

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Strategic Planning Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 30 September 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 12.22 pm

20 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 September 2025 were confirmed as a true record, subject to Councillor Geoff Jung being added to the list of apologies.

21 Declarations of interest

Minute 26. Coastal Change Management Areas

In accordance with the Code of Good Practice for Councillors and Officers dealing with planning matters as set out in the Constitution, Councillors Geoff Jung and Todd Olive advised that they had been lobbied by residents regarding coastal change management areas.

22 Public speaking

Mr Shillitoe had request to speak on agenda items 1 and 7. He expressed his concerns over the minutes of the last meeting. He felt that there was an inherent conflict with EXMO 20 and that the site was currently not legally compliant, due to there being no mitigation strategy, and no HRA to support the Local Plan. He felt that the maps used were inconsistent, misleading and conflicting. He challenged the officers and urged councillors to make informed decisions with all the information available to them.

Mr Hamill had requested to speak on agenda item 7 and began by listing what he regarded as EXMO 20 failings. He went on to describe the role of a councillor and urged members when considering Marlcombe not to repeat what he perceived to be the errors of the March consultation. He suggested that EXMO 20 be removed from the second consultation and that the numbers be incorporated into Marlcombe.

Mr Humphrey spoke on two areas, the Regulation 19 process and the draft Local Plan. In relation to the Regulation 19 consultation, he stated that it had been six months since the consultation had finished and he had yet to receive any responses to the questions or comments asked. He asked when responses to the comments would be published. In relation to EXMO 20 Mr Humphrey commented that he believed that there were direct conflicts with the draft Local Plan, which had been agreed by the Strategic Planning Committee. He asked when the developers' Regulation 19 information or submissions needed to align with the draft Local Plan and added that he felt that the draft Local Plan should be agreed so that EDDC could control and deliver the best possible developments for the communities. Taking into account that the Plan would not be adopted until 2027, Mr Humphrey also asked whether a developer could submit an application for a site within the draft Local Plan for it to be approved by EDDC before the Plan had been adopted.

Councillor Roy Collins stated that he was a proud Devonian and felt that the countryside was being ruined by developers carrying out Government policy. He commented that there were more vacant homes than homeless people worldwide and that in the UK there

were 1 million empty homes and the birth rate was falling. He asked why more homes were required and stated that by 2050 nearly 25% of agricultural land would disappear and that farmers could not produce food for the nation if the land was being developed on. He felt that EDDC had done nothing to protect agricultural land. He suggested increasing housing numbers on other sites to save agricultural land.

The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Services replied to Mr Humphrey's questions. The draft Local Plan had received over 3000 comments and responses would not be made on a 1-2-1 basis. Officers would be responding to comments through the many reports coming to the Strategic Planning Committee and in the second Regulation 19 consultation. Developers were entitled to promote additional development, so there was no need for developers' plans to align with the plans in relation to EXMO 20 before the draft Local Plan was adopted. It was clarified that a further version of the EXMO 20 plan would be brought to a future meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee to be considered and agreed.

23 **Matters of urgency**

There were no matters of urgency to discuss.

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

There were no confidential or exempt items.

25 **Marlcombe SPC Report**

The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Services' report sought members' agreement to changes to Policy WS01 within the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan to reflect further work that had taken place on the new community including reference to its name, Marlcombe, and specific policy requirements that had emerged through work on the masterplan and other work for the new town.

Members agreement was also sought to consult on the proposed masterplan and associated vision document, which set out its evolution. A similar document had also been prepared to show the work on assessing and mitigating the impacts of the development on transport infrastructure as well as a strategic outline business case for the development of the new town. These documents were also envisaged to form part of the second Regulation 19 consultation albeit in the case of the strategic outline business case, only the executive summary was intended for consultation purposes. This was to ensure that the development of Marlcombe was supported by appropriate planning policy and associated evidence and guidance documents and that the vision and strategy for its delivery was fully explained to consultees through the upcoming second Regulation 19 consultation. It was noted that Regulation 19 consultation was likely to commence in November 2025 for a six-week period.

Members were asked to review and consider the following:

- Masterplan
- Transport vision.
- Strategic outline business case.
- Revised vision.
- Revised policy WS01.
- Infrastructure delivery plan.

During his presentation the Assistant Director - Planning Strategy and Development Services explained that Marlcombe would have neighbourhood centres, employment land provision and employment within the town centre and two park and ride facilities which would provide focus points for public transport. Marlcombe's challenges included:

- Topography
- Heritage
- Landscape
- Flooding
- Utilities
- Noise and air quality
- Airport safeguarding
- Land control

Key changes included:

- Provision of land for wastewater facilities.
- Material recycling facilities.
- Balancing employment land with more employment adjacent to A30.
- Renewable energy facilities.

The engagement timeline was outlined:

- January – March 2021 issues and options.
- November 2022 – January 2023 Regulation 18 consultation.
- September 2024 Masterplan consultation.
- February – March 2025 Regulation 19 consultation.

The site allocation masterplan:

- Retained the principle of the three neighbourhoods.
- The town centre was located with visibility and prominence on key routes, very much at the heart.
- There was a balance of employment spaces north and south.
- A proposed key route which brought out access onto the A3052.
- Opportunities to deal with the topography of the site, although some challenges remained.
- Park and ride facilities both north and south.

Transport vision:

- Key features were around internalisation of trips through phased delivery of services and facilities alongside the housing, ensuring that as the new homes were built the town had the employment spaces, the community facilities and the infrastructure that it needed.
- If trips were internalised and out-commuting minimised the town would have sustainable travel movements, so creating 20-minute neighbourhoods.
- The town was designed to be very compact, self-contained and internalising trips where possible.
- There were park and ride facilities to the north and south.
- There was an internalised circular bus route.
- Looking to link into Digby and Sowton railway station as well Cranbrook.
- The transport vision was making the most of transport links in both directions.
- Some improvements to the road networks were required.

The strategic outline business case was a key document in terms of delivery of the Marlcombe scheme. It needed to secure a delivery vehicle and to ensure central Government funding.

Discussion included:

- The importance of design and local influence on that. Members questioned how much control on architectural style EDDC would have. A design code would be developed and EDDC were exploring the role of the master developer position.
- There should be different products in Cranbrook and Marlcombe and they should not compete with each other.
- The first units in Marlcombe were likely to come on site in 2031.
- Allotment allocation – these were included in the land budget and were regarded as key to the new town.
- Parking requirements of workplaces – this would be considered further as work progressed and it was possible to develop policy guidance.
- There were a number of challenges with housing numbers. The build rates were set as they were, with conservative numbers as it was very hard to predict when delivery might start and the speed at which it would take place. There was a need to strike a balance between being ambitious and being conservative about delivery rates so that EDDC was not entirely dependent on Marlcombe in achieving the 5-year housing supply.
- In terms of the infrastructure delivery plan, the cemetery should be included on the same level of importance as play areas. It was confirmed that cemeteries were included within the wider infrastructure list. Members felt play areas, allotments and amenity green space should be regarded as critical. The issue was what was to be delivered and when. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Services clarified that the items regarded as critical in the master plan were statutory requirements. The report did not include a definition of what was regarded as critical. It was suggested that the prioritisation of items be removed from the infrastructure delivery plan, however they were regarded as helpful when allocating finite funding.
- Providing adequate sewage services. The key thing was to set aside sufficient areas of land. EDDC was continuing to work with South West Water on providing improved facilities in the district.
- The development corporation would be crucial.
- Communications were vital, especially around specific areas such as sewage and proposed solutions, transport, affordability, local facilities including schools, governance, and the wider civic proposition with Cranbrook. This should be a top communications priority for the Council.
- Housing need, land use across the nation and density of development at Marlcombe were all debated.
- Government funding would be key on delivering aspirations. It was unclear at present as to the level of funding but Marlcombe had new homes programme support.

It was noted that the revised vision had been made more locally specific, but the focus of the vision had remained. During the meeting clarification was sought on the number of properties to be provided and the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Services agreed to amend the vision statement to incorporate ‘at least 10,000 properties’. Members debated the classifications given in the infrastructure delivery plan for Marlcombe, included as Appendix 2 to the report, and were reminded that it was an iterative process, with the infrastructure delivery plan being under continued review. Officers were thanked for a fantastic report and vision.

RESOLVED: that members of Strategic Planning Committee:

1. Agreed that the revised vision statement for Marlcombe be included in the second Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan for consultation.
2. Agreed that the revised wording for Strategic Policy WS01 included as Appendix 1 to the report be included in the second Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan for consultation.
3. Agreed that the appended Masterplan Vision (including any agreed revisions to the vision referred to in recommendation 1), Transport Vision and Strategic Outline Business Case - Executive Summary documents in relation to Marlcombe new town form part of the evidence base for the second Regulation 19 consultation on the new Local Plan planned for Autumn/Winter 2025 subject to delegated authority to the Assistant Director –

Planning Strategy and Development Management in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning to agree any minor changes.

4. Considered and commented on the emerging Infrastructure Delivery Plan for Marcombe included as Appendix 2 to the report.

26 **Coastal Change Management Areas report**

The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Services' report set out information and recommendations in respect of where Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMAs) were defined, the justification for this and the policy relating to CCMAs.

The CCMA boundary defined in the first Regulation 19 plan was largely based on work undertaken by the university of Plymouth. It was acknowledged that new national coastal erosion risk management mapping (NCERM) had been recently updated, but it was too late for this work to be taken into account at that time. The boundaries had now been redefined to generally account for both the University of Plymouth work and the NCERM. In the vicinity of Cliff Road in Sidmouth, the line is redrawn to align with new national coastal erosion risk mapping lines (though noting that these were similar to those shown in the first Regulation 19 consultation plan).

One option highlighted in the report and considered by the committee was to use both the Plymouth work and the NCERM to inform the plan and to take whatever was the more landward extent of the area identified as being potentially affected by coastal change. In their representation on the local plan the Environment Agency recommended this as the appropriate course of action.

The Coastal Change topic paper concluded that the CCMA boundaries should be defined by using both the Plymouth University and the NCERM evidence and the most landward boundary should be taken to define the extent of the CCMA, in accordance with the advice of the Environment Agency. The only exception to this approach was in the vicinity of Cliff Road, Sidmouth, where it was recommended that the NCERM was used to define the boundary. This designated a far smaller area of land than identified by the Plymouth work and was justified on the basis that key decisions on the beach management plan happened after the conclusion of the Plymouth work. Sidmouth had been subject to detailed study and analysis in the recent past that justified taking a localised approach in this area. The line was very similar to that shown in the previous consultation plan, which was based on the beach management plan, but using the NCERM mapping overcame criticisms of the evidence underpinning the beach management plan.

Members were asked to consider revisions to Policy AR03. The proposed changes made it clearer that the implementation of coastal management schemes would be taken into account when determining when coastal change could be expected, alongside NCERM and the University of Plymouth work. Changes had also been made to simplify the text in relation to what kind of development might be acceptable according to when coastal change was expected. The proposed change to clause E made the policy compliant with national advice.

Officers were thanked for their report and for reviewing the coastal change areas.

RESOLVED: that Strategic Planning Committee endorse the officer recommended changes to the CCMA boundary and related plan policy as set out in the report.

27 **Response to Dorset Local Plan Options Consultation**

The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Services’ report outlined the key issues arising from the Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation 2025 that were of relevance to East Devon District Council. It sought agreement on a formal response to be submitted to Dorset Council, focussing on cross-boundary matters including housing growth at Lyme Regis, landscape and infrastructure impacts, and shared environmental designations such as the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site and National Landscapes.

Key issues for East Devon included:

- Growth at Lyme Regis and impact on Uplyme.
- Housing numbers and infrastructure.
- National landscapes and the Jurassic Coast.
- Flexible settlements policy.
- Strategic heathland recreation migration.

The full proposed response to the consultation was included in the report and addressed the consultation questions which were of relevance to East Devon:

- Q3: Settlement hierarchy.
- Q8: Infrastructure delivery.
- Q12: Flexible settlements policy.

RESOLVED:

1. that Strategic Planning Committee agreed the proposed response to the Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation 2025 as set out in paragraph 3.2 this report and authorised the Planning Policy team to submit it to Dorset Council.
2. that Strategic Planning Committee give delegated authority to the Assistant Director- Planning Strategy and Development Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning to agree a Statement of Common Ground with Dorset Council covering the issues set out in this report.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

K Blakey
O Davey
P Hayward
M Howe (Vice-Chair)
B Ingham
G Jung
D Ledger
T Olive (Chair)
H Parr

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

P Arnott
I Barlow
R Collins
P Faithfull

Officers in attendance:

Ed Freeman, Assistant Director Planning Strategy and Development Services

Damian Hunter, Planning Solicitor
Andrew Melhuish, Democratic Services Manager

Chris Knott, Consultant
Simon Phillips, Consultant

Councillor apologies:

C Brown
P Fernley
Y Levine

Chair

Date: