

Date: 22 May 2014
Contact number: 01395 571540
E-mail: mdickins@eastdevon.gov.uk
Direct Fax:
Our Reference: MD/02/16
Your Reference:



Mr A Thickett
East Devon Local Plan Inspector
C/O Amanda Polley
Programme Officer
Knowle
SIDMOUTH
EX10 8HL

East Devon District Council
Knowle
Sidmouth
EX10 8HL
DX 48705 Sidmouth
Tel: 01395 516551

Dear Mr Thickett

East Devon Local Plan and Future Work

I write in response to your letters of 31 March 2014 and 16 April 2014 regarding the above.

On the 8 May 2014 I presented a report to the Development Management Committee of this Council and the Committee endorsed a draft Action Plan to address the matters highlighted in your initial letter. I append the draft Action Plan to this letter and it sets out a summary programme of future work. I would envisage that overtime, and if need arises, we will update and amend this plan.

I would see the conclusions of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), and how we seek to apply these, as being the key factor in terms of future workloads and timescales for the Local Plan. If we conclude that the SHMA and the other work we are doing in response to matters you raise does not generate the need for significant changes to the plan then I would be keen to follow the timetable below:

1. East Devon District Council and partner Council's have been advised that we should receive the draft SHMA in early June 2014, a SHMA workshop has been proposed for June 2014.
2. If the final SHMA is received in time I will aim to report findings to our Development Management Committee on the 1 July 2014. Alongside the SHMA I would also report options for changes to the plan or at least the proposed format or structure that changes could take (assuming that changes are appropriate or required).
3. If we have the SHMA in time and are able to go to Committee as set out above then I would plan to send the proposed format or proposed content of any changes consultation document to you for your consideration. I can also see clear merit, as you suggest in your letter of 16 April, in you advising on specific questions you would like asked.
4. The next Development Management Committee is on the 29 July 2014 and in practical terms, and if we have information in time, we would wish to complete all paperwork

before 16 July 2014. If we can meet this deadline then I would wish to go back to Committee, seeking their endorsement for consultation, with a full suite of proposed consultation documents to include a schedule of proposed changes and reasoning for these changes (if required), technical evidence reports and consultation questions. I would wish to highlight that we hope that the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment will be completed in time for this Committee. However, given the nature of the work and the fact that it has been commissioned by a number of separate local authorities, this cannot be guaranteed. Furthermore even if the study is concluded in time and it shows a need for further provision which warrants the allocation of one or more sites, I am concerned that this could delay, perhaps substantially, the overall timetable for Local Plan production. It was this concern that prompted us to favour producing a separate plan specifically to address Gypsy and Traveller issues.

5. Notwithstanding the above concerns if it is possible to produce a full set of documents, and you are satisfied they will provide a coherent basis for future consultation, then I would hope that consultation could run for a six week period starting in August and running into September.
6. If the above consultation period is viable I would envisage that we would then collate consultation responses received and send them on to you in September.
7. On the basis of the above, and subject to your availability, I would hope that it would be possible to reconvene hearing sessions in October 2014 or soon after.

I would however stress that the programme set out is a rolling programme and it is dependent upon when we actually receive the SHMA and on the conclusions it draws.

Further to the above I am aware that some authorities in a similar position to ours have had reconvened hearing sessions at which in-principle matters have been considered, notably levels of housing provision. Through this approach strategic matters can be considered, and for example future housing numbers established, before matters of detail such as evaluating and consulting on possible additional land allocations take place.

At this stage I am proceeding on the basis that we will be able to address all outstanding matters in a combined set of extra hearing days. This would be rather than having an initial hearing session considering over-arching strategic matters (specifically housing numbers) before then having what could be a substantive break, awaiting your feedback, before we embark on possible more detailed site evaluation work and consultation. I will, however, and from our perspective, keep this issue under review and will advise you of any concerns that we might have.

Yours sincerely



Matthew Dickins
Planning Policy Manager