

RESPONSE OF LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL TO THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT EAST DEVON LOCAL PLAN

Lyme Regis town council is grateful for the opportunity to comment on the draft East Devon Local Plan.

The town council supports the strategic objectives which underpin the plan and the overall spatial strategy for the delivery of the growth and development planned to take place between 2020-40.

The town council notes and supports the designations for its two closest neighbouring communities, Axminster (Main Centre) and Uplyme (Service Village).

With regard to Axminster, we note the vital role which this settlement can play in meeting the housing needs of people working in west Dorset as well as east Devon and we welcome the proposed allocation of new homes, the proportion of affordable homes and their mix of types and tenures. We note the employment opportunities which this settlement can offer and the higher order facilities available to residents on both sides of the county boundary, and broadly welcome the wider proposals for Axminster set out in the draft plan. We also note the number of current day and other visitors which visit Lyme Regis (and other parts of the Jurassic Coast) by private car and would welcome discussions to explore the potential for Axminster station, and wider public transport provision, to play a greater role in mitigating the environmental and other impacts which arise from this.

With regard to Uplyme, we note that no sites suitable for development have been submitted as yet and would request that any proposals which may come forward minimise the potential impact on Lyme Regis, particularly with regard to existing traffic and parking issues. We welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with our close neighbours in Uplyme to similarly minimise and mitigate the impact of the volume of visitor traffic and suggest that signage strategies from the A35 and other main routes could be developed which assist in this respect.

The town council was amongst the first to declare a climate emergency and supports the ambition in the draft plan to be carbon neutral by 2040. It also welcomes the commitment to renewables and zero carbon energy. It does, however, question whether the impact of transport in general and visitor transport in particular has been adequately considered. Whilst the latter point is difficult to control at local level, the current impact of day trip visitor journeys (especially to the Jurassic Coast) and the likely future impact of the planned level of housing growth within the day trip, drive time visitor catchment (both within and outwith East Devon) has the potential for very considerable negative impacts which need to be carefully considered and mitigated. Whilst we fully appreciate issues of development viability and the vast range of competing demands, we suggest developer contributions towards mitigating measures should be considered, perhaps in conjunction with a dedicated share of car parking income? As the draft plan says, 'now is the time for bold collective action.'

In this respect, we also suggest there could be more emphasis on and greater support for working from home in the employment sections, alongside the policies on digital connectivity, etc.

Further, with regard to sustainable travel, we welcome and support the commitment to measures to deliver EV charging within all new developments, but worry that there is little reference to existing development and the need to 'retro fit' or provide communal facilities to an agreed level and standard. Moreover, we are concerned that the current level of infrastructure/utilities provision in areas where there is little or no planned large-scale new development may be entirely inadequate to

support increased levels of EV charging provision and with no plan, or funding, in place to support the necessary 'reinforcing' of services.

We welcome the support for protecting the landscape and built heritage, but are concerned that the sheer area covered by AONB status, combined with the commitment to protect high grade agricultural land, and other aspects of the existing landscape, infrastructure and built environment, may severely reduce the ability to identify suitable sites for renewables and zero carbon energy generation. We would welcome the opportunity for dialogue about the delivery of cross-border community level local generation schemes.

With regard to the landscape and natural environment in particular, we support the existing protection afforded to many areas through AONB or other status, but do not support additional National Park designation, either for parts of the Plan area or for parts of neighbouring Dorset.

We welcome the support for protecting the historic environment, but would prefer there to be a presumption in favour of alterations to improve the energy performance of historic buildings except where there is unacceptable material harm. Given the sheer number of Listed Buildings across the area, this would seem to be a better and more sustainable approach to reducing carbon emissions?

With regard to environmental changes and managing environmental harm, we would support measures to specifically improve water quality in the river Lym and note the negative impact that relatively poor water quality is currently having on bathing water quality at Lyme Regis.