

East Devon District Council

Local Plan - 2031

Public Consultation / Feedback

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Index

1 Context	3
2 Strategic Approach and Policies	5
3 The Built Environment	10
4 Transport and Infrastructure	15
5 Thriving Communities	17
6 Climate Change and renewable energy	19
7 Outstanding Natural and Historic Environments	20
8 Development Management Policies	22
9 Conclusion	23

Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success.” – Pablo Picasso

1 Context

Introduction

The research, the public engagement in the process, gathering of evidence and information from relevant stakeholders is crucial for the creation of the Local Plan, formerly known as the Development plan, which then steers planning policy in the future.

It forms the framework / blue print for development in the District Council Area for the next 20 years. Planning applications are guided by the principles layout out in the Local Plan, both cartographic and written policies and procedures.

After the NDF(National Development Framework), which sits above the Local Plan, this is the most important document for the Planning Department in each five year period. Under the Local Plan are a host of Neighbourhood Plans, developed by parishes and Town Councils. However, the local plan should be guided by the decisions taken and the democratic process of individual parishes.

Portrait of East Devon

East Devon is a beautiful part of Devon in the south of England and incorporates the World Heritage Area of the Jurassic Coast, it is also incorporates the outer fringes of Exeter, seen as a significant growth area. The largest town is Exmouth (with a population of 34,500 - 2011 census). The second largest is Sidmouth (with a population of 14500- 2011 Census) and the third is Honiton with a population of 12,000 – 2011 census). Cranbrook is due to be the second biggest town by 2030. Other key towns are Axminster, Seaton, Sidmouth and Ottery St Mary and Budleigh Salterton. There are 75 rural areas / parishes.

East Devon remains largely unspoilt by insensitive developments due in part to much of the area being part of two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. East Devon AONB and the Blackdown Hills AONB. These have given protection against intrusive exploitation and thus the scenic beauty of these districts remains basically intact.



Broadhembury, Blackdown Hills, AONB

Vision for East Devon to 2031

The key issue to be addressed is the balance between development and the protection of the environment. East Devon is a very special area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; has great economic potential and improving green credentials.

Housing is the number one issue, which requires more sensitivity than it has previously been given by EDDC. The vision should be on providing an exceptional standard of housing accommodation in a variety of location across the district designs.

Reimagining Cranbrooks future and insisting on high quality design standards or no planning permission. The will of local people trumps the avaricious desires of developers.

East Devon must stand up to the pressures by Exeter City Council's demand for more and more housing. That the folly of The Greater Exeter Strategic Plan is dead and buried.

There must be far more emphasis on rigorous environmental targets, including tree planting, flood management and costal erosion.

Significant improvement in rail infrastructure is necessary, including a new Railway Station at East Cranbrook, re-opening the Sidmouth Line and a spur line to the Exeter Airport. In respect of road infrastructure a desire for the A30 to be duelled, within East Devon and partnership with the Department of Transport. Further improvement to the A35 from Honiton to Axminster and the A376 to Exmouth are needed.

There should be a new focus on outdoor leisure, including upgrading footpaths, improving off road cycle ways. Improved access to the Clyst Valley Regional Park and green spaces are a necessity.

New policies on working from home, and the suitability of new homes for this purpose, as seen as a new ways of working. Requirement for new policies on electric chargers for new homes. East Devon has an opportunity to lead the way.

Villages to make gradual increases in the size of their population, with exceptional standard of built design.

Re-development and structural improvements to Exeter Airport and a strong business hub and light manufacturing facilities.

New policies to enhance the tourist and hospitality industry.

Public Engagement

The initial consultation of which this is a part, is strategically important as it provides valuable material and a 'glimpse' of members of the publics views, desires and hopes. In addition like many examples of 'brain storming', some highly innovative ideas are often generated.

The other element is the numerous democratic Neighbourhood plans that have been drawn up, agreed by parishes, with parish active involvement and authorised by EDDC. This is a vital part of developing the 'Local Plan' as it links with the will of the people.

2 Strategic Approach and Policies

Scale and Distribution of Residential Development

The Government has published the results of its Housing Delivery Test which monitors the number of homes delivered in local authority areas across England to see if they have met their targets. The targets have been seen to be false, as the Government has used dubious mechanisms to calculate forecasted growth. The Government has announced at the beginning of 2021 a U-turn decision on the number of new homes that must be built annually in East Devon.

According to the data the EDDC has met the Government requirement by delivering 2,868 new homes in the last three years, which are predominantly in Cranbrook.

The consultation for the 'Local Plan' is seeking views on issues such as the number of new homes that should be delivered and where they should be built. In addition the different types of housing that should be built in the future. However, the housing standards and design criteria, to ensure the new homes are fit to meet the needs of the community must be exemplary.

The proposals to build 1,614 houses in the district each year have been cut by almost 700, giving a total of just over 900 homes per year. The aim is to deliver more homes, by an increase by 35 per cent on previously-developed or brownfield land.

The council's strategic planning committee meeting, on 16 September 2020, councillors declared 'no logic' to The Government's proposed approach other than to deliver the 300,000 homes nationally per year and reach targets.

It has been reported, that the district council had raised concerns with The Government over the proposed numbers – similar to other authorities – with councillors saying the proposals *'lacked any rhyme or reason' and would have been 'impossible' to achieve without putting pressure on East Devon's protected landscapes and habitats.*

Now that the incompetence of the Department of Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government under The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP has been revealed, we need to determine where are the best locations for new housing in the District. This building programme and increase in population will affect the need for new infrastructure, roads, schools, health care facilities and employment provision.

This reappraisal takes off the profound pressure of East Devon as a potential building plot. What has been agreed by the - Government's findings, that more homes will be built in Plymouth and Bristol, regional capitals.

Clearly, the larger towns should be allowed to grow, sharing the housing requirements across the District. These should be: Exmouth, Seaton, Axminster, Honiton, West Clyst and Sidmouth. It would add to the viability of these Town Centres, as places of retail, social, entertainment and business.

Axminster, Exmouth and Honiton have added potential as they are both served by the main line railway.

No development should be for more than 200 dwelling, as this would stimulate a far greater diversification of design, providing adjacent developments are by another house builder.

The new standard of acceptance, and thus being scene in a more favourable light will be for smaller development of under 50 dwelling but over the threshold for social housing requirements.



Lime Tree Square, Street, Somerset

A mix of house types, and densities together with formal and informal public open space and tree planting schemes.

Cranbrook

In respect to Cranbrook, no further development should take place outside the Town Council Area, e.g. East of Cobden Lane. That SANGS area should protected and not used as a bargaining chip. Boundaries must now be fixed for the life of the Local Plan.

Cranbrook was part of a flawed Government Policy of 'Developer led' New Town, hence no Town Centre for 10 years, poor infrastructure and a lack of amenities, including sport and social provisions. In addition, poor dangerous street layouts, parking issues, quality of build and design. This is known by the planners but little has changed in terms of raising the standard of design, partly because of the immense pressure by inferior developers. In addition the unpleasantness of the limited variety of housebuilder and the virtual monopoly of two key builders, one of which, namely Persimmon has an appalling record. One important exemplifying

example of the crassness of the developers is using standard and limited designs for 'Any Town'. developments.

There is NO ATTEMPT to build in the vernacular style of Devon, The only example is the Cranberry Farm PH and there are a few examples of flint, (in pre-formed blocks) which is not a common building material in Devon.

There was no attempt to develop a network of cycle-ways through the housing estates of Cranbrook. Cycling on the pavement is not a cycle way. If planners could do it in the c1960's (Crawley, New Town) it should be natural in the 2020's Unless the developers want more land for high density housing, which would jeopardise their bottom line.

It is disappointing that the suggestions for high quality design standards, illustrated in publications for the consultation process on Cranbrook Master were never achieved, where never insisted upon, because of the power that the developers had over East Devon District Council. It is essential that EDDC take back control and archive a far higher standard than previous phases.

At the Planning Inspectors hearings for Cranbrook in early 2020, it was evident that planners were building a stronger case and challenging the unpleasant individuals representing the land owners and the national house builders.

I would advocate a Green Belt surrounding Cranbrook, which is allowed under planning legislation – It would clearly draw a boundary around Cranbrook and prevent coalescence to nearby villages. It would also create a distinction between Cranbrook and Exeter, including the Exeter suburb of West Clyst.



10 years on. Town Centre 2020

Planners must no longer accept second rate, they must pursue, even at appeal if necessary, higher design standards similar to what has been achieved in the early phases of Sherford New Town, Plymouth.

N.B. Further comments would likely need to be expressed, when the final report by the Government Inspector is released.

Village Growth

Although there are very divided opinions on new housing in villages to assist with the overall district target, it is worth citing my own research for the Open University.

From 72 respondents 56% were acceptable to new homes in their village. 44% being opposed. Of those that were prepared to accept new homes the overall average for all five villages was 23.

However, of those that accepted new development, 33% specifically mentioned starter homes. In some cases this was a condition on the acceptance.

Comments linked to research

- a) Mixed feelings - selfishly, I would like the village to stay as it is, but in order to maintain the amenities we need more young inhabitants.
- b) Uneasy, but accept the need.
- c) Need for low cost housing for first-timers.
- d) A village has to grow to be a living organism, which has developed over hundreds of years and must continue to do so.
- e) Limited number but must be sympathetic to the village style.
- f) They are needed to maintain economic and village activities in an ageing population situation.
- g) Great - villages are dying - more people the better.

It would be reasonable to accept a 5% increase in the number of homes in each village and in some hamlets, over the defined period of the Local Plan. Of which 33% being affordable, self - build, council housing, social housing association the latter two being conditional on not being able to be purchase under Right to Buy.

Unlike the atrocious ideas within the 'Greater Exeter Strategic Plan', which was to have bolt on 'New Towns' to villages, which is complete and utter madness.

It is not unreasonable to allow the same proportion of new houses within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, with the proviso that the design of new builds, or conversion of redundant buildings, must be of outstanding quality.

Affordable Homes

There is a great deal of controversy in what is affordable, because there are many people that can't get on the property ladder at the perceived 'affordable rate'. The scheme much exalted by Chancellor George Osborne is cited for causing considerable house price inflation.

Part ownership should be encouraged as a solution, and self-build plots, in all types of location. The self-build option is a far better affordable project than the deals linked to the Government Scheme.

Park homes also offer an affordable solution and their needs to be allocation of land for this purpose.

Affordable homes, is also linked to the price of land, and what has been very evident is 'land price' inflation, due the methods and practices of land companies. I would strongly advocate a land tax, which is not in the EDDC remit, unfortunately.

Retirement villages

Often in rural locations, but of some merit, as they realise residents previous homes, back on the market, as retirees are downsizing. Planning should consider these in a favourable light, providing not too substantial, e.g. 50 homes. Architectural merit has to be at the top of the agenda in these developments often linked to historic properties.

Brown Field Development

This is to be encouraged, but must be architecturally sensitive to the area in which it sits. It could also include redundant retail premises on the outer fringes of Town Centres, to improve the look, use aspects and visual appearance of the Town Centre street scene.

There is an emergency need to form 'By-laws' to prohibit former office premises being converted into unfit accommodation. It has been extensively reported that, Richard Sharp the new appointment by the Tory Government as the chair of the BBC, has been linked to a firm accused of building '*ghettoes for the vulnerable*' The property company accused of cramming homeless and low-income families into former office blocks has been funded by an investment group managed by the new chair of the BBC.

These are not the sort of development that East Devon wants in its patch, therefore it must be written into the Local Plan.

It also must be appreciated that Brown Field Sites could be used for other purposes than housing.

Sustainable Development

The new community of Cranbrook was seen as a prototype for a new Eco-town. The pressing need was for the highest possible standards of sustainability and renewable energy usage on the green-field development, with its own railway station. The guiding principle by the planners was for Britain's first eco-town' Cranbrook to be committed to 'good design'. This has clearly, not been achieved.

In 2007, according to Richard McCarthy, Director General of Programmes, Policy and Innovation at the Department for Communities and Local Government, at a Growth Summit linked to a Government Green Paper on Housing. Mr McCarthy said "*We must not overlook the need for good design of both homes and communities,*

the urgent need for the highest environmental standards and lifestyles, and an innovative approach to transport provision”.

This statement should be the framework for all new housing developments in East Devon, with the proviso that each locality is different and development must sit naturally with the surrounding built environment.

Development sites must be linked to the provision of good roads, public transport and the capacity of local infrastructure.

3 The Built Environment

The local authority must have the highest standard of design standards and be determined at every single development to insist on quality of design, even down to the colour of the mortar and gap between each brick.

Development within Built-Up Area Boundaries

The principle of good design must guide all development and be set in ‘stone’, set in the Local Plan. Development should seek to harmonise with the street scene.



Thickett Mead, Midsomer Norton

Parking provision should be adequate for the needs of occupants.

Density of persons / hectare must not exceed the norms for the area in question.

The Local Authority should oppose and discourage the principle of leasehold properties.

The Local Authority to encourage new types of construction methods and low-carbon impact.

Development in the Countryside

All development in the countryside should require planning permission, including agricultural building, as they become important features of the rural landscape.

Sensitive and what is necessary, village development, as previously stated in housing needs would be seen in a positive way. However, the neighbourhood plan is the key document in determining the local planning.

Village pubs, shops, post offices, schools, being the life blood of each village, should be laid down into the 'local plan' as a desire to be preserved.

Outdoor sports location should be considered in a favourable way, e.g. Football / Rugby pitches, golf courses, archery and country parks.

Touring caravan sites should allowed subject to landscaping in AONB, these limited season facilities have less of a visual impact than static vans and more sustainable.

The change of use of redundant farm buildings should be defined as what is, and is not acceptable. Residential use is only one possibility, but employment opportunities, linked to the countryside would be more favourable, as is rural craft. Office accommodation would fit well within a change in society, as an alternative from working from home. Less commuting, less damage to the environment.

Development in Green Wedges

Green wedges are important features which prevents coalescence of built up areas, forming extended ribbon development. The old London Road is at risk of being an elongated suburb of Exeter to Whimble & Rockbeare, unless these Green Wedges are ratified by the Local Authority and built into the Local Plan. Tree planting would be environmentally beneficial as well as aesthetically pleasing.

Green wedges need to be free from urban style development, but could incorporate, playing fields, parkland, but not commercial activity.

The creation of new Green Wedges could be used to separate area of new estates, from railways, main roads, unsightly structure and Motorways

Major Development at East Devon's West End

No development should be nearer than 100 meters from the boundary land of the M5. Tree planting should be linked to planning conditions, on development linked to land adjacent to motorway.

Apart from additional development attached to Key Towns in East Devon, the principle development area is land north of Blackhorse, west of the River Clyst and East of the M5. With a 'buffer zone' of 200 meters north of Blackhorse Lane, of new mixed woodland.

Area South of the A30 near Exeter Airport fringing the B3184 could act as addition building land.

Currently, there is a lack of amenities in the West Clyst. There needs to be more of a community focus and what would amount to a village centre. West Clyst should be a distinct place, not an extension of Pinhoe.

Green Infrastructure in East Devon's West End

Very much linked to the Regional Clyst Valley Park, however there must be a more dynamic approach to tree planting than seen in Cranbrook and some parts of West Clyst.

For information: Milton Keynes planted One Million Trees = 4 trees / person. Trees not only are the great flood sponges but also capture carbon, they also have huge visual appeal.

The creation of small lakes / large ponds through creating dams,(without Beavers) would add to the diversity of wildlife and habitats, and assist with flood alleviation. These areas become focus points within the Region Park for the enjoyment of citizens, for recreation and education. Water features are a key point in Milton Keynes, and Cambourne in Cambridgeshire, they are often linked with a recreation centres / café.

One of the remits of the Regional Park was to enhance biodiversity e.g. ponds, orchards and trees.

The existing Cranbrook Country Park is very much on a small scale. There could be opportunities to enlarge this local park around the area of Hellings Lane, north of the railway, thus adding to the existing number of accessible hectares. This area would still be part of the new proposed Regional Park. This could retain farming but with wide cycle ways and footpaths.



Distinct, purpose built, Cycle path

Pedestrian access across the railway line would better integrate these two open park areas. In addition a network of footpaths and key cycle tracks to link Exeter, Cranbrook and West Clyst.

An area of Land referenced as ASH to the south of the A30 has strong merit to incorporate into the Region Park. Part of this area formed part of the; ill-conceived, irrational and foolish Greater Exeter Strategic plan.

Green Car parks would be required in certain areas to improve access for areas of recreation and walking.

Development of Exeter Airport Business Park, Sky Park and Science Park

The desire of developing a regional avionics centre of excellence and learning campus should be part of the local plan. The Airport is one of the best assets for East Devon as an air travel hub for the region, with swift connections to major cities in the UK, Ireland, and Europe and for air freight transport.

The Sky Park has been disappointing, but there is a market for relocated office premises outside of city centre, with hot desk provision. It suggests that this area would fulfil demand within the district for 10 years.

The Science Park is also disappointing as a centre for high tech, and science based companies spun off from the Exeter University.

The airport, science park, sky park and business park would be enhanced by a rail spur, / Shuttle train, (Not dissimilar from the Docklands Light Railway or Gatwick Airport link to north terminal) similar to the original intention to link the railway with the J Sainsbury Depot, which Lidl now occupies.

Smaller Towns, Villages and Countryside

Within these settlements only modest development that supports and complements rural areas, whilst helping to sustain their distinctive qualities, their local amenities and desirability & visual appeal would be allowed.

Re-development at Winslade Park, Clyst St Mary

There are often developments that enrage and arouse impassioned feelings local citizens and a case in point is the vast development by Burrington Estates for live, work and leisure facilities at Winslade Park, Clyst St Mary. It is a potentially exciting opportunity for the District, but what has to be priority is the will of local people, as they fear an overdevelopment of the site and the dubious practices of the developers are already evident. In this location, it is an opportunity to create a revered, innovative development that could be admired not only in the South West, providing it does not trespass on open countryside.

Development at Uplyme

In 2011, 93 dwellings had no usual resident (empty properties, second homes or holiday lets). This is a large number for a Parish this size and makes up 11% of all dwellings. Of the rest of the villages has a high proportion of retired people - almost 30%.

In the 2016 Local Plan it states that; *“Uplyme as one of a number of settlements in the District that vary in size and character but all offer a range of accessible services and facilities to meet many of the everyday needs of local residents and they have reasonable public transport. They will have a Built-up Area Boundary that will be designated in the East Devon Villages Plan though they will not have land specifically allocated for development”*.

The strategic objectives are: a) To satisfy the diverse housing needs for all by meeting changing demographic and social requirements. b) To keep housing development to small scale and designed to a high quality which is sustainable, reflecting the local character and distinctiveness of the area. This is key as it will stop the village being consumed by Lyme Regis and protects the distinctiveness of the community.

Development at the Small Towns and Larger Villages

Following on from the previous Local Plan the following settlements vary in size and character but all offer a range of accessible services and facilities to meet many of the everyday needs of local residents and they have reasonable public transport. They will have a Built-up Area Boundary that will be designated in the East Devon Villages DPD.

These village small towns will not have land specifically allocated for development. This links in with localism agenda and the Neighbourhood Plan.

It also links to the Strategic Objectives as stated above, of a) To satisfy the diverse housing needs for all by meeting changing demographic and social requirements. b) To keep housing development to small scale and designed to a high quality which is sustainable, reflecting the local character and distinctiveness of the area.

- Beer
- Broadclyst
- Clyst St Mary
- Colyton
- East Budleigh
- Feniton
- Kilmington
- Lympstone
- Musbury
- Newton Poppleford
- Sidbury
- Uplyme
- West Hill
- Whimple
- Woodbury

The principle planning mechanism for communities is to produce a Neighbourhood Plan which justifies, how and why, in a local context, the developments will promote the objectives of sustainable development.

As stated previously, a 5% increase in the number of dwellings, providing they are of exceptional design quality would be considered reasonable over a period of 10 years. The decisions made at parish level, as an amendment of the Neighbourhood plan. The figure is derived from my own research, including reading various Neighbourhood Plans in East Devon..

Development in Large Towns

The Large Towns include: Budleigh Salterton, Axminster, Exmouth, Honiton, Ottery St Mary, Seaford and Sidmouth

Priority for larger scale development of over 50 dwellings should focus on Towns outside areas of outstanding Natural Beauty. Those within Towns immediately adjacent should be able to expand in a far more sensitive manner, including exceptional design standards, but these would be small scale schemes of no more than 20 dwellings.

Towns with good vehicular access and railway connectivity should be able to increase by 5% over the next 10 years. These being, Axminster, Honiton and Exmouth.

All towns should be able to utilise brown field sites for development first, including areas for employment.

Town Centre – would be a more flexible to new uses, including leisure, entertainment, new businesses / retail start-ups and pop-up shops, but with the focus on shopping, jobs and tourism. The Town Centre would be more concentrated if the fringe areas could change of use to residential.



Proposed Sherford, Town Centre

Critically, the Town Centre must be a desirable place, in terms of the visual appearance, space and its general environment and urban landscaping.

4 Transport and Infrastructure

Sustainable Transport

Each town, each school, health facility, leisure complex, hotel, must have secure cycle provision, especially for Electric Bicycles.

Towns over the size of 10,000 inhabitants should have a Railway Station, this policy would necessitate re-instating of the Sidmouth railway line to the national network. Every effort of the District Council should be made with Network Rail, to ensure this comes to fruition. In addition, a rail or Tram Link to the main network from Exeter Airport.

In addition a second railway station for Cranbrook East, as a priority.(Late 2022)

A new station for West Clyst Development by 2025

Set a target to achieve a network of off-main road cycle-ways, to interconnect main urban areas.

A comprehensive supply of Charging Points, in places of employment, in order for users to charge up at their work location when their residence does not have or it is problematic to have charging facilities.

All new housing developments should have charging points to each property.

School buses to be electric powered.

Railway Infrastructure

Whist it is not in the control of EDDC, it should be deemed an important element to work with Network Rail and South West Railways to achieve both a line of national importance and two lines of local importance.

- 1) That Axminster to Exeter St David's (Express Metro) should be duelling from Salisbury to Exeter Central.
- 2) The re- instigation of the Sidmouth branch line.(Population 13,280 – 2019)
- 3) Airport spur, from main line to Sky Park and to Airport Terminal, either linked directly to the main line or shuttle train or tram from a new West Clyst Station.
- 4) New East Cranbrook Station
- 5) New West Clyst Station
- 6) Re- instigation of the Chard Line, (Two miles short of the main line) with a population of 13,000, forming a terminal station for Eastern Arm of the Exeter Express Metro.

Railway infrastructure opportunities

The Department for Transport has invited MPs, local authorities and community groups across England and Wales to propose how they could use funding to reinstate axed local services and restore closed stations.



Only a single track.

The £500 million fund will also help accelerate the development of closed lines and stations which are already in the process of being considered for restoration proposals for new and restored stations.

The New Stations Fund supports both the development of new stations and restoration of old station sites. Within the 'Ideas Fund' it offers support to proposals to reinstate axed local services, which should be sponsored by MPs working with local authorities and community groups.

Road Infrastructure

Whilst the Trunk road infrastructure is the responsibility of the Department of Transport, it should be a desire of EDDC to improve the A303 and A30 by making it a dual carriageway road from Honiton to the boundary of the district at Ham, and into Somerset to Ilminster. In addition the A35 would benefit from improvements, as this is the major south coast trunk road to Kent.

Improve main road from M5 to Exmouth the largest Town in the District.

Increase in road width, within new developments.

Increase width of Local Distributor roads in new development.

Ensure robust good design standard for all new development in District. Outstanding design standards within Areas of outstanding Natural Beauty and in Conservation Areas

5 Thriving Communities

Future Job and Employment Land Provision

There is underutilised provision at Airport Business Park, Sky Park and at the science Park, for at least five years.

Cranbrook should have small business centres within each new neighbourhood area, linked to the neighbourhood shops. There should also be business accommodation in the New Town Centre.

Land could also be made available for employment opportunities, including business start-ups, near the Hilton Hotel, Exeter Airport

Resisting Loss of Employment, Retail and Community Sites and Buildings

The District must advertise, that East Devon is a great place to live, learn and work. However, there are a few major employers, within the district. These major employers including, education, institutions and national companies, have been the economic backbone of new town development in the UK. But, there wasn't a plan for Cranbrook other than the Science Park and the Sky Park. It is why Cranbrook is at present a suburb of Exeter.

The growth industry is Health and Social Care, as well as hospitality, which for the reasons that are very clear, has taken a dive, but will re-emerge.

Retail in town centres needs to concentrate in a core area, rather than be dispersed, this would allow former retail premises to be housing accommodation or business start-up premises, specialist small scale manufacturing. These should be built into the Local Plan as a type of use class zoning.

Community centres must survive, as they are socially and benefit citizen's well-being, with a positive knock-on to save money down the line, and flag up issues that need to be addressed. This will need funding by the local authority and NHS.

Promotion of Tourism in East Devon

It has long been argued for a permanent jetty at Sidmouth, to enhance coastal sea trips along the Jurassic Coast.

Touring Caravan Parks should be considered in a more favourable light than static vans.

Development for tourism should be coincided favourably even in areas of AONBs providing it is of outstanding design, exceptional landscaping and screening, especially in inland parts of the districts.



Good design holiday accommodation within AONB

More emphasis played on the World Heritage Status of East Devon Coast. Seaton's new Jurassic Centre is positive example of improving tourist facilities, as is the new café at the Donkey Sanctuary, at Sidmouth.

A Theme Park with affordable accommodation would be an asset for tourism in East Devon.

6 Climate Change and renewable energy

Sustainable Design and Construction

Sustainable design should be a criterion in which planning decisions are made. This would include sourcing of raw materials in construction, using local building materials, including stone. Timber should be sourced from renewable suppliers.

Passive house construction should also be a target technology within the Local Plan.

Heat pumps should be a preferred source of energy for house construction, as well as Solar Panels, which one could argue are less visibly appealing.

Five percent of the new housing stock in Cranbrook should be self-build projects (at least there would be some decent design.). This should also apply to all new developments of 50 houses and more.

Targets for Self-build should be part of the textual information within the Local Plan.

Coastal Erosion

Coastal erosion is having a profound effect on the Districts coastline. Schemes like the proposed work at Sidmouth is long overdue, as the waves have 'eaten' large chunks of new red sandstone away.

Some protection has been undertaken with the use of: 'Rock armour' or 'boulder barriers' - large boulders are piled up on the beach. Absorb the energy of waves and allows the build-up of a beach. Councillor Hughes says previous work has

shown the coastline at Sidmouth is receding by around two metres a year – but a rock revetment scheme could reduce this to 200mm. Hence the urgency of the scheme.

Schemes, like the River Otter at Budleigh Salterton, in which areas of the coast are allowed to flood naturally is significant. Usually this will be areas considered to be of low value. This would create salt marshes an important area of the natural environment, especially for wild life.



Mouth of the River Otter

Much of the coastline will naturally erode over time and providing this does not impact on population centres, or sensitive archaeological or historic landscapes, requires no intervention.

7 Outstanding Natural and Historic Environments

Open Space Standards

Excellence in design, management and maintenance of parks and public space in our towns and cities must be the target of EDDC.

One of the principal aims of any public authority is to improve quality of life and the importance on improving the experience of living in our towns and villages.

Open spaces, enhancing local neighbourhoods, make them more attractive and more joyful places in which to live. Good, proactive management of these open spaces today will leave a real legacy for those who come after us. Planting a tree today is our shade tomorrow.

Open spaces have had added value in terms of the current lockdown and Covid 19. These have greater importance, to how we see these areas. It can be a town square, track of riverside a municipal park or country park. Arguably, the most useful are those on our door step of where you live and where you work. These places still need to be designed carefully and maintained and care for.

More open spaces will be needed and the cooperation with land owners may be necessary. Gates need to be open to maximise this community asset.

Undeveloped Coast and Coastal Preservation Area

Undeveloped coast is a valuable asset to the District and to the United Kingdom and as such should be preserved. There does need to be parking provision in the proximity of the coast, but not necessarily on the coast. Foot paths should be the main means of access to undeveloped coast. There will be a need to ensure, any realignment of coastal paths is part of the textual information in the Local Plan.

A very limited number of visitor amenities should be permissible.

Landscape Conservation and Enhancement and AONBs

This broad category has major benefits to citizen's well-being, tourist industry and the local ecology and visual appearance of this part of the county.

Improved design standards for agricultural building.

Re-wilding of some parts of the district, using Knepp Estate in West Sussex as a case study. There is also a former Sandilands golf links in Lincolnshire that has recently been purchased by the Nation Trust to be left to become a wildlife area.

The River Axe may benefit from the re-introduction of Beavers, as in the case of the River Otters.

Work with Teignbridge District Council to improve the effectiveness and infrastructure of the dune system at Dawlish to protection the sand spit and dune system from erosion at the mouth of the river Exe.

Jurassic National Park

The coastline stretching from Exmouth to Poole Harbour, a distance of 95 miles, is a UNESCO world heritage site stretches known as the Jurassic Coast. This is not only a nation asset but is also of Global Significance.

Whist much of this area is of Outstanding Natural Beauty there is a case for the creation of the Jurassic National Park, within Devon and Dorset. Nation Park status would enhance the Tourist Industry and improve access to the countryside. It would take on a similar profile of focusing on a 10 – 15 Kilometre strip along the coast, like the Pembrokeshire Coastal National Park.

Local Distinctiveness in the Built Environment

It is reasonable for certain 'infilling' within built up areas proving it enhances the landscape value and 'blends' with the prevailing vernacular style, unless neighbouring structures have little architectural merit. In certain places there are specific styles of architecture. For example: the thatched village of Gittisham and Broadhembury, the regency style of Sidmouth and the Victorian seaside elements in Exmouth. Distinctiveness, can also be negative, as in the Residential Tower on

Seaton esplanade. I understand plans are underway to improve the visual appearance of this part of the Town.

The 'local Plan', should identify buildings of poor architectural merit that would benefit from redevelopment, which would guide town planners future decisions.

The Historic Environment

There are a large number of listed building in East Devon, these are building of special architectural or historic interest considered to be of national importance and therefore worth protecting. There are 54 Grade one, 186 Grade 2* and significant numbers of Grade 2 listed buildings. Amongst these are some outstanding Parish Churches.

Owners have a responsibility to take care of these historic properties and the planning department has a responsibility to 'police' this task.

Case Study

Tillhouse Farm. This Grade 2 'listed' building has remained in a derelict state for a number of years and it still is, and showing signs of dilapidation. This is a tragedy as this could provide a valuable resource to the new town and preserve a vital part of the built history of Cranbrook. It is also disappointing that land adjacent to Tillhouse Farms was built on rather than provide a Car Park for potential users of a community facility, which was planned to have small start-up business use. This act of what could be considered vandalism by a national house builder, beginning with 'P'. It is perhaps a deliberate attempt to demolish the building and not consider the potential for community use. The issue is not a question of blame, but to instigate the immediate reconstruction and conservation of this group of buildings, and be a lesson on how not to deal with Historic Buildings.

In the Cranbrook Master plan it states: *"there are potential opportunities to re-purpose agricultural buildings for cultural active and as visitor interpretation centres"*.

As part of historic landscape, mature orchards that surrounding Whimple, as being of significant value, linked to the National Brand of Whiteways Cider. These should be preserved with a Blanket TPO. If at some time the trees are past their productive age, then new planting of new apples and pear trees should be deemed appropriate.

There are a number of Iron Age Hill forts in the District, some of which have limited access and parking.

8 Development Management Policies

Design Standards

Design Review and national planning policy In March 2012 the Government published its National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This emphasises the

importance of sustainable development, and sets out 12 planning principles that should underpin both plan-making and decision-making.

The fourth of these principles and very relevant to EDDC, is that planning should: *“always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings”*

According to the Design Council: *“Local planning authorities should have local design review arrangements in place to provide assessment and support to ensure high standards of design. They should also, where appropriate refer major projects for a national Design Review. In general, early engagement on design produces the greatest benefits. In assessing applications, local planning authorities should have regard to the recommendations from the design review panel”*

Landscaping

Good, well planned and timely landscaping can enhance the setting of new buildings and enable them to be blend into surroundings. The guiding principle is to enhance urban areas.



Upton, West Northampton - Homes overlooking urban landscaped area

Tree planting and retention of trees in new developments is vital and a major part of a landscaping scheme. There has been some positive preservation of old hedges and trees in Cranbrook.

However, many new developments in the district do not have sufficient emphasis on Tree Planting, unlike other local authorities, including Milton Keynes.

Tree planting can also act as a ‘green buffer’ between housing developments, both within the development and for screening purposes.

Tree Planting in existing urban areas, including Town Centres, should be part of the local plan.

9 Conclusions

The creation of the EDDC Local Plan is the most important task of the Planning Department, each five years, as it sets the pattern for future development. It also set down key aims which effects each and every citizen in the district.

The above report is designed to provide the local Authority with a set of ideas and strategies that would be beneficial to the Council to developing the 'Local Plan'.

The biggest threat to the district is the massive demands for new housing, although this has been modified. Unlike the appalling, Greater Exeter Strategic Plan. The aim is to examine the entire district and have a far more balanced 'gradual approach. However, the local authority must stand firm against the aggression of some developers and the lack of decency and caring for the built environment.

We must have a quality of design that is right for East Devon, which is vernacular in style, it is distinctive and of significant merit. Building a future for the people of East Devon, that is decent, socially beneficial, economically buoyant and an outstanding place to live, work, learn and play.



Relaxing on the beach

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