

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 20 March 2018

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10:00am and ended at 12.36pm.

***28 Public speaking**

Ron Forrest from Rockbeare Parish Council outlined to the committee that the parish was against the Cranbrook Development Plan because of the expansion it proposed. He informed the committee that assurances had been given by the Council in previous years that there would be no expansion south of the old A30. He felt that the proposal was disproportionate and would take over the village of Rockbeare; he also stated that including a gypsy site would impact on neighbouring farms; and that the proposal encroached onto Grade 2 agricultural land.

Ray Bloxham from Cranbrook Town Council, again relating to the Cranbrook Development Plan, commented that there were some positive elements to the proposal, but had concern that because of the objections from the nearby parishes, it would affect the relationship between Cranbrook and them. In relation to the greenspace on the eastern expansion (as outlined on pages 32 and 33 of the agenda for the meeting) he commented that this had originally been assigned for housing and he preferred to see that assignment remain. He asked to see a balance in the mix of housing provided, as this was an expensive town to deliver but was being populated by some of the poorest people in the District – such people could not afford any associated costs of maintaining an expensive area.

Paul Smith, speaking as a member of the public, also spoke to the committee about the Cranbrook Development Plan. He advised that the proposal putting forward option 2 was at variance to the professional advice given to the committee and asked why housing on the triangular wedge shown on the map had been introduced into the plan when the committee had not discussed that parcel of land. There was also no reference in the plan to Rockbeare's emerging neighbourhood plan. The appraisal report highlighted the adverse impact on Rockbeare and existing Cranbrook homes and the SA and SEA reports were also not mentioned in the plan, both of which had advised that option 4 was the best option to minimise impact, use less land and provide less noise impact.

Mr Smith also submitted a petition, to save the green wedge of land bounded to the left of Parsons Lane and London Road, from any form of residential or commercial development, ensuring its future safeguarding as a green community space for leisure and wellbeing activities for the people of Cranbrook and its neighbouring communities. It had been signed by 50 local residents. The Chairman accepted the petition.

***29 Minutes**

The minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee meeting held on 14 December 2017 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

***30 Declarations of interest**

Councillor Geoff Pook – minute 33 – personal interest – construction

Councillor Mike Howe – minute 32 – personal interest - local Ward Member

***31 Housing Monitoring Report to year ending 31 March 2017**

The report provided the committee with a summary of house building data, establishing that there is a greater than five year land supply. Following the implementation of a new database, extracting data could now be done much quicker and therefore more regular reporting could be provided to the committee.

Expected housing delivery was down, but with a number of issues being resolved with larger sites the prediction is that this will rise for 2018/19.

An employment land monitoring report is expected to be produced (for the year ending March 2018) in the summer of 2018. Information and data on employment is being sought to add to that report, but some challenges were highlighted in locating data broken down to specific town and parish areas.

Discussion covered:

- Issue of affordable housing and building balanced communities; needed data on affordable housing element; a report will come forward to the committee on the proportion of affordable housing and how that is balanced against infrastructure;
- Challenges in obtaining data on employment and jobs, with desire to evaluate the delivery of total jobs against the scale of land;
- Continued push of statistics on jobs made to existing policy team that had not, in the opinion of the councillor commenting, been taken into account – such as information from the Office of National Statistics, and HMRC data;
- Lack of CIL receipts and how that affects delivery of schools. In response, the committee were reminded that Devon County Council were not prepared to borrow money to fund building schools and could not prevent residential development if no school was included – but it was a politically sensitive issue of how prepared a local authority was to deliver such infrastructure;
- Request for detail in statistics to show how many homes delivered were affordable, or into council tax banding in order to show how balanced the housing delivery was;
- Request for the Planning Policy Manager to be present when the housing monitoring reports were reported to the committee.

RESOLVED: that the residential completion data and future projections in the District be noted.

***32 Cranbrook Development Plan Document**

The report presented to the committee outlined the feedback received on the Cranbrook Development Plan Document Preferred Approach consultation. It also set out the intended actions based on that feedback from the public, stakeholders and consultation bodies.

The committee were shown [maps outlining the issues for specific areas of the plan](#).

Issues were highlighted as:

- Access arrangements for the Bluehayes area where alternatives were being reviewed, alongside additional land outlined in red to be considered for inclusion in the plan;

- Access issues also in the Tresbeare area, with work underway with highways officers to find a solution. The triangular parcel of land in this area was that referenced in the petition handed to the Chairman, and other areas had the potential to be visible to Rockbeare. Further testing on this needed to be undertaken, to then consult again with the landscape consultant;
- Cobdens: Additional land put forward adjacent to Southbrook Court and south of Southbrook House, to be examined and considered for allocation;
- Grange had issues with the relationship with Rockbeare, and the use of the green wedge; as well as access issues;
- Gypsy site to be removed from land in Bluehayes and look to allocate to another area within the plan area;
- Second platform at railway station shown as not feasible and so was to be deleted from the plan, but proposals for a second station to remain.

Members discussed concerns over:

- Green wedge changes in plan were not acceptable, and it should be retained;
- Making changes to this green wedge may leave Council open to challenges or changes to other green wedges set out in the Local Plan;
- Access – establishing key entry points across the plan had been introduced early on in the planning process to alleviate concerns about London Road being used as a bypass to the area. Mixed use areas benefitted from passing traffic, so flexibility was required in the routes through the area;
- Devon County Council had revised their view on the location options, and there are ongoing discussions about transport of students to and from the area;
- Some progress made in discussion with health commissioners;
- Recent years have seen a decline in the traditional high street consisting of retail, so a different mix of uses to encourage vitality of the high street was required;
- The peripheral edges of the plan were being examined to determine if single storey builds were a better fit to reduce impact on surrounding area; there was also a demand for single storey homes;
- Request for statistical breakdown on self-build in the plan;
- Reliance on five housebuilders to deliver the development and concern that the intention to build a community was not the reality. Mixed response in Members present on a positive or negative view of the development and its delivery;
- Level of consultation undertaken clarified;
- Need to be specific with developers on what is expected if higher density of housing is needed, so that developers could not haggle over detail when discussing a planning application;
- Open space provision based on the policy set out in the Local Plan and not dissimilar to other settlements;
- Need to have a mix of homes to deliver to all ages and requirements of the community.

A revised draft of the plan, demonstrating how the feedback had been taken into account, was expected to come back to the committee in the autumn. This would also take into account comments made at the meeting.

RESOLVED: that progress on the Cranbrook Development Plan be noted.

***33 East Devon Self-build and Custom Build register, monitoring of lot delivery and options for additional support**

The report outlined the level of interest in self-build in the District. The authority has a duty to provide a supply of suitable sites to meet demand and the existing NPPF requires local planning authorities to consider how they can support self and custom build. The committee were asked what desire there was to undertake such options or if the current light touch approach should continue.

In discussion, debate included:

- Looking at what capacity there was in smaller allocated sites to include an element of self build;
- Demand was expected to be in rural, picturesque sites;
- Look to link up with GESP partners in how can deliver such sites across a wider area;
- Established proactive approach to self and custom build in Teignbridge. Suggestion to hear from Teignbridge at a future meeting to discuss further how this could be developed across the GESP area.

RESOLVED:

1. **that the level of demand shown on the register for self-build and custom build be noted and taken into account in the Council's planning, housing, regeneration and disposal of land functions;**
2. **Further consider the various ways of supporting self-build in East Devon following a presentation from Teignbridge District Council on their approach.**

***34 Protocol for production of Supplementary Planning Documents**

The report set out a protocol for a consistent process for the production of supplementary planning documents. This protocol would also be useful for involved stakeholders to understand the process.

The committee welcomed the clear guidance and that a wide understanding of what was involved in producing such documentation would be beneficial.

RESOLVED: that the protocol for the production of Supplementary Planning Documents be adopted.

***35 Clyst Valley Trail delivery plan**

The report set out the plan, which forms the first component of the Clyst Valley Regional Park (CVRP). The CVRP requires an estimated £5m of capital investment and will take several years to deliver. Whilst the CVRP and the trail delivery plan are

priority 1 projects, there is already a funding gap for that priority and the committee were alerted to the planned bid for CIL funding.

The Chairman and the committee supported the key green infrastructure plan but had concerns about the success of a bid for CIL funding because of the demands for funding in other areas.

Specific comment on the trail itself covered:

- Concern on impact in Lympstone and Ebford in directing the route through the villages on public roads where there was already pressure on the road with parking and through-traffic;
- Route from Clyst St Mary to Topsham passing through the Sandygate roundabout and making use of pelican crossings also needed further consideration in respect of safety;
- Suggesting further work with Ward Members on alternative solutions to narrow and congested areas that the route passes through.

The committee also wished to see further consultation with the County Council and the Sustrans project.

1. **RESOLVED:**
that the Clyst Valley Trail Delivery Plan be endorsed subject to further consideration of the route on grounds of safety, in consultation with Devon County Council and the Sustrans project;
2. that a bid for £1million from CIL funding for the project will be made, be noted.

*36 Strategic Planning Forward Plan

The forward plan set out expected work for the committee in the coming months. The April meeting would include a report on the draft NPPF and consultation on changes to CIL. The Inspector's report on the Villages Plan may not be available in time for the April meeting, so may fall to May. In response to a question on lifetime homes, the Housing Standards briefing paper would be expected to include that topic.

Attendance list

Committee Members:

Councillors
Phil Twiss - Chairman
Graham Godbeer – Vice Chairman
Mike Allen
Colin Brown
Mike Howe
Philip Skinner
Mark Williamson
Jill Elson
Rob Longhurst
Geoff Jung
Geoff Pook

Also present (present for all or part of the meeting):

Councillors:
David Barratt
Paul Diviani
Ian Thomas
Megan Armstrong
Andrew Moulding
Peter Faithfull

Officers present (present for all or part of the meeting):

Ed Freeman, Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management
Andy Wood, East of Exeter Projects Director
Chris Rose, Development Manager
Simon Bates, Green Infrastructure Project Manager
Thea Billeter, Cranbrook New Community Manager
Shirley Shaw, Planning Barrister
Mark Williams, Chief Executive
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer
Tabitha Whitcombe, Democratic Services Officer

Apologies:

Councillors
Susie Bond
Ian Hall
Brenda Taylor
Tom Wright

Chairman Date.....