

Date: 6 February 2015
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Reference: A/02/16/03



Mr A Thickett
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Dear Mr Thickett

East Devon Local Plan Examination

I write with reference to the above and apologies for delays in responding. I have recently been appointed as Service Lead – Planning and my top priority is to progress the Local Plan through to adoption as quickly as possible. I am writing to update you on recent progress.

In order to establish a robust understanding of the objectively assessed housing need in East Devon the Council has commissioned a number of studies that are now nearing completion. We have a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) report that we have been advised will, in draft form, be completed by the appointed consultants, DCA, on or before Friday 13 February 2015. The SHMA is a multi-authority commission by East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon and Teignbridge Councils and Dartmoor National Park Authority, with Devon County Council also being a partner.

In the course of production of the SHMA it became clear that housing needs, potentially arising as a result of possible future job growth, warranted particular attention. On account of this issue the partnership commissioned Edge Analytics to undertake specific modelling work to establish the relationship between job growth and housing requirements. Further to this East Devon District Council has also commissioned work by Ash Futures Ltd to specifically advise on future job growth levels in East Devon. I can advise that we have received draft reports from both Ash Futures and Edge Analytics and we will be pushing for final speedy conclusion of all reports.

Regrettably to get to this stage has taken longer than would be desirable and I am aware of the need for consultation on evidence and any policy changes that might arise from the evidence.

Given the timetable for SHMA completion, and under normal circumstances, I would have envisaged that the earliest we would have been able to take a report with proposed changes to the Plan to our members, seeking authority to consult, would be in March (or early April) 2015. I would envisage a six week consultation period. However because of the forthcoming local and national elections this would not appear to be a viable programme to follow with concern of risks that the process could be seen as becoming politically motivated rather than being based on the soundness of the plan. While mindful of the need to progress quickly I would appreciate your views on the significance to the process of Members consideration and consultation not taking place until shortly after the election.

Yours sincerely

Ed Freeman,
Service Lead - Planning Strategy and Development Management

East Devon – an outstanding place

Chief Executive: Mark R Williams Deputy Chief Executive: Richard Cohen

