

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Notes of a Meeting of the Local Development Framework Panel held at the Knowle, Sidmouth on Thursday 10 March 2011

Present: Councillors:
David Key (Chairman)

Derek Button
Bob Buxton
Ray Franklin
Mike Green
Tony Reed

Also Present: Councillors:
Vivienne Ash
Peter Bowden
Graham Brown
Philip Skinner

Officers:
Matt Dickins, Planning Policy Manager
Nigel Harrison, Economic Development Manager
Kate Little, Head of Planning Services
Fliss Morey, Projects Director, Exeter and East Devon Growth Point
April Waterman, Senior Planning Officer
Hannah Whitfield, Assistant Democratic Services Officer
Andy Wood, Head of Infrastructure and Partnerships, Exeter and
East Devon Growth Point

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 12.15 pm.

35 **Notes of the meeting held on 10 February 2011**

The notes of the of the Local Development Framework (LDF) Panel meeting held on 10 February 2011 were agreed as a true record.

36 **Consultants Brief - Employment and Housing Requirements** (minute 32 refers)

At their previous meeting (10 February), Members had considered a draft brief for the appointment of consultants to undertake a review of employment and housing requirements in East Devon. The Planning Policy Manager presented a revised brief to the Panel, taking into account Members' observations made at that meeting in respect of the outputs required from the study. It was noted that the brief required further refinement but was hoped to provide Members with an overview of work that the consultants would be asked to complete, essentially a high level testing of need and demand for housing and employment development and a market facing assessment of employment sites.

It was intended that the brief would be issued by the end of the month, with appointment in April and the study undertaken over the Spring/Summer months. The Consultant's report would be used to inform the revised Core Strategy to go before Members at the end of the Summer 2011.

36 **Consultants Brief - Employment and Housing Requirements** (minute 32 refers)
continued...

Members heard that the brief covered a wide range of issues, however the onus was on consultants using existing data and reports to complete the work rather than undertaking original primary data collection. It was hoped that this approach would keep costs to a minimum. However it was recognised that some field work would be required in order to complete the study.

Members' endorsement was sought for the revised brief, subject to minor amendments, to be put out to consultants for tender. Observations made during a lengthy discussion regarding the revised brief included:

- Assessment of employment site options should be carried out across the whole of East Devon, not purely focused on the West End;
- Study shouldn't 'overplay' the West End at detriment to the rest of the district (6.3 wording to be amended);
- Accuracy of the demography of East Devon key – Members advised that DCC updated its demographic information on a yearly basis. Consultants would be asked to demonstrate their ability to access data – crucial that data used was reliable;
- Demography and housing and employment to be considered together in order to achieve the right balance of provision;
- Importance placed on consultants having an in-depth knowledge of the local area;
- Study needs to show the wider economic trends and cross-boundary issues;
- Consultants to provide details on methods and cost of consultation to be undertaken;
- Critical analysis needed of the emerging policy position. Important that consultants were not prejudiced by the emerging policy position and presented an unbiased assessment. Consultants were being asked to carry out an assessment, not define policy;
- Assessment of inward and outward, particularly in respect of young people, migration to/from the district required – important if want to achieve balanced communities;
- Test market demand and effects meeting that demand would have on the East Devon economy. Investigate reasons for unoccupied employment premises;
- Important that emerging vision thoroughly tested, such as vision for hi-tech hubs. Listen to visions of the communities articulated through the consultation exercises;
- Work with Economy Think Tank to communicate/consult with towns and parishes;
- 4.11 (pg 27) Credibility of Job Growth Levels – data to be clarified in table;
- Consideration to be given to economic growth as well as community aspiration;
- LDF Panel will be presented with assessment study from consultants and be asked to balance alongside community responses in order to inform a revised Core Strategy in late Summer 2011;
- Concern regarding the tight timescale of consultant's work, however recognised importance for the Council to have a Core Strategy adopted.

RECOMMENDED: that the Consultant's Brief for a review of housing and employment requirements in East Devon, subject to minor amendments, be endorsed by the Panel for submission to tender.

37 **Rural Areas/Village Development**

Consideration was given to the Parish Councils' Feedback and Responses to LDF Consultation paper, written by Senior Planning Officer, Claire Rodway. The Planning Policy Manager explained to Members that the paper expanded upon section 8 of the LDF Consultation Feedback Report to be presented to the Development Management Committee on 15 March 2011 and had been brought before the Panel for discussion and for information; it was not anticipated that it would be the subject of any formal decision. Members heard that over the upcoming months the Planning Policy Team was aiming to produce a topic/working

37 Rural Areas/Village Development continued...

paper on rural area/village development to inform and justify future policy choices. Clarification would be sought from some Parish Councils on their feedback submissions.

Members noted that from the feedback and responses received to the Preferred Approach repeated issues highlighted for rural areas/village development included facilities, housing (affordable and housing for elderly), small scale employment provision (compatible with the environment) and broadband.

Members were encouraged to consider whether 'hubs villages' were the right approach for villages who aspired to have growth or whether individual settlement allocations or percentage allocations was a more appropriate approach. If the average household size continued to decline as trends suggested, over a period of 10-15 years villages without growth would see a 5% decrease in their population figures.

Observations and issues raised during a lengthy debate regarding rural area/village included:

- If demographic trends continued, status quo in housing numbers would see a decrease in population figures in East Devon;
- New 'Community Right to Build', to be introduced as part of wider Neighbourhood Planning reforms, detailed in the Localism Bill could be used to expand the size of communities by up to 10%;
- Speak to those Parish Councils who did not respond to Preferred Approach Consultation – ask why did they not respond? Did they agree with approach for their villages and for that reason did not feel need to respond?
- Built up area boundaries versus criteria based policy. Advantages and disadvantages of both - these need to be explained to the villages;
- Absolute figures for growth versus % of housing stock;
- Exception sites unlikely to come forward due to lack of funding available from the Homes and Community Agency (HCA), therefore require cross-subsidised private housing in order to deliver affordable housing – How is this type of housing delivered?
- Important to highlight areas for non-development, particularly within built up area boundaries, to avoid urbanised village centres;
- How do villages that don't want growth fund infrastructure improvements and aspirations, such as village halls, improved flood defences?
- Broadband vital for rural communities - Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) would allow local authorities to charge on new developments in the area and use the money to support development by funding infrastructure that the local community wants;
- Villages need good quality development that enhances and does not detract from its character.

38 Next meeting

The Head of Planning Services advised Members that the next meeting of the LDF Panel would be held after the Annual Council meeting at the end of May.

The Chairman thanked the Panel, and all those who had attended meetings, for their hard work and helpful contributions.