

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Notes of a Meeting of the Local Development Framework Panel held at the Knowle, Sidmouth on Tuesday 30 August 2011

Present: Councillors:
Mike Allen (Chairman)
Peter Bowden
Alan Dent
Helen Parr
Steve Wragg
Claire Wright

Also Present: Councillors:
Graham Brown
Madeline Chapman
Jill Elson
Paul Diviani
Vivien Duval Steer
Martin Gammel
Steve Gazzard
Roger Giles
Graham Godbeer
Anthony Howard
Mike Howe
Douglas Hull
Stephanie Jones
Sheila Kerridge
Frances Newth
Ken Potter
Philip Skinner
Pauline Stott
Ian Thomas

Officers:
Neil Blackmore, Landscape Architect
Richard Cohen, Deputy Chief Executive
Matt Dickins, Planning Policy Manager
Nigel Harrison, Economic Development Manager
Christopher Holland, Democratic Services Officer
Kate Little, Head of Economy
Fliss Morey, Projects Director, Exeter & East Devon Growth Point
Charlie Plowden, Countryside Manager
Andrew Seddon, Senior Solicitor
Andy Wood, Head of Infrastructure and Partnerships,
Exeter and East Devon Growth Point

Apologies: Councillors:
David Atkins
Ray Bloxham
Derek Button
Geoff Chamberlain
Andrew Moulding
Mark Williamson

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 5.05 pm.

25 Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Panel was reminded that only members of the public who had submitted written evidence (which was available to view on the Council's website) in advance of the meeting would be invited to speak on individual agenda items. The Chairman reminded all speakers that they were limited to three minutes speaking duration.

26 Notes of Previous Meeting

The notes of the of the Local Development Framework (LDF) Panel meeting held on 2 August 2011 were discussed and agreed as a true record.

27 Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were made by Members:

Councillor/Officer	Agenda Item	Type of Interest	Nature of Interest
Councillor Alan Dent	General	Personal	Councillor was a member of the National Trust
Councillor Peter Bowden	General	Personal	Councillor was the owner of a plot of land at Town Orchard, Whimble
Councillor Claire Wright	General	Personal	Councillor was a member of the Communities Before Developers (CBD) Campaign Group and had signed up to the CBD Candidate's Pledge
Councillor Graham Godbeer	Employment and Tourism/ West End Development	Personal	Councillor was a director of Exeter Science Park Board

28 Economic Development, Employment and Tourism

Members of the Panel noted the ongoing work of the Economy Portfolio Holder, on producing an employment strategy for the District. It was noted that the early work had produced a draft document and was included for the Panel for information on work so far.

Kate Little, Head of Economy, presented the draft Strategy and explained each of the included tables showing the draft objectives of the strategy.

Members raised concerns regarding the resources needed to achieve some of the objectives and aims of the strategy. It was noted however, that the document was only an interim report and should be treated as a guide only in its present form. The Chairman asked that if Members had specific issues, they should raise them directly with the Head of Economy as all feedback was welcome.

28 Economic Development, Employment and Tourism (cont'd)

The Chairman invited members of the public and representatives of local parish and town councils who had submitted written evidence to speak on the issues they wished to raise in respect of Economic Development, Employment and Tourism in East Devon. Matters raised and issues arising included:

- Support for economic growth from the council was vital, particularly in the West end of the district
- The Economic Strategy for the district should have flexibility to give business more choice
- The growth of Exeter Airport should be supported to help stimulate growth
- Infrastructure needed to be upgraded if Skypark and additional employment land provision was to be made available successfully
- EDDC had three employment provision reports to use data from – they should all be considered.
- It should not be assumed that Employment land should always be close to housing. There should be choice in locating areas of employment.
- Employment units needed to be of all sizes in order to provide business with choice.
- Improved Rural Broadband provision was vital to assist economic development throughout the district.
- The economic development process should attempt to fit in with the green environment.

The Chairman thanked the speakers for their well prepared and valuable comments.

- RECOMMENDED: 1)** that the broad approach set out in the draft economic strategy be supported and used to inform future planning policy.
- 2)** that the issues raised by the Panel and speakers be noted by the Economy Portfolio Holder.

29 Employment Land Monitoring Report

Members of the Panel noted that as part of the annual monitoring process, the Council reviews available employment land and development that has taken place. Presenting the report to the Panel, Matt Dickens, Planning Policy Manager highlighted that the paper was an initial draft report for employment land monitoring for the year ending 31 March 2011. It was stressed that this was an interim report provided for information only at this stage and that data and maps would need rechecking before the final report was produced.

Members discussed at length the interim report. Matters raised and issues arising included:

- The Atkins Employment land report, East Devon Business Forum work and Timms reports should be used together to help develop an up to date employment land allocation policy.
- A thriving economy was a priority of the Council. Adequate Employment land provision was vital to securing that priority.
- Land allocation must have flexibility built in to offer choice to attract potential business; size, location and type
- Empty units need to be used as much as possible. Business should be encouraged to use existing provision whilst providing new.

29 Employment Land Monitoring Report (cont'd)

- Whilst it was acknowledged that there were vacant commercial properties in the District (8% of total Commercial Stock) there weren't necessarily where businesses wished to locate or sustainable for the potential occupier
- There was a need to provide more employment land during a recession in order to stimulate and support growth during better times

The Chairman thanked Members for their contributions and commented that the economic development agenda was a major part of the Government's policy to encourage and stimulate growth in the economy.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted

30 West End Development Strategy

Panel Members noted that East Devon's West End had been identified as a focal point for growth in the Core Strategy Preferred Approach report. This had reflected commitments to development by the Council and previous policy approaches contained in the East Devon Local Plan, as well as two Devon's Structure Plans and the South West Regional Spatial Strategy. Significant public and private sector investment had gone into the West End (and across the boundary in Exeter City) and after years of planning schemes and projects were starting to be developed. Reasoning behind the West End development related to the growth and success of Exeter in attracting new jobs and being a focal point for development. The City however, was constrained by lack of land supply. Strategic policy had, therefore, looked beyond Exeter into adjoining Districts (notably East Devon but to some extent Teignbridge) to accommodate development.

Members noted that to date, there was no specific boundary or line on a map showing a physical extent of the 'West End'. It had not been considered necessary for a precise line/boundary to be shown. The West End developments were, however, listed in the Preferred Approach document as strategic/larger scale schemes designed to complement and play a role in serving the wider Exeter growth agenda. A number of landowners and developers had expressed an interest in potential development sites in/at the West End.

The Chairman invited members of the public, including developers and land owners and representatives of local parish and town councils who had submitted written evidence to speak on the issues they wished to raise in respect of West End Development. Matters raised and issues arising included:

- Consideration should be given to development on the A3052 corridor and not to rely on the former A30 corridor development or over burden the infrastructure
- It was possible to accommodate housing and employment land together if planned sympathetically
- The A3052 infrastructure links (Clyst St Mary roundabout and M5 J30) were very poor and would need improving to accommodate extra housing along A3052
- Natural 'Urban extensions' to existing Exeter developments which would be more sustainable should be considered.
- Economic development in the West end should not undermine the viability of the Exeter Science Park or Skypark.
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30 West End Development Strategy (cont'd)

- Employment land at the planned Intermodal Freight Depot has not been included in the allocation as its location is a function of the rail network and will be servicing the sole South West region. It is a Government Regional requirement but a local provision.
- Parishes such as Rockbeare wish to retain their 'rural character'. Development needs to be sympathetic to existing communities with protection for villages using mechanisms such as green wedges.
- Pressures on existing infrastructure was a major concern
- The growth of Exeter Airport should be supported and could result in upwards of 2000 jobs but could only happen if land adjacent to it was allocated for airport development, given the downturn in airport usage.
- Cranbrook town centre would only be viable if employment and additional housing was allocated to support it

The Chairman thanked the speakers for their well prepared and valuable comments. He acknowledged that there were many competing development proposals but that they had to fit in with the limitations of infrastructure and the expectations from the many Parish Councils involved. He encouraged Parish Councils in particular to talk with the Head of Economy to feed back their own individual views regarding West End Development.

RECOMMENDED: that further assessment is undertaken to arrive at preferred site choices for development and in respect of the scale/levels of development in the West End of the district.

31 Green Infrastructure Policy and District Wide Green Infrastructure Provision

Members considered the report and presentation of, Neil Blackmore, Landscape Architect and Charlie Plowden, Countryside Manager regarding Green Infrastructure in the West End of the district.

Green Infrastructure comprised the green areas, parks, play areas, footpaths, sports pitches and other open spaces that contributed to the quality of life and environmental performance of East Devon. The report summarised the Study and Strategy work which had been completed for the West End of East Devon District and 'Growth Point' area.

Some Members suggested that detailed consultation on such green measures was needed with the people of the Towns and Parishes it affected. The issue of land ownership was raised as a potential hurdle to the realisation of many green schemes.

The Chairman commented that the Council had a difficult task to balance the green spaces and infrastructure with the existence of a new town, airport and future growth point development.

RECOMMENDED: that the Council endorses an overarching strategy for the West End Growth Point area and as part of this strategy, land be allocated for a Clyst Valley Regional Park.