	3.4	2.7
Deliverability*	4.5	3	2.5
TOTAL	38.3	31.7	37.4

Source: CBRE (2023) Note: a higher score represents lower potential adverse impact/ higher benefit of each Option. Key: *Where a number of assessments inform a technical category the average score per Option is rounded to one decimal point and feeds through to the cumulative assessment in Section 12.

The report summarises the further work and its final conclusions stating:

“The additional assessments undertaken on land ownership, sustainable accessibility and highways have enabled these scores to be reviewed which has resulted in marginal changes from the 2022 Option Appraisal Report. There is now a larger but still marginal difference (0.9) difference between Options 1 and 3 (38.3 & 37.4) as Preferred Options. Whilst there has been some change in the scoring per assessment category Option 2 has performed better (+1.2).

In terms of ranking Option 1 is marginally the Preferred, with Option 3 the second ranked Option and Option 2 the least preferred and as such it is recommend that Option 2 is not taken forward. Option 1 has the benefit as being the most deliverable in terms of land ownership, is located adjacent to the highway network and is in close proximity to employment opportunities at the Science Park and Airport.”

It then summarises the key factors that lead to option 1 being recommended over option 3 despite the close scoring in the following table:

Assessment Category	Option 1	Option 3
Landscape Sensitivity	<p>This represents: a high-medium overall landscape sensitivity to proposed development. Unique sensitivities are the quality and integrity of the historic rural landscape and associated river corridors which flow east-west through the middle of the defined area; the elevated land in the east, and the slopes forming the setting to the Clyst Valley in the west.</p> <p>These areas are particularly sensitive and it would be very difficult to mitigate for this through masterplanning.</p>	<p>This represents a medium overall landscape sensitivity to proposed development. Higher landscape sensitivity occurs in the south and east of this Option, and is associated with elevated and steeper land; a smaller-scale historic landscape; land intervisible with the East Devon AONB, and the setting of Clyst St George. Lower sensitivity land is found in the north of the Option.</p> <p>Levels of landscape and visual effects could be mitigated by focussing development in the northern part of the Option.</p>
Ecological Impact/Biodiversity	<p>A medium impact on existing ecology and biodiversity. However the location and integration of future green and blue infrastructure for the new settlement will be able to accommodate existing and future ecological processes and biodiversity.</p>	<p>A higher potential impact on existing ecology and biodiversity, due to the proximity of the southern part of the Option to designated sites in the Exe Estuary. However the location and integration of future green and blue infrastructure for the new settlement will be able to accommodate existing and future ecological processes and biodiversity.</p>
Flood Risk	<p>A low to medium flood risk that can be reduced by well designed and implemented drainage and water mitigation strategies.</p>	<p>A low to medium flood risk that can be reduced by well designed and implemented drainage and water mitigation strategies.</p>
Minerals	<p>A medium minerals risk but the area is outside coal mining areas with no nitrate and phosphate areas identified. Other mineral constraints can be addressed by informed masterplanning.</p>	<p>A low minerals risk.</p>

Historic Environment	A medium risk on the historic environment , though again this can be mitigated by thoughtful masterplanning. Ensuring the new settlement doesn't abut existing places and densely planted landscape buffers are introduced to protect the environment around historic buildings and assets.	A medium risk on the historic environment , though again this can be mitigated by thoughtful masterplanning. Ensuring the new settlement doesn't abut existing places and densely planted landscape buffers are introduced to protect the environment around historic buildings and assets.
Sustainable Accessibility	A medium risk in terms of sustainable accessibility but with thoughtful integration into the new community of walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure routes these risks can be mitigated. It benefits from potential for sustainable access to existing and future employment sites.	A low risk in terms of sustainable accessibility but with thoughtful integration into the new community of walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure routes these risks can be mitigated. It benefits from potential for sustainable access to existing and future employment sites.
Highways	A low adverse impact and high benefit in terms of proximity to existing highway infrastructure and it appears that the development of 2,500 new homes up to the end of the Plan period could be accommodated without significant highway interventions. It shows relatively small changes in traffic on the M5, A30 and A380, resulting in generally small increases in delay. Minor highway mitigation and access junction works may be needed and could be reviewed and addressed as part of the normal planning process, with no strategic interventions required.	A medium adverse impact and medium benefit in terms of proximity to existing highway infrastructure requiring improvements at the Clyst St Mary Roundabout. Based on an initial desktop reviews, it appears that, despite their larger delay impacts, it would be possible to mitigate the impacts this Option were to be taken forward. This would be through either localised capacity improvements or demand reduction schemes.
Utilities	A low-medium adverse impact to diverting existing utilities due to overhead HV networks and high benefit in terms of access to existing utilities with the potential to access existing power, water and telecom connections with proximity to the site	A medium adverse impact and medium benefit in terms of access to existing utilities.
Net Zero Carbon	A low adverse impact and high benefit in terms of net zero carbon .	A medium adverse impact and medium benefit in terms of net zero carbon
Climate Resilience	A medium level of resilience and medium exposure and/or vulnerability.	A medium level of resilience and medium exposure and/or vulnerability.
Deliverability	A low adverse impact and high benefit due to fewer land owners many of whom are private	A medium to high adverse impact and low benefit due to the highest number of different land owners many of

	<p>companies or private individuals all of which are known and registered. Land assembly will still be required but to a lesser extent. The control of land was one of the key learning points from the ten year review of Cranbrook. It is assumed that any existing land uses that are not relocated will be suitably screened and this will be addressed in the masterplanning.</p>	<p>whom are private individuals and there are 5 areas of unregistered land where ownership is not known. Significant land assembly will be required to package a sufficient quantum of land together to enable this to come forward and gain the required level of control, which is a risk. It is assumed that any existing land uses that are not relocated will be suitably screened and this will be addressed in the masterplanning. There are no known barriers to delivery presented by existing land uses in the area.</p>
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The consultants have not sought to weight one criteria over another and to do so is considered to be fraught with difficulties but when considering the options Members may wish to consider the different assessment criteria which they would consider to be most important to inform their thinking.

Ultimately the consultants recommendation is to pursue option 1 which has the notable benefits of being the most deliverable and the lowest adverse impact and highest benefit in terms of net zero carbon. It would also have a lower highway impact than option 3.

Financial implications:

No direct financial implications on which to comment.

Legal implications:

There are no legal implications arising other than as set out in the report.