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Reference: PTR1/01/BY/RNP



Mr Bob Yuille
Examiner of the Rockbeare Parish Neighbourhood Plan

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Dear Mr Yuille,

Following receipt of your letter on the 4 April, please find below responses to the questions you have posed to East Devon District Council. I would stress at the outset that responses comprise the views of officers and have not been subject to member consideration.

Question to LPA or QB

1. *Could I please be provided a copy of an extract from the West End Inset Map of the East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031, centred on Rockbeare, at reasonably large scale with the following additional information shown?*
 - *The Neighbourhood Plan Area;*
 - *The extent to which development proposed in the emerging Cranbrook Masterplan (both recreational greenspace uses and housing) extend into the Neighbourhood Plan Area and the Green Wedge; and*
 - *The Rockbeare Key Viewpoints.*

EDDC Response: Please find attached maps relating to the Parish boundary, forming the Neighbourhood Plan Area, with requested additional information.

Questions to LPA:

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1. *Set out below is what is described on the LPA's web site as "...a full list of responses..." to the Regulation 16 consultation on the Rockbeare Neighbourhood Plan.*

Amec Foster for National Grid
Aylesbeare Parish Council
Cranbrook Town Council
David Lock Associates
Dorset County Council
Gladman Developments Ltd
Highways England
Historic England
PCL Planning

East Devon – an outstanding place

Chief Executive: Mark R Williams Deputy Chief Executive: Richard Cohen



The documents in green are those of which I have received hard copies. I have not received hard copies of the documents in red but obviously I have access to them electronically.

More worrying is the fact that I have received hard copies of three documents which appear to be Regulation 16 responses but which are not on the list. There are:

1. A response from Natural England dated 7th March 2018;
2. A response from [REDACTED] dated 15th March 2018; and
3. A response from the LPA in the form of a report to Cabinet dated 7th March 2018.

Are these indeed regulation 16 responses? If they are, please inform me and add them to the list on the LPA's web site.

EDDC response: An administration error resulted in a batch of hard copies not getting included in the package you received, we will ensure all hard copies are provided for future examinations. The responses you received from Natural England, [REDACTED] and EDDC are Regulation 16 responses and are on our website as linked below:

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/planning/neighbourhood-and-community-plans/neighbourhood-plans/neighbourhood-plans-being-produced-in-east-devon/rockbears>

The updated list of responses includes all regulation 16 comments.

2. *The Development Plan for the area, not including documents relating to excluded minerals and waste development, is the East Devon Local Plan 2013 – 2021. Is that correct? Is the LPA able to tell me what are the principal strategic policies in this document that are relevant to the Plan?*

EDDC response: The Development Plan for the area is the **East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031**.

Principal strategic policies relevant to the Plan:

Strategy 1 – Spatial Strategy for Development in East Devon

Strategy 2 – Scale and Distribution of Residential Development

Strategy 3 – Sustainable Development

Strategy 5 – Environment

Strategy 5b – Sustainable Transport

Strategy 7 – Development in the Countryside

Strategy 8 – Development in Green Wedges

Strategy 9 – Major development at East Devon's West End

Strategy 12 – Development at Cranbrook

3. *There are two emerging development plan documents that appear to be relevant to the examination of the Plan. These are the Cranbrook Plan and the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan. Can the LPA please tell me what stage these plans have reached in their preparation; when they are due to be submitted for examination; and what, if any, strategic policies they contain that are of particular relevance to the examination of the Plan?*

EDDC response:

The Cranbrook Plan – public consultation on the preferred approach took place from 10 November 2017 – 8 January 2018. A report providing feedback to that consultation was presented to the Council’s Strategic Planning Committee on 20 March 2018. At Preferred Approach stage the Plan proposes to allocate land for residential development on land in Rockbeare Neighbourhood Plan Area and within a Green Wedge identified in Strategy 8 of the Local Plan. It is expected that the Publication Draft of the Cranbrook Plan will be presented to Strategic Planning Committee in September 2018, seeking authority to submit for examination following a final round of public consultation. It is anticipated that submission will take place in January 2019.

The Greater Exeter Strategic Plan – The Greater Exeter Strategic Plan will be a joint strategic level statutory plan covering the Local Planning Authority areas of East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon and Teignbridge. The plan is currently at an early stage, having consulted on an “Issues” Report in 2017. As such, no draft strategic policies exist as yet, however, it is envisaged that it will contain policies and proposals for strategic scale development. A Draft Plan is currently anticipated for consultation in June 2019, with Publication in September 2020, Submission in March 2021 and adoption in December 2021.

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4. *From a preliminary reading of the evidence it appears that the LPA was satisfied when it prepared the East Devon Local Plan that the growth needs of Cranbrook could be met without utilising land in the Rockbeare Parish Neighbourhood Plan Area and in Policy STRAT8 it designated a Green Wedge, part of which is in the Neighbourhood Plan Area, the purpose of which is to prevent the coalescence of settlements. However, in the emerging Cranbrook Plan the LPA appears to have changed its stance and is proposing to allocate land for recreational greenspace uses and housing in the Rockbeare Green Wedge. Is that correct? If so, could the LPA please give a brief summary of the reasons for this change of approach?*

EDDC Response (Brief summary): The Cranbrook Plan looks to allocate land to accommodate the additional 1550 homes referred to in Strategy 12 of the East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031. The land proposed to be allocated in Preferred Approach document is all contained within the Cranbrook Plan Area shown on the Proposals Map.

In order to determine where to locate those additional 1550 homes, this approach has been informed by a large body of evidence. Perhaps most pertinent to the decision to look to allocate land within the Rockbeare Parish and within both the Neighbourhood Plan Area and the Green Wedge is that of landscape evidence. Strategy 8 does not state that no development is permissible in the Green Wedge but of relevance to Cranbrook and Rockbeare, it must not damage the individual identity of a settlement or lead to or encourage settlement coalescence. The Preferred Approach document and uses proposed, were informed by and developed in accordance with the detailed landscape assessment which demonstrates that the intention of the Strategy is not undermined.

The preferred approach proposals, by including large areas of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS) around the north of Rockbeare, would provide enhanced, accessible open spaces for the public. SANGS provision is proposed to mitigate the impact of new residential development upon the Exe Estuary and Pebblebed Heaths Special Protection Areas, and once provided, the land

would be subject to greater protection than that afforded by the current Green Wedge designation requiring an expectation of management as such, in perpetuity. The land to the north of Rockbeare shown as SANGS mitigation is in the same control as the housing land also within the Rockbeare Green Wedge in the Grange area.

Detailed process history:

In an early consultation draft of the local plan, dated December 2011, the council, see:

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/363094/new-east-devon-local-plan.pdf>

included reference to Cranbrook, in Draft Strategy 9, that advised:

"It is proposed that land is allocated for the expansion of Cranbrook to the East and West (North of the old A30 and South of the Exeter to Waterloo railway line) of the existing planning application boundary as shown on Map 3. In the longer term and beyond 2026 (and expected to be in the 2026 to 2031 period) Cranbrook is envisaged to develop in a South Westerly direction (South of the A30) with provision for a further 1,500 homes. Proposals for the development of Cranbrook will need to take into account this longer term development aspiration."

At this stage of plan making there was a policy expectation of Cranbrook expansion to the south west but a specific site or sites for development was/were not allocated.

In 2013 the Council submitted the local plan for examination, see:

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/348650/publication-draft-of-the-new-local-plan.pdf>

and the main Cranbrook policy, now Strategy 12, remained very similar to the above but did include text to advise:

"In the longer term and beyond 2026 (expected to be in the 2026 to 2031 period) Cranbrook is envisaged to develop in a South Westerly direction (South of the old A30) with provision for a further 1,500 homes, the notional location for development is indicated on the Proposals Map."

The Proposals Map indicated this notional location by the form of a large black house on a West End Inset Map. The black house sits approximately 1.5 kilometres west of Rockbeare Village. See:

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/348765/west-end.pdf>

There was consultation on further changes to the plan before examination hearing sessions were held but these made very minor changes to policy for Cranbrook. It is highlighted, however, that at this stage the plan had and retained an envisaged end date of 2026.

In April 2015, whilst the local plan was at Examination (after initial hearing sessions), there were further changes made that were consulted on, see:

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/1060693/psd2015a-local-plan-tracked-changes-consultation-apr-2015.pdf>

These changes extended the plan period to 2031 (i.e. an extra 5 year on from the previous 2026 end date). The changes made deleted the text highlighted above, in Strategy 12, and inserted new text, to read:

*"Developments at Cranbrook shall be developed in a phased and co-ordinated manner alongside the required infrastructure and in accordance with parameter plans that will form part of a plan for Cranbrook which will be developed in partnership with the developers and the community as a Development Plan Document. The Cranbrook Plan area also identifies land for the further expansion/intensification of Cranbrook to accommodate a further 1,550 houses and associated jobs, social, community and education facilities and infrastructure **outside the designated Neighbourhood Plan Areas of Rockbeare, Broadclyst and Clyst Honiton.**"*

The Cranbrook Plan area was denoted by a green dotted line on the West End Inset Map and it was within this area (but actual development sites were not allocated or identified) that the development was to take place. Authority to undertake consultation on these changes was approved by a meeting of East Devon District Council on 26 March 2015. Officer recommendation included the text above with the exception of the text shown in bold and underlined. The bold and

underlined text was an amendment to the recommendation that was approved by Council. See minutes at:

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/1464857/260315-extra-ordinary-council-mins-local-plan.pdf>

The Local Plan, as adopted on 28 January 2016, contains the above wording and Strategy 12 and the Local Plan overall sets the context for production of a DPD for Cranbrook. For the adopted plan see:

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/1772841/local-plan-final-adopted-plan-2016.pdf>

The Cranbrook DPD (the Cranbrook Plan) was subject to an Issues report consultation in July 2016, see:

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2218860/cranbrook-io-160609-final-lr.pdf>

and this explored options for possible specific site allocations south of London Road, these options included potential for development in Green Wedge areas and in designated Neighbourhood Plan areas. Amongst other considerations exploring options reflects the fact that policies in adopted plans can be superseded should matters move on and that local plan making was not done within the context of the level of detailed assessment that has underpinned work on the Cranbrook Plan.

More detailed assessment of options was specifically reflected in the Cranbrook Plan Preferred Approach consultation of 2017/18, see:

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/cranbrook-plan/cranbrook-plan-preferred-approach-consultation-201718/#article-content>

This work and the Masterplan, informed by detailed evidence gathering including landscape assessment, concluded on the potential appropriateness of proposing development of land that falls in the local plan defined Green Wedge area and Neighbourhood Plan areas.

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5. *The Plan proposes (Policy Rock06) to resist development in the Green Wedge. On that basis, there appears to be a conflict between the Plan and the emerging Cranbrook Plan. Although the Plan is not to be tested against the policies of an emerging plan, such plans are expected to be complementary with each other and the LPA is expected to have worked collaboratively with the QB to minimise conflict¹. Has such collaborative working taken place?*

EDDC Response: Public consultation on the preferred approach to the Cranbrook Plan took place from 10 November 2017 – 8 January 2018. As part of that consultation process a meeting with the QB was held on 29 November 2017 to discuss the differences between the two emerging plans. Unfortunately, no agreed common position could be found.

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6. *Reference is made in evidence to a report to the LPA's Strategic Planning Committee on 20th March 2018. Can the LPA please supply me with the agenda for and the minutes of that meeting?*

EDDC Response: Attached and linked below.

Agenda:

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2411938/200318strategicplanningcombinedagenda.pdf>

Minutes:

¹ Planning Practice Guidance. Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 41-009-20160211.

7. *Would the LPA please confirm whether or not it considers that the Plan meets the Basic Conditions?*

EDDC Response: We consider the Plan to have met the Basic Conditions.

If you require clarification of the above or have any further questions, please do come back to me.

Yours sincerely

Phil Twamley
Neighbourhood Planning Officer
East Devon District Council