

WHIMPLE PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman John Griffith

Clerk Gerri Turner

January 2012

Whimble Parish Council WPC welcomes the opportunity to respond to East Devon District Council's EDDC consultation on the emerging East Devon Plan 2006 – 2026.

Whimble sits in the central part of East Devon, has a long history not only as a settlement of over 200 houses, but over the years it has been the heart of the cider making industry and was the home of Whiteways cider. It boasted a rail freight terminal which was used to export Whiteway products across the world. Whimble remained a major employment village until the late eighties and would remain an active contributor to the local economy if the ex factory brown field site was not constrained by the narrow road network and low bridges and had been used for jobs rather than houses.

Whimble has many community groups including the PTA primary school, pre school group, history society, sporting and leisure organisations including the cricket and tennis clubs, Multi Use Games MUGA post office church, two pubs, shop, garage and shop, crematorium, several farms which all provide local employment.

The five year old Parish Plan has been a useful tool to help the WPC focus its work on delivering the wishes of the residents. Joint work is about to start on the new Neighbourhood Plan with our neighbouring parishes. We have been an active partner with our neighbouring parishes to ensure work on the new community is delivered as planned by the developer. (An example of this scrutiny is our disappointment that the Parson's lane roundabout yet to be opened on the old A30 is smaller than anticipated. We envisage public transport and heavy goods vehicles will have difficulty getting round without mounting the kerb.)

Whimble is pleased that in many parts of East Devon future growth will be modest in scale, but we recognise and accept the big initiatives, some on our doorstep. We will continue to campaign to ensure Cranbrook and all the growth in East Devon's West End are delivered to the highest standard and welcome the comments in the plan aspiring to see major strategic world-class developments.

WPC agrees with future growth being modest in scale across many parts of East Devon and your ambitions for the new town of Cranbrook. Whimble currently does not want to be part of Cranbrook and therefore supports:

- vi) Land separating the villages of Rockbeare and Whimble from the new community site.

S6 Development in Green Wedges

Within Green Wedges, as defined on the Proposal Map, development will not be permitted if it would add to existing sporadic or isolated development or damage the individual identity of a settlement or could lead to or encourage settlement coalescence.

We are supportive of Grouped Parishes and accept they have value as they show how communities function in day to day living and Whimble has many synergies with Talaton. The villages share a railway station doctor's surgery and until recently a veterinary practice and parish vicar.

Residents of Whimble have been working hard to encourage South West Trains to improve their timetabling and provide additional stopping services between the village and Pinhoe to enable more people to use rail as their preferred method of commuting to work. Pinhoe station serves Sowton industrial estate along with those major employers including Met office. Whimble would welcome the dailing of the track from the village to Broadclyst through the proposed new station at Cranbrook. This would add an additional miles of track enabling trains to pass at speed allowing more trains to stop at stations from Axminster to Exeter.

7.20

WPC supports the reinstatement of the second track to create a passing loop between Whimble and Broadclyst (closed) stations. This length of track enables trains to pass at speed which will enable increased stopping trains for all east Devon stations. We call on half hourly services to Axminster and eastwards as well as to Exeter and the west including the mainline St David's station.

The current timetable is very restrictive denying residents to option of commuter train travel either in Exeter, Devon or the rest of the country. We do not believe that your comments are strong enough in relation to all the stations between Exeter and Axminster. Fifteen minute services are achievable within the plan period and WPC calls on EDDC to be more ambiguous and recognize the valuable asset these stations provide to local residents.

7.28 Cranbrook Expansion

WPC remains committed to ensuring the village is separate to Cranbrook and strongly defends the green wedge between the two. There are no grounds to cross Cobden Lane, south old A30 or go closer to Exeter Airport. The only area is north of the railway line. We do not support Cranbrook beyond 6000 houses in total.

7.50 High value Employment

WPC welcomes the creation of employment opportunity for all residents, yet finds it ironic that Whimble residents are denied the opportunity to travel to the Met office by train due to the poor service currently offered by the rail company. EDDC needs to lobby with DCC to ensure this situation be remedied before any new stations (Cranbrook) are opened.

We also recognize that employment opportunities for all types of work need to be considered and suitable land made available to cater for their needs. New housing provision should not impinge on these operations such as farming, manufacturing and the airports to name but a few examples.

Towns

WPC agrees that towns provide important services for both their residents and those of neighbouring villages and settlements. The majority of growth for both homes and employment should be delivered within these established towns. We find it disappointing that some towns lack ambition and have modest aspirations to provide valuable services. We welcome and support growth that will benefit residents of the district as well as Whimple.

15.20 Draft Strategy 22

In principle WPC agrees with the proposed 20 houses and we acknowledge that future demand might require a variation on this number as long as this does not result in coalescence with Cranbrook. We are currently seeking affordable homes for locals and do not want to see high houses prices force or prohibit those with close links with the village disadvantaged and denied the opportunity to live in Whimple.

Draft Strategy 26 and E7

We are keen to support employment opportunities in the village. Home working and start up businesses (self employed) should be encouraged and we welcome this plan recognising the valuable part these businesses play in the district.

WPC welcomes the call for further investment and improvement to technology provision like broadband. We are disappointed that mobile phone connectivity is still nonexistent or very poor across the district (and the country). We do not feel this plan is robust enough in this area and we call upon EDDC to challenge the communication industry and encourage them to invest in greater connectivity.

16.46 as 7.20 with the call for concessionary fares to include trains.

Policy S6 Green Wedges

WPC welcomes this policy and in particular the singling out both Rockbeare and Whimple:

21.6 vi) Land separating the villages of Rockbeare and Whimple from the new community site.

Policy H5 Affordable Housing on Exception Sites.

21.61 WPC understands and accepts the clustering with Talaton, yet there are close links with other neighboring parishes including Rockbeare which need to be recognised.

We welcome the revised policy and the greater importance given to maintaining strong communities.

In conclusion WPC is supportive of the draft plan and policies being proposed and are encouraged at the positive approach being adopted by the new Council.