

MINUTES

Committee: Planning Committee
Date: Monday, 5 December 2022
Time: 6.30pm
Venue: Younghayes Centre, 169 Younghayes Road, Cranbrook EX5 7DR

Present

Cllr Ray Bloxham (Chair)
Cllr Les Bayliss
Cllr Matt Bayliss
Cllr Kevin Blakey
Cllr Colin Buchan
Cllr Barry Rogers

Also Present

Cllr Kim Bloxham
Alexandra Robinson, Cranbrook Town Council

P/22/78 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies all were present.

P/22/79 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Cllr Kim Bloxham declared a personal interest by virtue of being a Member of East Devon District Council Planning Committee.

P/22/80 MINUTES

It was proposed by Cllr Colin Buchan, seconded by Cllr Kevin Blakey and **resolved** to accept and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 14th November 2022 as a correct record.

P/22/81 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None present.

P/22/82 MONITORING REPORT

The Chairman reported on items within the Monitoring Report:

(59) 22/2136/FUL 36 Books Warren. The committee noted the application had been refused at variance with the recommendations of the Planning Committee, albeit members of the committee had raised concerns about overbearing and loss of parking.

(60) The Committee had previously considered application 22/2248/FUL 36 Post Coach Way, for the provision of additional accommodation in the loft space to include front dormers and rear roof lights. EDDC re-consulted on the application because the description of the application on their website was originally inaccurate. There are no other changes to the application in this re-consultation. The committee previously resolved to support this application.

In considering the original application, the Committee relied on the plans which were accurate and not the description on the website. Therefore, the committee noted that the Council will not submit any further

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comments as the original comments to support remain valid and because this is essentially a tidying up exercise by the planning authority.

Items (52) and (53) South Whimble Farm, applications 20/2028/V106 and 20/1663/VAR the committee had previously expressed their disappointment that the development was proceeding despite the applications being as yet undetermined by the Local Planning Authority.

Following the Committee's request that the Council write to the three District Ward Members to raise concerns about apparent lack of planning control, there was a meeting with the Cranbrook New Community Manager who offered to provide an update in person to the Committee at a date to be agreed.

The Committee noted the updated Monitoring Report.

P/22/83 PLANNING APPLICATION – 22/2354/MFUL PARCELS TC5A, TC6 & TC7A TILLHOUSE ROAD, CRANBROOK TOWN CENTRE

The Committee considered the Planning Application for development of residential dwellings and associated car parking, roads, access, landscaping, infrastructure and engineering works (including ground modelling and utilities). For Parcels Tc5a, Tc6 & Tc7a Tillhouse Road Cranbrook Town Centre.

Members noted that the application adjoins application 22/2306/RES which the Committee considered on 14th November 2022 and **resolved to recommend refusal and object** on the following grounds:

- The proposed parking is inadequate and will lead to conflict at school drop off and pick up. The town council seeks assurances from the planning authority that there is a redesign of the parking strategy for residential and visitor parking to make adequate provision and that it will take account of future plans to expand the Education Campus;
- The design of the estate road that runs east / west along the northern border will lead to conflicts between vehicles and those walking and cycling especially to and from school;
- The housing is inappropriate and will further contribute to an unbalanced community.
- Clarity is sought on the prevention of damage to green spaces and verges by unauthorised parking. This should be designed out as far as possible to prevent impacts on the street scene and visual amenity;
- Adoption needs to be clarified, particularly any public open space that might be adopted by the Town Council including ensuring that it is accessible over public land;
- The Council is concerned about the design of the parcel as to how the integrity of the gas main is protected.

In reviewing the current application members noted that a number of these points were the same, namely

- The proposed parking strategy;
- The perpetuation of an unbalanced community;
- The protection of green spaces;
- Clarity on adoption; and additionally
- Adoption of drainage including responsibility for the proposed underground drainage tank in the public open space in front of the Education Campus.

The application seeks permission for 84 houses comprising a mixture of houses and apartments, providing 1, 2 & 3 bed properties. There are no affordable dwellings within this application. The properties generally have frontages onto either the Tillhouse Road or the public open space with vehicle access and parking provided in mews streets and parking courts to the rear. These mews streets/parking courts are broken-up where possible with pockets of soft landscaping and smaller dwellings providing active frontage onto these spaces. All dwellings will either have EV charging capability, or the provision for installation in future. In accepting that town centre densities will be higher than other areas of the town, that should not lead to a reduction in parking provision nor to development that is limited to small properties.

The committee noted that the application states that the units to the southern boundary of Parcel TC7a have been designed to minimise potential noise disturbance from the proposed skate park to the south.

Following consideration, it was proposed by Cllr Colin Buchan, seconded by Cllr Kevin Blakey and **resolved to recommend refusal and Object** on the following grounds:

- a. The proposed parking is inadequate and will lead to conflict at school drop off and pick up. The town council seeks assurances from the planning authority that there is a redesign of the parking strategy for

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residential and visitor parking to make adequate provision and that it will take account of future plans to expand the Education Campus;

- b. Rear parking courts are not supported as they are generally unpopular and underused leading to on street parking;
- c. The housing is inappropriate and will further contribute to an unbalanced community. Whilst greater density is expected in the town centre this does not mean that all of the properties need to be small.
- d. Clarity is sought on the prevention of damage to green spaces and verges by unauthorised parking. This should be designed out as far as possible to prevent impacts on the street scene and visual amenity. Areas of green space and landscaping separating parking areas need to be demised to residents;
- e. Adoption needs to be clarified, particularly any public open space that might be adopted by the Town Council including ensuring that it is accessible over public land;
- f. Adoption of drainage needs to be clarified particularly future responsibility for the drainage tank located in the public open space in front of the education campus.

P/22/84 PLANNING APPLICATION – 22/2563/TRE 143 YOUNGHAYES ROAD CRANBROOK

The Committee considered Planning Application for tree works submitted on behalf of the Town Council as set out:

Oak (A001) carry out lateral pruning around a streetlight to ensure the statutory highways clearance is met.

Carry out crown raising to ensure statutory highways are met over Bat Roosts

Elm (T003) Fell

Elm (T004) Fell

The Chairman advised that ordinarily the Committee may be minded to simply offer **no comment** on its own application and leave the matter in the hands of the Tree Officer at EDDC, however it was felt necessary to clarify the incorrect and misleading information both in the application and in its public consultation.

The Committee noted that with regard to the public consultation, the information available to the public falls short of the standard that should be attained and may have caused confusion as to what is actually proposed. This is not acceptable as tree works and particularly tree felling is an area that many members of the community are concerned about. Similarly, the description on the EDDC public planning website is as set out in the agenda, repeated above in the heading to this section of the report and highlighted below:

Oak (A001): carry out lateral pruning around a streetlight to ensure the statutory highways clearance is met. Carry out crown raising to ensure statutory highways clearances are met over ?Bats roost?

Elm (T003): Fell Elm (T004): Fell.

143 Younghayes Road Cranbrook Devon EX5 7DR

The application relates to four trees but the description above refers to just three. Apart from the reference to tree A001 the proposed work to each tree is confusing with no mention of tree replacement which is an integral part of the proposed work. The location of the application is given as 143 Younghayes Road which is the cafe.

Four documents are published on the website. The application, a sketch plan, a tree survey and a landscaping plan. An extract from the application describing the proposed work is as follows:

- ***Oak tree, carry out lateral pruning around a streetlight to ensure the statutory highways clearance is met.***
- ***Carry out crown raising to ensure statutory highways clearances are met over “Bats roost”***
- ***Fell of a dead elm tree***
- ***Fell of a dead elm tree and replace using species- New Horizon Elm***

It is not possible to be clear on the proposals from the information given in the application form and whilst the application mentions photographs, which the contractors acting for the Town Council submitted these have not been published in the consultation. The application does not tie the work to the location of each tree nor to its tree number so the reader cannot determine which trees are to be cut back or felled. The tree numbers where provided are incorrect. The inclusion of the tree survey is understood but this does not identify the trees to be worked on.

To clarify for the committee, the proposed tree work is as follows:

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Tree Number	Tree Species	Location	Proposal
A001	Oak	Barn Orchard Public Open Space (Southern end).	Lateral pruning around street lamp
T003	Elm	Hayes Square POS	Fell and replace with New Horizon Elm
T004	Elm	Bats Roost	Fell
A005	Oak	Langworthy Orchard	Crown raising to ensure statutory clearances are met.

Following consideration, it was proposed by Cllr Les Bayliss, seconded by Cllr Barry Rogers and **resolved** to a) to offer no comment on the specific proposals for tree works as the Town Council is the applicant and

b) to request that the Chair and Clerk raise the question of the quality of the application and of the consultation with both the Town Council's Contractor and the Local Planning Authority.

P/22/85 EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL – DRAFT LOCAL PLAN 2040

The Chairman advised that East Devon District Council are consulting on the draft Local Plan to 2040 and invited the Committee to consider the Town Council's response to the document. The Committee considered the report and the Town Council's response on behalf of Cranbrook, noting that the consultation period expired on 15th January 2023.

In summary, Cranbrook is not specifically addressed in this local plan. The Cranbrook plan was adopted in autumn 2022 and the Cranbrook Plan will oversee its development until this local plan and the Cranbrook Plan are superseded by a subsequent local plan that will follow that being consulted upon. It is proposed that the two plans (Local Plan to 2040 and the Cranbrook Plan) will operate in parallel.

Cranbrook is mentioned within the draft Local Plan but generally as an exception to the policies put forward. Whilst development in Cranbrook does not feature in the consultation draft, the strategic direction of the Plan and its overriding spatial strategy is to focus new development on the western side of the district including a new town and other major strategic developments close to Exeter.

The Vision and Objectives of the Plan are outlined in Chapter 2 and seek to deliver better homes and communities, a greener East Devon and a resilient economy are a vision that we can all subscribe to.

Specific objectives include:

- designing for health and well being;
- tackling the climate emergency;
- meeting future housing needs;
- supporting jobs and the economy;
- promoting vibrant town centres;
- designing beautiful and healthy spaces and buildings;
- our outstanding built heritage and natural environment;
- promoting sustainable transport; and
- connections and infrastructure supporting sustainable and thriving villages.

The difficulty is that the plan is site led and stems from land that is put forward by land owners and developers for development. This approach to plan making (which is common to recent East Devon local plans) constrains strategic thinking and strategic development. The result is that the plan is parochial and, most likely, the response to it will be parochial.

One of the key issues with any local plan is housing numbers. These attract a degree of criticism and objection. In essence EDDC has no choice in this matter and is required to deliver the numbers dictated to it by Government. The issues raised by the plan therefore are not about housing numbers but more about housing allocation and the strategy within which it is delivered.

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Given the scale of required development in the region, the approach of delivering a substantial percentage through a new settlement is probably the right way forward. The alternative is to add reasonably substantial additional housing to existing settlements and that approach would simply overrun existing infrastructure whilst not attracting the financial resources to improve it sufficiently.

The problem with the approach in the plan is two fold. Firstly it is not addressing the strategic infrastructure needs that will be required to underpin a new settlement on land to the south-east of Exeter and, secondly, it is not learning the lessons from the development of Cranbrook.

Given the current highway limitations and congestion around the A376 and A3052 there is a need to substantially improve the transport connectivity in that part of the District. One can have real sympathy with local residents living in that locality when they object to the development proposals (as they surely will) that are not properly underpinned with how the additional demands on infrastructure can be met. The highway infrastructure in that part of East Devon is already at or near capacity with lengthy delays at peak times. Existing public transport in that area is not a viable alternative to the car and that needs to be addressed. There is a distinct lack of vision to create a transport system around Exeter that is both efficient and affordable. Other European Cities manage it, why not here.

Clear collaboration with Exeter and its immediate travel to work area is required. It should be the starting point for this plan. Opportunities have been lost with the withdrawal from the work on the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan. This needs to be revived if the Plan is to succeed.

Cranbrook was conceived as a private development with developers delivering the strategy. The Planning Authority, whilst overseeing planning applications did not, and is not, exercising any authority as a development corporation and that omission is quite apparent. Equally both District and County Councils have withdrawn into their statutory responsibilities with regards to the Town which delivers a two-tier service within East Devon with Cranbrook expected to pay for itself and at the same time support the remainder of the District financially. If this approach is repeated in the new settlement the same mistakes will arise.

One of the very big errors in Cranbrook was attempting to manage public amenities through an estate rent charge and management company. This approach was grossly expensive to residents and provided a very poor service to the community. The Local Plan should address the issue of management companies and estate rent charges in relation to larger development. The approach does not work and Cranbrook proved that. Other Districts have addressed this point, but the draft local plan does not despite this being raised with the Planning Authority ahead of the local plan work.

Following consideration, it was proposed by Cllr Ray Bloxham seconded by Cllr Colin Buchan and **resolved** to respond to the draft local plan in the terms set out in the report above.

The meeting closed at 6:59pm.

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