

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 4 September 2018

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 4.30pm and ended at 7.09pm.

***15 Public speaking**

The Chairman welcomed everyone present to the meeting.

Malcolm Randall, a building consultant living and working in Whimble, asked the committee for more flexibility in considering how it applied planning policy to larger scale developments. He felt that the area boundaries were too limiting, stressing the need for development in rural areas in order to help villages remain viable.

***16 Minutes**

The minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee meeting held on 24 July 2018 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

***17 Principles For Accommodating The Future Growth Needs Of East Devon**

The report presented to the committee outlined the future growth needs of East Devon and how they could be accommodated. The report has been informed by work undertaken for the now adopted Local Plan and some early work on the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP).

In November 2017, the government consulted on a white paper called "Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals". One of the key proposals in the paper was a standard method for calculating local authorities housing need. The government therefore proposed a standard method, based on publically available data and reflecting the actual needs for each area. Alongside the consultation the government published a table of housing needs for each district based on the calculator. In the case of East Devon this shows a housing need of 844 homes per year, and the committee were asked to consider the 844 as an indicator of a minimum level of growth that will need to be accommodated.

On top of this is to achieve Members aspiration to deliver one job per home, so the Council will also need to deliver enough employment space to accommodate at least 844 jobs per year. In the Local Plan it was estimated that based on this ratio for each 250 new homes we would need to deliver around 1 hectare of employment land.

In considering sustainable growth, Members were referred to the sustainability appraisal (SA) that was carried out at each stage of the development of the now adopted Local Plan. This is because the themes that were considered as part of the SA remain a good bench mark to consider the factors that will be important for planning growth into the future. The themes used were as follows:

- Healthy and Prosperous Communities
- Environmental Protection and Enhancement
- Resource Consumption and Climate Change
- Economic Growth, Education and Employment

The committee were reminded that this was ongoing work, with no decision to be made at the meeting, but to encourage discussion and debate.

Discussion covered:

- Clarifying if the future plans covered building more services and infrastructure or relying on existing services for new homes in the future – in response, there would have to be an accommodation of both, depending on the application scale and local needs;
- Need to look at a wider range of housing types, such as offsite manufacture, as acceptable for planning applications;
- Recent Overview committee discussion on renewable energy of interest to the committee in providing evidence to help understand how to provide for future growth;
- Failure with current local plan to address issue of mobility in rural areas and adaptive homes requirement; it was not practical to expect the private sector to provide the requirement;
- Add to “Ensure that sites are genuinely viable and deliverable at allocation stage” (paragraph 4.2) the term “and will be delivered”. There are a number of allocations but need compulsion to deliver;
- Needs reference to the rural economy. With many small villages struggling, the small development they want will make them viable; why create new villages when many are keen to expand to survive, and will in turn lead to more jobs and improvements in infrastructure;
- Would the stated growth only help out neighbouring areas to reduce the number of homes they had to provide? The Council was working with neighbouring authorities in planning growth for the wider area, but the report presented was set out to explain what growth needs to be undertaken within the District boundaries to meet the government calculated need, not in picking up growth for other authorities;
- Disagreement with paragraph 8.10, in that it was not presenting the reality of Ottery St Mary that had both schools and medical practices at capacity with limited bus services; and that large scale developments had not delivered in providing adequate infrastructure;
- Unhappy that area to the north of Exmouth and west of Ottery St Mary was identified as area for growth;
- Need for developing a housing policy that gave young people a chance to get a home;
- Need to address issue of inadequate health provision for the growth of the district, particularly in respect of growing elderly demographic;
- Need a pragmatic and practical approach to delivery of homes;
- Look to encouraging community led development, where many can get a much higher proportion of affordable housing delivered;
- Look at splitting sites to allow a proportion to be delivered by local builders to help local economy;
- Encourage house build types that will fit with older, traditional styles of surrounding houses;
- Need for funding for infrastructure in order to support such growth;
- Should planning permission be given if there is any doubt that the development won't be delivered;
- Cannot force landowners to sell land for development;
- Focus on improving rail transport as current road infrastructure cannot support growth.

RESOLVED:

1. That the issues raised in the report be noted;
2. That the proposed principles for growth as the basis for future discussion and consultation on accommodating growth in the district be endorsed.

***18 Greater Exeter Strategic Plan – Update and Vision**

The report presented to the committee provided an update on the progress of preparing the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP) and to recommend that a public consultation on a new vision for the plan, together with engagement on homes and infrastructure matters be held in October and November 2018.

The consultation document was before the committee to consider if it met their vision for the GESP and adequately addressed the associated infrastructure needs, including previously indicated aspirations for a sports hub and concert venue.

Many Members voiced their concern on the content of the consultation document.

Discussion covered:

- Need for greater emphasis on healthcare, particularly in respect of surgeries at capacity, and travel needs of rural community to receive care;
- Sport and music opportunities welcomed. Need for entry level sports facilities where young people live; significant benefits to the community from having those opportunities;
- Prioritising immediate need for dealing with travel infrastructure before looking at sport facilities;
- Lack of reference to energy use and energy resources;
- Lack of reference to 5G technology;
- Needs more ambition in tackling transport issues, such as how to replace diesel buses with electric buses; and other radical solutions for moving people around the area;
- Force Exeter to become involved in delivery by adding in the need for a regional centre for swimming;
- Passing loop at Whimble needed;
- Consistent high quality of broadband provision needed;
- Consultation document not clear on how people should respond – tailor it to provide succinct responses that can be easily analysed;
- Not clear on how a “connected region” will be delivered;
- Doesn’t cover for how people will travel to work between towns, only focus on travelling to Exeter for work;
- No indication of forward funding.

RESOLVED:

1. that before consultation, the consultation document “Our New Vision and How We Make It Real” be amended to:
 - a. include reference to assisting the rural community;
 - b. include reference to increasing healthcare provision in response to demographic changes;
 - c. include entry level sports provision and sports hub;
 - d. include provision of passing loop at Whimple, and other transport provision;
 - e. include a review of energy needs and how to supply them;
 - f. include an indication of forward funding; and
 - g. include a clear set of questions that provide information that can be analysed.
2. That before consultation, the amended document be considered at a future meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee.

***19 Publication of the new revised National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018)**

The report presented to the committee summarised the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was published on the 24 July 2018, and highlights and comments on specific matters that may have particular relevance in East Devon.

The NPPF sets out the government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The revised NPPF does not introduce any fundamental changes to the planning system or processes but it does bring about some more detailed changes, particularly with regard to plan making. This revised Framework replaces the previous NPPF published in March 2012.

In addition to the changes to the NPPF the government has also updated the Planning Practice Guidance which is a more detailed on-line document that provides detail about the implementation of the NPPF. The guidance is regularly updated and will continue to be. The guidance has however been significantly updated already in terms of issues of viability:

- Viability assessment work will be primarily undertaken at the plan making stage;
- Justification will be required for a re-assessment of viability, strengthening the local authority’s ability to resist viability challenges other than where clear unforeseen issues arise;
- Providing clearer guidance on land values; and
- Promoting openness and transparency on viability issues, with the expectation that appraisals are publicly available other than in exceptional circumstances.

Points raised during the discussion included:

- Need for a policy of viability assessment, that includes making public that assessment;
- Need for standards on the uplift of land values; this suggestion was challenged by other Members in terms of value being dependent on location as well as grade, and should stay on a case by case basis;
- Need for clarify over how the new NPPF now affects decisions by the Development Management Committee in considering applications against the agreed Local Plan - the Local Plan takes precedence for a planning application unless a material consideration overrides it – so the new NPPF can be a material consideration alongside supporting evidence;

- Testing at appeal in weighting the new NPPF over the existing Local Plan may be only way of finding out if that approach can be adopted.

The Service Lead for Planning Strategy and Development Management reminded the committee that there was already work underway by planning officers in adapting their internal procedures to take account of the changes in the NPPF. A report would be presented to Development Management Committee to highlight a couple of key changes and how these affect decision-making.

RESOLVED: That the content of the report be approved.

***20 Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)**

The Statement of Community Involvement is a document that Local Planning Authorities are required to produce, setting out how the Council will consult the local community and other interested parties on:

- Planning Policy documents (including Local Plans, 'Supplementary Planning Documents and other guidance);
- Neighbourhood Plans; and
- Planning Applications.

An SCI states who the council will consult with, when and how. It provides an opportunity to ensure that the particular needs of 'hard to reach' groups are taken into account, making the planning system more inclusive.

The committee considered the Statement of Community Involvement report updating Members of the progress made since the consultation, which ran from Tuesday 3 July to Wednesday 15 August 2018. The SCI had now been updated, taking account of the consultation.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That the Statement of Community Involvement, subject to minor amendments as set out in table at paragraph 3.1 of the report and as updated arising from the consultation, be adopted.

***21 Interim Masterplan to support planning applications at the Exeter Science Park and the adjacent Redhayes development to facilitate a potential land use exchange**

The report presented to the committee outlined the need for an Interim Masterplan to be used to guide and inform two planning applications to ensure that, in the event of a land exchange, the new development coming forward is compatible and complementary to the Science Park and the adjacent mixed-use development at Redhayes.

Consultation of the Interim Masterplan has been undertaken by means of two workshops held with key stakeholders. Following this, amendments and clarification were made to the draft interim document to accommodate where possible the views of the stakeholders.

RESOLVED:

That the Interim Masterplan for Exeter Science Park and Redhayes Development be endorsed.

Attendance list

Committee Members:

Councillors:

Paul Diviani - Chairman
Mike Allen – Vice Chairman
Susie Bond
Matt Booth
Colin Brown
Jill Elson
Graham Godbeer
Mike Howe
Geoff Jung
Geoff Pook
Eleanor Rylance
Philip Skinner

Also present (present for all or part of the meeting):

Councillors:

Ian Thomas
Pauline Stott
Brian Bailey
Andrew Moulding
Paul Carter
Ben Ingham
Roger Giles
Helen Parr
Peter Faithfull

Officers present (present for all or part of the meeting):

Mark Williams, Chief Executive
Ed Freeman, Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management
Andy Wood, East of Exeter Projects Director
Chris Rose, Development Manager
Matt Dickins, Planning Policy Manager
Tim Spurway, Planning Officer
Keith Lane, Planning Officer
Shirley Shaw, Planning Barrister
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

Apologies:

Councillors

Mark Williamson
Ian Hall
Rob Longhurst
Alan Dent
Tom Wright

Chairman Date.....