

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Strategic Planning Committee held at Council Chamber Blackdown House on 25 February 2020

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 12.25 pm

39 Public speaking

A member of the public commented on item 44, as follows

Mrs Hilary Kirkcaldie speaking on behalf of Axminster Town Council thanked the Committee for supporting the position of the Town Council and suggested an additional sentence to explain that the upfront provision of the relief road was vital to ensure that vehicles delivering materials required for the development do not use Stoney Lane as the road goes past the primary and secondary schools.

Councillor Blakey as Ward Member for Cranbrook commented on item 46, and referred to a letter submitted by David Lock Associates Ltd., raising concerns that the proposal for a Cranbrook Town Centre SPD would undermine all that the Cranbrook Strategic Delivery Board had achieved with the Consortium in recent months and would jeopardise the delivery of a Cranbrook Town Centre which was to include a major brand supermarket as well as provision of public space. He advised Members that the Consortium would like to present to the Strategic Planning Committee a full proposal and proposed an urgent meeting should take place before the next Strategic Planning Committee to consider this.

40 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee held on 9 December 2019 were confirmed as a true record with the following amendment on page 6, item 36 which should read:

RESOLVED:

- 2. To re-engage the consultants for the Axminster Urban Extension Masterplan to review options to enable the forward delivery of the relief road in its entirety and that a Members Advisory Panel be set up as soon as the consultant's report is received.**

41 Declarations of interest

Minute 46. East Devon Local Development Scheme.
Councillor Eleanor Rylance, Personal, Greater Exeter Strategic Plan Forum Member.

Minute 46. East Devon Local Development Scheme.
Councillor Kevin Blakey, Personal, Cranbrook Town Councillor.

Minute 46. East Devon Local Development Scheme.
Councillor Kevin Blakey, Personal, Cranbrook Strategic Development Board Member.

Minute 46. East Devon Local Development Scheme.

Councillor Paul Hayward, Personal, Clerk to Newton Poppleford and Harpford Parish Council.

Minute 46. East Devon Local Development Scheme.

Councillor Paul Hayward, Personal, Has family that live in Cranbrook and daughter's partner has interest in the development of the town centre as this could provide commercial development potential.

42 **Matters of urgency**

There were no matters of urgency discussed.

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

There were no items that officers recommended should be dealt with requiring exclusion of the public or press.

44 **Axminster Masterplan - Letter to Neil Parish MP**

The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management updated Members on the progress made since the last Strategic Planning Committee on 9 December 2019 and sought Members views on the wording of the draft letter to Neil Parish MP to seek assistance to progress matters and to secure money in an acceptable way from Homes England.

Ward Members discussed the following:

- Councillor Hall said it was imperative to seek assistance from the local MP for the delivery of the relief road and sought Members support for the letter. He said he wanted Axminster to become a resilient town in the future and raised concerns for the need for extra employment land to bring much needed jobs to the area and the climate declaration.
- Councillor Jackson disagreed with the wording and content of the letter raising concerns with the land valuations and questioned whether Members had seen the Land Valuations and the Viability Assessments highlighting that Members should not vote without knowing all the information. Cllr Jackson raised concerns about discrepancies between the original valuation and the independent valuation. In response the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised that the fundamental issue with the HIF fund was the disagreement with values of the land. He explained that this needed to be addressed in the letter to explain that Homes England believed the HIF money could be repaid by paying a lower value for the land, however the Council's independent valuation showed that their valuation was wrong. The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development said Members were welcome to view the valuations but did not see a need as it was the principle that was important.
- Councillor Moulding advised the delivery of the Axminster Masterplan and relief road was essential for the future of Axminster and essential for East Devon District Council as the five year land supply could be compromised and supported the draft letter to Neil Parish MP.

Points raised during discussion included:

- General support was shown to send the letter to Neil Parish MP to get his support.

- Clarification sought on who authorised the independent valuation to be done. The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised it had been done under officer's delegated powers.
- Concerns raised about the valuation and content of the letter and if it had been done by officers how can an agreement be reached by Members if they had not seen the reports. In response the Chief Executive advised officers were entrusted to take the necessary steps to implement the Masterplan and to deliver the relief road.
- Clarification sought on who would be invited to attend a meeting with Neil Parish MP. In response the Chief Executive suggested the Chairman of the Committee, the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management and the three Ward Members.
- Concerns raised that the information contained in the letter was inaccurate.
- The need to recommend to go to Part B or defer the decision until the information on the viability and land value had been seen by Members.
- Councillor Arnott advised that if the letter was sent today he would personally send a letter to Neil Parish MP reflecting what had been discussed today and advised it would be published.

Councillor Hayward requested a recorded vote. The Chairman put to Members that a recorded vote take place. This was agreed by a show of hands.

The Chief Executive read out the names of all councillors present to record who voted for or against the motion, or abstained from voting.

The Councillors against the motion comprised; Paul Hayward, Geoff Pratt, Tony McCollum, Dan Ledger.

The Councillors in support of the motion comprised; Sam Hawkins, Fabian King, Mike Allen, Olly Davey, Andrew Moulding, Mike Howe, Philip Skinner, Susie Bond.

There was two councillor abstaining from the vote, Eleanor Rylance and Nick Hookway.

The Chairman stated the outcome of the recorded vote as being 8 in favour, 4 against and 2 abstentions.

RESOLVED:

That the draft letter to be sent to Neil Parish MP be agreed.

45

Glover Review special meeting

The report presented to the Committee advised Members of the potential scope, format and invitees to a special meeting open to all Members and members of the public to discuss the findings of the Glover Review and proposals for a National Park.

The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management drew Members attention to the list of potential issues for consideration that had been set out under the 4 main priorities in the Council Plan to help focus on what the council was aiming to achieve.

Members noted the proposed list of invitees contained in the report including the following additional invitees suggested by the Economic Development Team:

Exeter & Heart of Devon Employment and Skills Board
South West Business Council

Exeter Airport
South West Rail
East Devon Excellence
Highways, DCC
Heart of the South West Growth Hub
Blackdown Hills Business Association
Devon & Exeter Chamber of Commerce
Jurassic Fibre

Discussion covered:

- Concerns raised about the impact this would have on affordable housing and other housing to meet the needs of our rural communities.
- Concerns raised about the Exe Valley Ward facing repercussions of large protected areas across East Devon by becoming a depositing ground for housing requirements. In response the Chief Executive acknowledged the concerns raised advising the council would need to consider the implications of other parts of the district if a National Park was declared for East Devon AONB.
- Concerns raised about who amongst the invitees would be looking after the wider interest. In response the Chief Executive advised there would be a supporting report from officers addressing the wider issues.
- A suggestion was received to invite the Woodland Trust and Sport England.
- A suggestion was received to invite the larger housing developers in the district.
- The need to look at the impact on areas outside of the National Park area.

Members noted there may be some financial implications for the need to hire a bigger hall.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed arrangements for a special meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee as detailed in this report be agreed.

46 **East Devon Local Development Scheme**

The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management presented the East Devon – Local Development Scheme (LDS) outlining the programme and timetable for production of future planning policy documents.

Members noted some amendments to the new Local Development Scheme (LDS) document as detailed below:

- Page 9, paragraph 4.1; Point c) of the Cranbrook Development Plan
The adoption of the timetable for production will now be September 2020 due to mediation recommended at the Hearing.
- Page 11, paragraph 5.5 of the Cranbrook Development Plan
An additional point be added to the list of additional guidance in relation to the production of a Cranbrook Town Centre Masterplan which should read: A Masterplan to show how it is envisaged the Cranbrook Town Centre should come forward indicating the appropriate layout and mix of uses as well as guidance on design and development form.

Members noted that the Local Development Scheme would need to be approved by Council and the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management proposed to change the recommendation to read **‘that committee recommends that**

Council adopts the proposed new Local Development Scheme as appended to this report.'

Ward Members discussed the following:

- It was claimed viability had been a point of contention since May 2019.
- Concerns raised about the SPD.
- It was queried whether the timescale of September 2020 realistic for a SPD.
- The developers have the power and it is not a great place to be.
- It was claimed that Cranbrook had a different demographic to the rest of East Devon.

Points raised during discussion included:

- Advice sought on making the right decision. In response the Chief Executive advised Members would need to consider whether they were able to properly consider the Consortium's offer in the context of the council's policies.
- Concerns raised about the timelines that the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management had proposed.
- Facts were needed from both sides before a decision could be made.
- Clarification sought about why the Strategic Delivery Board were against a SPD. In response the Chairman briefed Members on the background of the Delivery Board.
- Concerns raised that Cranbrook had very limited shared facilities where people can meet.
- Members need to consider ways to improve public perception and the media image of Cranbrook.
- It was suggested that a copy of the letter received by Members from David Lock Associates Ltd be available in the minutes as a link.

The Chairman put to Members Councillor Howe's proposal which was seconded by Councillor Allen to hold a special meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee to speak to the developers about their proposal. This was agreed by a show of hands.

RESOLVED:

That Committee hold a special meeting to consider and debate the developer's proposal be agreed.

Further discussions covered:

- Concerns raised about the timescale of the GESP and the Local Plan.
- It was suggested that the GESP would need to come to either Strategic Planning Committee or Full Council at various points to keep Members informed. The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised the committee dates would be recorded in the Corporate Work Programme.
- Concerns raised about the Local Plan and the growing evidence that shows councils splitting their Local Plan so that they can get ahead of the GESP if it was delayed. This council should be pushing on with parts of the Local Plan we can do now so we are fully prepared. In response The Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised he had concerns and referred Members to page 20, paragraphs 2.12 and 2.13 of the report.
- Members welcomed the Chief Executive suggestion for the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management to prepare a report for the Committee in April to give Members a better understanding on the timescales.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the amendments detailed for the date for adoption for the Cranbrook Plan DPD and the insertion of the Cranbrook Town Centre Masterplan as a SPD the Committee recommend that Council adopts the proposed new Local Development Scheme as appended to this report.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

That Council adopt the proposed new Local Development Scheme, as appended to this report subject to the date for adoption of the Cranbrook Plan being amended to September 2020 and the insertion of the Cranbrook Town Centre Masterplan SPD.

47 **Summary of self-build monitoring report and review of local connection test for self-build register**

The Committee considered the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management report outlining the latest self-build monitoring report and which sought Members guidance on whether to introduce a financial test or to charge a fee to join the register.

The Committee were supportive of the recommendations and comments included:

- Self-build was welcomed to help build better houses.
- Keen to see local jobs for local people and to give people an opportunity to raise their aspirations.

RESOLVED:

1. **That 29 individuals added to the self-build register during the latest monitoring period (31/10/18 to 30/10/19) be noted;**
2. **The need to permission 19 plots suitable for self-build between 31/10/19 and 30/10/22 to meet the level of demand between 31/10/18 and 30/10/19 shown on Part 1 of the self-build register be noted;**
3. **That the local connection test for inclusion on Part 1 of the self-build register be retained;**
4. **That no registration fee is introduced to join the register be approved.**

Attendance List

Councillors present:

S Bond (Chairman)
N Hookway (Vice-Chairman)
M Allen
O Davey
S Hawkins
P Hayward
M Howe
F King
D Ledger
T McCollum
A Moulding
G Pratt
E Rylance
P Skinner

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

P Arnott
K Blakey
C Brown
P Faithfull
I Hall
S Jackson
G Jung
K McLauchlan
H Parr

Officers in attendance:

Ed Freeman, Service Lead Strategic Planning and Development Management
Chris Rose, Development Manager
Shirley Shaw, Planning Barrister
Mark Williams, Chief Executive
Richard Cohen, Deputy Chief Executive
Wendy Harris, Democratic Services Officer

Councillor apologies:

F Caygill

Chairman

Date: