

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Notes of a Meeting of the Local Development Framework Panel held at the Knowle, Sidmouth on Tuesday 4 October 2011

Present:

Councillors:

Mike Allen (Chairman)
Ray Bloxham
Peter Bowden
Alan Dent
Andrew Moulding
Helen Parr
Steve Wragg
Claire Wright

Also Present:

Councillors:

Geoff Chamberlain
Paul Diviani
Vivien Duval Steer
Jill Elson
Martin Gammell
Steve Gazzard
Roger Giles
Graham Godbeer

Douglas Hull
John Humphreys
Frances Newth
Geoff Pool
Philip Skinner
Pauline Stott
Ian Thomas
Mark Williamson
Tim Wood

Honorary Alderman Vivienne Ash

Officers:

Janthia Algate, Major Projects Manager
Neil Blackmore, Landscape Architect
Lesley Crocker, Growth Point Communications Officer
Matt Dickens, Planning Policy Manager
Kate Little, Head of Economy
Linda Renshaw, Senior Planning Officer
Claire Rodway, Senior Planning Officer
Ross Sutherland, Planning Officer
Hannah Whitfield, Assistant Democratic Services Officer
Andrew Wood, Head of Infrastructure and Partnerships, Exeter
and East Devon Growth Point

Devon County Council Officers:

Dave Black
Jamie Hlland
Lewis Ward

Apologies:

Councillors:

Derek Button
Tony Howard
Stephanie Jones
David Key
Ken Potter
Peter Sullivan
Eileen Wragg

The meeting started at 2.00pm and finished at 6.40 pm.

52 Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members and the public were reminded of the new public speaking arrangements for Panel meetings – a period of 12 minutes was provided to allow members of the public to comment on policy recommendations for each item listed on the agenda. All individual contributions were limited to 3 minutes. Forthcoming agenda items were detailed in the Panel's Forward Plan which was circulated with the agenda papers.

53 Notes of Previous Meeting

The notes of the of the Local Development Framework (LDF) Panel meeting held on 27 September 2011 were discussed and agreed as a true record.

54 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Consultation Response (Minute #s 41 & 51 refers)

At the previous meeting the Panel had requested that all Councillors be invited to comment on the draft NPPF and that comments received, including those heard during discussion at the Local Development Framework Panel meeting and Development Management Committee, be used by the Head of Economy to inform a revised response to the consultation on behalf of the Council. Members were reminded of the resolution made by the Development Management Committee regarding the consultation response to the draft NPPF on 20 September 2011. Responses received had been circulated to Members and were discussed, however it was noted that some responses were incompatible.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1 that the following comments be incorporated into the Council's consultation response to the draft National Planning Policy Framework by the Head of Economy:
 - Emphasis to be placed on balance of environment, housing and economy;
 - Emphasis on the importance of weight being given to parish/neighbourhood plans;
 - Emphasis on importance of environment and enhancement of the countryside.
- 2 that individual Councillors' comments, with the agreement of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Development Management Committee, on the draft National Planning Policy Framework be appended to the Council's response.
- 3 that for information a copy of the Council's final submission to the draft National Planning Policy Framework consultation be brought back to a future meeting of the Panel.

55 Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were made by Members:

Councillor/Officer	Agenda Item	Type of Interest/ Action Taken	Nature of Interest
Councillor Claire Wright	General	Personal – Remained in Chamber to take part in discussion and voting	Councillor was a member of the Communities Before Developers (CBD) Campaign Group and had signed up to the CBD Candidate's Pledge
Councillor Claire Wright	Item 8, e – Towns of East Devon, Ottery St Mary	Personal – Remained in Chamber to take part in discussion and voting	As a Town Councillor drafted a response to the LDF process on behalf of the Ottery St Mary Town Council.
Councillor Claire Wright	Item 10 – draft National Planning Policy Framework	Personal – Remained in Chamber to take part in discussion and voting	Drafted a consultation response for Ottery St Mary Town Council to the draft National Planning Policy Framework
Councillors Ray Bloxham and Alan Dent	General	Personal – Remained in Chamber to take part in discussions and voting	Member of National Trust
Councillor Graham Godbeer	General	Personal – Remained in Chamber to take part in discussion	Vice Chairman of East Devon AONB
Councillor Graham Godbeer	Item 8, a – Towns of East Devon, Axminster	Personal – Remained in Chamber to take part in discussion	Axminster Town Councillor and Governor of Axe Valley Community College
Councillor Graham Godbeer	Item 9 – West End Development	Personal – Remained in Chamber to take part in discussion	Director on the Science Park Board
Councillor Mike Allen	General	Personal – Remained in Chamber to take part in discussion	Honiton Town Councillor

55 Declarations of Interest continued...

Councillor/Officer	Agenda Item	Type of Interest/ Action Taken	Nature of Interest
Councillor Philip Skinner	Item 8, c – Towns of East Devon, Exmouth	Personal – Remained in the Chamber	Brother was tenant farmer of Maer/Green Farm, Littleham
Councillor Pauline Stott	Item 8, c – Towns of East Devon, Exmouth	Personal – Remained in Chamber to take part in discussion	Lived at Featherbed Lane, Exmouth
Councillor Roger Giles	Item 8, d – Towns of East Devon, Ottery St Mary	Personal – Remained in Chamber to take part in discussion	Ottery St Mary Town Councillor and Governor at King's School

56 Forward Plan and Schedule of Meetings

Members noted the forward plan which scheduled items and subjects for discussion at future meetings; the following amendments were advised:

- Recreation, health, renewable energy policies and education would be considered on the 18 October.

57 Transport Issues

Members received a presentation (available on the Council's website) detailing an overview of transport infrastructure plans/proposals and constraints for the West End, Exmouth, Honiton and Axminster.

Members were invited to raise questions/issues regarding the presentation they had received; responses included:

- There were approximately 20,000 vehicle trips on the A376 (Exmouth – Exeter) per day, with congestion issues at peak times during the day. This road was approaching but not yet at capacity. To alleviate congestion a strategy to improve rail services to and from Exmouth was in place; this included two additional stations and increasing train frequency;
- Changes to the lane markings approaching Junction 30/Sandygate roundabout to ease congestion were being explored;
- The option of signal control at Clyst St Mary roundabout to balance flow of traffic was being explored.
- Issues with A3052 had been identified in the presentation- Achieving a sustainable residential development along the A3052 would be challenging and would add to congestion issues along that particular route into Exeter.
- Relocation of the Junction 30 Service Station to the other side of the motorway was suggested by a Member as way of alleviating congestion issues, particularly during the summer months – Members were advised that a response on the suggestion would be required from the Highways Agency;
- Work was being undertaken regarding travel to work patterns, however it was difficult to accurately predict where people would chose to live in relation to their place of work;

57 Transport Issues continued...

- Concern was raised by Members that developer contributions couldn't deliver all infrastructure requirements. For example contributions from proposed housing figures for Exmouth would not complete Dinan Way and provide the level of affordable housing (the Council's number one priority) required as well as the other infrastructure needs.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the Devon County Council presentation on transport infrastructure in the West End, Exmouth, Honiton and Axminster be noted;
2. that a copy of the presentation be circulated to Members.

58 Towns of East Devon

For Part One, the strategy section, of the Local Plan it was proposed that separate chapters of each of the East Devon towns in the District (excluding Budleigh Salterton) would be retained. Members considered initial draft chapters, including proposed strategic policy text, for each of the towns; policy text had been informed by consultation undertaken on the Preferred Approach document 2010/11 and subsequent consultation with town councils - evidence and justification for the proposed policy was detailed in the proposed text.

Members noted that the text required further refinement to ensure consistency with wording and housing figures within the chapters.

Speakers' comments:

- Overall pleased with draft proposed strategic policy text for Axminster, particularly inclusion of strategic allocation for additional housing to the north and east of the town to accommodate mix uses and provision of a north south relief road. Concern regarding DCC question of whether a north relief road was required based on 2000 vehicle trips daily between Lyme Road and Chard Road – issue was the type of vehicle, as large number of HGVs went through the town. A full traffic assessment was required;
- 500 houses at Littleham Valley (Maer Valley) was not supported – Exmouth Town Council had submitted a revised submission with a number of individual sites identified for development in Littleham, which did not include Maer valley. Same reasons for not allocating development on land at St Johns applied to Maer Valley.
- Land at Marley Road, adjoining Goodmores Farm, Exmouth – site was considered to be complimentary to development that had already taken place on both sides of Dinan Way. Good strategic location which could be combined with Goodmores Farm site or phased as two strategic sites – both sites could assist with the liberation of uses of other sites within Exmouth for potential re-location, such as the hospital and police station. Site was in an area that the Town Council had considered development to be acceptable.
- Proposed housing figures for Honiton too high and no justification for 15 hectares of employment land.

58 Towns of East Devon continued...

- Would be helpful for a general understanding of the Local Plan if key numeric data could be presented for each town and rural areas to show current and predicted population figures, past and present housing figures, and current areas of employment land and planned growth. This information would enable people to compare the planned growth rate with past development, to interpret how this would impact on the local community and environment and understand infrastructure needs to meet growth.
- Disagree with Ottery St Mary's proximity to Cranbrook as a justification for growth – Cranbrook requires a critical mass in order to deliver infrastructure requirements, providing housing elsewhere would impact on this.

Observations and comments made during a lengthy discussion about draft proposed strategic policy text for each town included:

a) Axminster

- Assessment by DCC doesn't take into account town centre congestion and issues with traffic along Stoney Lane, which was single Lane in parts.
- Should continue to promote north south relief road based on issues with Stoney Lane, the town's aspiration to grow to help create a viable town centre, and remove heavy vehicles from the town centre to improve shopping experience;
- Axminster's aspirations were to regenerate the town centre, a north south relief road and employment provision to be forecast on commutes to Axminster, West End and Chard for example.
- Concern that the proposed number of homes for the town would not be sufficient to deliver a north south relief road – housing should not be delivered without the necessary infrastructure. Chapter wording was advised to address this, however Members were advised that it was a high risk allocation that might be successfully challenged at examination – there was a need to show a link between housing allocation and sustainable transport;
- Sustainable transport links were essential to enable people to travel to West End for work;
- DCC advised that more information would be required before costings for a north south relief road could be advised.

RECOMMENDED: that the initial draft chapter for Axminster, subject to further refinement (including text issues identified by Members) be endorsed.

b) Exmouth

- Major issues with access to Maer Valley. Development in this area would increase the use of 'rat runs'. Existing residents in this area travelling to Exeter avoided using Dinan Way due to traffic light arrangements;
- Development of Maer Valley would mean the existing farm would be become unviable;
- Development in Exmouth constrained by Sea and River Exe. Difficult to achieve strategic development in Exmouth that was viable and sustainable;
- Alternative sites to Maer Valley available for development;
- Emphasise needed on creating a balanced community – need affordable housing to achieve.
- 9.2 – reinstate 'largest town in East Devon'
- 9.4 – include Exmouth provided facilities to surrounding areas;
- 9.5 – change 'western end' to 'western gateway' and reinstate sailing and wind-surfing;
- Promoting enhancement of public transport links to Exeter should feature in the strategic policy text.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the most recent submission from Exmouth Town Council be circulated to all Members;
2. that Exmouth Town Clerk and Lympstone Parish Clerk be sent the submission received relating to Land at Marley Road, adjoining Goodmores Farm in Exmouth and be asked for comment;
3. that the chapter relating to Exmouth be deferred until the next Panel meeting to allow all Exmouth Ward Councillors to have a meeting to discuss the allocations and submit their proposals to the Panel;
4. that Member comments regarding the proposed text be noted and used to refine the chapter for Exmouth.

c) Honiton

- DCC Officers advised that any development to the east of the town would need to satisfy the Highways Agency and not impact on the strategic growth network. DCC was working with the Highways Agency to improve the Turk's Head junction – a roundabout was the preferred option;
- Concern that an allocation for 15 hectares of employment land would affect the viability of Skypark;
- Town had good transport links for both employment and housing growth;
- Strategic policy text to include that the 15 hectare employment land allocation would be restricted to class B1.

RECOMMENDED:

that the initial draft chapter for Honiton, subject to further refinement, including adding class B1 to the strategic policy text, be endorsed.

a) Ottery St Mary

- The proposed housing growth for the town was clarified to be 450 (350 strategic allocation to the west of the town, plus 100 for the Otter Mill Factory site);
- The Town Council's submission had been for no more than 300 houses – 450 was considered too high. Development should be on available brown field sites;
- Allocation of 3 hectares of employment land was too high as empty units existed in the town. The town was also within easy commute of the West End;
- Mixed used strategic allocation (residential and education) to the west of the town would bring forward required infrastructure;
- Creating a cycle way on the disused railway line should be included in order to be consistent with the rest of the chapters;
- The town had excellent road links to the west of the town;
- DCC land available for the School near Canaan Way - Members were advised that the School now had academy status and therefore DCC providing land might no longer be an option;
- Town required provision of a new library and museum – the Old Mill Factory site could meet these demands with a reduced housing figure.

RECOMMENDED: that the initial draft chapter for Ottery St May, subject to further refinement, be endorsed, subject to a housing growth figure of around 400 – 350 mixed use development to the west of the town (education and residential) and a reduced housing figure for the Old Mill Factory site to allow for provision of infrastructure such as a library, museum and niche retail.

a) Seaton

- No mention of maintaining green wedge between Seaton and Colyford. Members were advised that there would be a Development Management policy to address green wedges.
- Aspirations by Axmouth residents for a relief road. Concerns raised as to how this would be funded.

RECOMMENDED: that the initial draft chapter for Seaton, subject to further refinement be endorsed.

a) Sidmouth

- No indication of where employment land would be located;
- Tourism crucial to the town – needs to be prioritised;
- Expand/strengthen reference to regeneration of Port Royal and new/improved community facilities such as a new library and health centre and improved access to Alexandria Industrial Estate;
- Brownfield sites with Alexandria Industrial Estate need to be utilised;
- Greater emphasis required on maintaining greenfield sites around Sidmouth.

RECOMMENDED: that the initial draft chapter for Sidmouth, subject to further refinement and expansion of the points raised by Members, be endorsed.

59 West End Development

The West End was a focus for development in East Devon and the Local Plan would therefore include a 'West End' chapter – this was an adaption of the Preferred Approach document. The full chapter would be considered by the Panel when the employment policy had been drafted, however Members were asked to consider key proposed changes to Preferred Approach policy in respect of housing and other policies relating to the West End.

Speakers' comments included:

- Support for removal of Blackhorse/Redhayes from the allocations. Concern that boundaries for Cranbrook remain unchanged and that this would create high density housing. Expansion to the south west (option 2 in the Issues and Options consultation document) would allow for sustainable travel patterns and avoid coalescence with Rockbeare and Whimble – expansion options should be included in the consultation.
- Strong evidence required to have housing numbers below that in the Regional Spatial Strategy. Roger Tyms study suggests 30% growth and there was a lack of evidence to support reduction in housing numbers from those in the Preferred Approach document - remodelling of the CLG projections suggest a level of housing provision of 19,400 dwellings in the plan period. Need to consult on a housing figure higher than 6000, to include land to the south west, in order to meet housing need.
- Disappointed recommendation in report did not include Blackhorse/Redhayes as an allocation. Sites offered a mixed use development opportunity of 1800 houses brought forward in phases and was considered to be an important strategic allocation that would add to the East Devon housing supply. Full implications of not including the sites as an allocation needed to be considered, particularly affects to Science Park as this would require a bypass if it was to maintain its campus style environment.
- Proposal for a new community, Greenbrook, comprising of between 1000 and 1500 houses, with community facilities between on the A3052 between Crealy Adventure Park and Greendale Business Park. The site was located between two significant employment sites, both of which had permission for expansion. Greenbrook would add 85 trips more than Blackhorse/Redhayes development at peak times on junction 30 and 544 fewer trips at junction 29. Potential existed for a Clyst St Mary Park and Ride site for at least 500 spaces.

59 West End Development continued...

Matters raised and issues arising during subsequent discussion included:

- Concern about development south of the A30 as this could lead to coalescence with Rockbeare;
- Bypass of the Science Park essential in order to maintain campus environment;
- Members felt it would be helpful to have an updated housing distribution chart for the district prior to considering the key proposed changes to Preferred Approach document;
- CS10 - greater sustainability if deliver two sites at Pinhoe/Westclyst as a combination;
- Green wedges to be maintained – need to clarify where and where can't be developed.

RECOMMENDED: that key proposed changes to Preferred Approach policy in respect of housing and other policies relating to the West End be deferred until the next Panel meeting to allow Members to consider an updated housing distribution chart for the district.

60 Key Principles of Local Plan Vision Statement

The Chairman advised that a redrafted Local Plan Vision Statement would be circulated for consideration at the next Panel meeting. Members were reminded that Cabinet would be discussing progress on the Council Plan and associated strategies at their meeting the following day – the importance of the two documents being closely linked was highlighted.

RECOMMENDED: that the consideration of the Local Plan Vision Statement be added to the agenda for the next Panel meeting.