



Minutes of Crediton Town Council's Policy & Forward Planning Committee, held on Tuesday, 5th April 2016, at 6.00 pm, at the Council Offices, Market Street, Crediton

Present: Cllrs Mrs L Brookes-Hocking (Committee Chairman), Mr A Wyer, Mr D Webb, Mr Bill Dixon, Mrs A Hughes and Mr N Way
Ms Helen Govier, Planning Officer, Mid Devon District Council
Mr James Gibbs, Director of Development Land and New Homes at Jackson-Stops & Staff
Mr Alex Wozniczko, Associate Director, Awcock Ward Partnership
Mr Oliver Taylor, Strategic Land Manager, Gleeson Developments
Mr Simon Niles, Strategic Planner, Children's Services, Devon County Council
Mr Gerald Conyngham, Welcoming Refugees in Crediton
Mrs Anne Varker, Welcoming Refugees in Crediton

In Attendance: Mrs Clare Dalley, Town Clerk
1 member of the press
16 members of the public

102 To receive and accept apologies

It was **resolved** to accept apologies from Cllr F Letch. (Proposed by Cllr Webb)

103 Declarations of Interest

None declared.

104 To discuss the proposed Creedy Bridge development with representatives of Gleeson Developments, Mid Devon District Council's Area Planning Officer and Devon County Council's Strategic Planner - Children's Services & Crediton Locality Lead.

Cllr Brookes Hocking explained the Policy & Forward Planning Committee's remit and the reasons for inviting Gleeson Developments to the meeting. She explained that Crediton has seen relatively little development in comparison to other towns due to its topography. She gave an overview of the current position of the Crediton Neighbourhood Plan explaining that it has to be in general conformity with the Local Plan, which has to conform to the National Planning Policy Framework. There is an assumption in favour of sustainable development.

To put the meeting in context Cllr Brookes-Hocking advised that whilst Crediton Town Councillors may disagree with the development, the site has been approved for development, therefore the Council wish to talk to the developers about how the site is developed in order to make it work and to prevent the current problems we have in Crediton, such as cars driving round on short trips, being exacerbated.

In order to gain an understanding of the reason for the large public attendance, she asked those present to confirm their reason for attending the meeting and asked if there were any questions before the item commenced. Members of the Creedy Valley Protection Group were invited to speak for 3 minutes. They declined advising that they are not making a statement as they haven't heard enough to do so.

Mid Devon District Councillor Judi Binks asked if Cllr Brookes-Hocking had advised everyone present that the development falls outside of the Crediton Town boundary. Cllr Brookes-Hocking confirmed the development was within Sandford Parish but will impact on Crediton.

There were questions from members of the public relating to the planning process and timescales. Representatives of Gleeson developments advised that there are still issues that need to be settled with

Initials... *elllett*

Mid Devon District Council and Devon County Council and they would anticipate submitting an application in June/July.

Mr Oliver Taylor, Strategic Land Manager at Gleeson Developments gave an overview of the feedback from the public consultation, a copy of the findings are attached as Appendix One.

Questions were then asked about the development by Councillors and the public. These included, density, housing mix, design, layout and highways issues.

Cllr Brookes-Hocking expressed concern regarding the proposed changes to the Crediton setting and road pattern. Mr Wozniczko, advised that the road design and pattern had been led by Devon County Council as the local Highway Authority. He advised a single point of access via a roundabout is required; the guidance states that there must be a feature in the road that forces a reduction in speed and a roundabout provides access to the site and slows the traffic. In terms of pedestrian access, that is at same location. He advised that Devon County Council want improvements to the location on Exhibition Road and they will be meeting them on Friday, 8th April 2016 to discuss this further.

Mr Wozniczko also advised that the policy requires improvements to Stonewall Lane by enhancing passing opportunities rather than whole scale widening, in order to preserve hedgerows and trees. They were also asked by Devon County Council to consider closing the last section of Pedlarspool Lane. He confirmed they have been talking with Devon County Council for several months and hope most of the details will be agreed before the planning application is submitted.

Gleeson Developments confirmed they are aware that Crediton Town Council has concerns regarding connectivity and would like the Town Council's ideas to improve this and if Devon County Council accepts the ideas they can take them forward in the scheme.

Cllr Dixon asked numerous questions, including the variations in the three different concepts presented at the public consultation, the definition of care units and what employment was going to be provided on site *and whether DCC had approved the road scheme.* *and who will provide them*

Mr Taylor advised that Gleeson Developments could have presented only one scheme, but they wanted to give the community the opportunity to influence the proposals by looking at different elements and commenting on what they felt was most appropriate. They are hoping to have resolutions on the school and gypsy/traveller site in the next few weeks.

Mr Niles advised that Devon County Council had requested an area of land was allocated for a new primary school, as this site was seen as the best and largest site to provide an additional school. It is important that the emerging local plan has a site identified. Whether the school is built will depend on demographics. Devon County Council is taking a strategic overview of Crediton and wants full and sustainable schools. With the level of housing proposed for Crediton it will be needed.

Mr Taylor confirmed the site allocation suggests 21,000 sqm. of employment should be provided on site, however, Mid Devon District Council accepts this site is not the right location for employment land. To this end it has accepted a trade-off for extra care units which will provide employment. Extra care is a model of housing tenure requiring people to stay in their own homes for independent living meaning they don't need to be upheaved to a care home. People have to qualify to occupy them, so they have to need a minimum of 2.5 hours of care per week. A private care provider will operate this service.

Mr Taylor confirmed the housing mix on the site will be broad with 2,3 and 4 bedroom dwellings, this is a Mid Devon District Council policy requirement. The variation on dwelling numbers depends on what else is provided on site.

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Cllr Hughes asked what other traffic calming schemes there will be, such as pelican crossings, traffic lights and asked how Crediton will be kept moving.

Mr Wozniczko confirmed a nationally recognised method is used whereby traffic information from similar sites is used to gain an average indication of traffic movements. He added that over the last few years trip rates have been decreasing due to numerous factors such as shift workers and those working from home. It is expected there will be 160-180 car movements at peak periods. Devon County Council have also requested a transport assessment at three locations within Crediton and these findings will be run through a model. Devon County Council have not asked Gleeson Developments to carry out any traffic calming, but they have been asked to look at a pedestrian crossing on Exhibition Road and this will be the subject of discussion with Devon County Council at the meeting on Friday.

Cllr Wyer expressed concern that residents of this proposed development will not be able to access Crediton's good public transport links without using a car. Mr Wozniczko advised that Mid Devon District Council would have considered this when the site was assessed for the local plan and the distances are within the accepted tolerances and national guidance. Cllr Wyer concluded this was a fundamental opinion difference, which was a national guidance issue.

Cllr Wyer advised that the feedback received from the Neighbourhood Plan Household Survey was that Crediton had a good sense of community however this development is over the hill and far away, as although it's part of Crediton it's not. There appears to be no sensible linking between this estate and Crediton infrastructure. Mr Wozniczko accepted there are connectivity issues with the site and this is something they are still investigating and they are happy to listen to suggestions.

There was then discussion regarding how Devon County Council has a history of heavily engineered road junctions and gateways to towns. This particular site is situated between parks and should be treated sensitively. Mr Wozniczko stated that there are schemes that can be done more sympathetically but their hands are tied by the Highway Authority. It was recognised by all that further conversation needed to be had between Crediton Town Council, Gleeson Developments, Sandford Parish and officers at Devon County Council Highways to address some of these issues.

Comments and questions raised by the public included:

- parking issues when there are rugby matches, the new estate will be full of parked cars
- the redirection of traffic from Pedlarspool Lane through the proposed new estate, especially silage tractors and trailers
- the statistics for the GP surgeries being incorrect
- The development will be a desecration of an area of beauty
- Crediton does need homes but there are other sites
- Suggesting people walk 20 minutes up hill to public transport on busy roads with narrow pavements is ludicrous
- The sewage system is at capacity
- GP's surgeries are at capacity
- Damage to protected species
- Flooding issues

Cllr Brookes-Hocking thanked everyone for attending and participating.

12 members of the public left the meeting.

105 To receive a presentation from the 'Welcoming Refugees in Crediton' group.

Cllr Brookes-Hocking welcomed Mr Gerald Conyngham and Mrs Ann Varker, representatives of the Welcoming Refugees in Crediton group. Mrs Varker explained that the Group had been set up in order to respond to residents' concerns regarding the Syrian refugee crisis and to explore what action can be

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taken in Crediton to respond to it.

Mr Conyngham gave a brief overview of the national picture. The government has agreed to take 20,000 Syrian refugees, mainly through local authorities agreeing to be sponsoring authorities. So far, only 1,000 people have come in to the country. Within Devon, Exeter and Plymouth City Councils have agreed to be sponsoring authorities. The Welcoming Refugees in Crediton group wrote to the Leader of Mid Devon District Council asking for Mid Devon to be a sponsoring authority. The District Council said no.

There is also an alternative scheme called community sponsorship. However, for any/either of these schemes to happen, the community has to be able to demonstrate that there is support in Crediton. The Group is currently designing a simple form for people to complete to show how they will help and support refugees through accommodation, English lessons etc.

The Group would like the support of Crediton Town Council. If Crediton can demonstrate strong support, Mid Devon District Council should reconsider its view.

Cllr Way advised that he had questioned why empty care homes couldn't be used to house some of the refugees, but he had not received an answer.

It was also suggested that the Town Council may need to consider additional support for CISCO if the Town is able to welcome refugees.

Mr Conyngham confirmed that at a meeting in October 2015, QE Academy had offered a number of places for Syrian unaccompanied children. This hasn't happened yet, due to funding issues and the need to have a provision in place for the young people during school holidays when the boarding house is closed.

It was resolved for Crediton Town Council to fully accept and support the Welcoming Refugees in Crediton group. (Proposed by Cllr Webb)

Mr Conyngham and Mrs Varker left the meeting.

2 member of the public left the meeting.

106 Public Question Time - To receive questions from members of the public relevant to the work of the Committee. A member of the public asked why the Council Offices could not be used to accommodate the Police. Cllr Brookes-Hocking advised that this option was being explored.

107 Order of Business

Cllr Way advised that he needed to leave the meeting early. In view of this, it was resolved to change the order of business and to bring forward 'To receive an update on the road widening scheme at Marsh Lane and the Town Council's request for the installation of a safe crossing place between the junction of Hawkins Way and the Leisure Centre' as the next item of business. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking)

108 To receive an update on the road widening scheme at Marsh Lane and the Town Council's request for the installation of a safe crossing place between the junction of Hawkins Way and the Leisure Centre. Copies of correspondence received from Mr Lewis Ward, Devon County Council, and Mr Steve Densham, Mid Devon District Council, had been issued with the agenda. Cllr Way advised that Mr Ward and Mr Densham had met again and ironed out a few more issues, however, nothing has been decided as yet and the matter is being referred to Mid Devon District Council's Asset Committee. Devon County Council is convinced there is a way round the issue of traffic passing the Meadow Suite.

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Cllr Way advised that Mr Ward is leaving Devon County Council's employment and it is currently unclear who will be taking on his work. The Clerk confirmed she would contact Mr Ward and Mr Densham for detailed updates and to establish who would be replacing Mr Ward on this particular project.

109 Chairman's and Clerk's Announcements

Cllr Brookes-Hocking thanked Councillors for their patience with the first part of the meeting. Cllr Dixon thanked Cllr Brookes-Hocking for allowing everyone to express their views and for allowing sufficient time for the item.

110 Policy & Forward Planning Committee Minutes – To approve and sign the minutes of the Policy & Forward Planning Committee Meeting held on 1st March 2016.

Copies had been circulated with the agenda. It was resolved to approve the minutes of the Policy & Forward Planning Committee Meeting held on 1st March 2016, as a correct record and they were duly signed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking. (Proposed by Cllr Hughes)

111 Matters Arising

Minute Number 91 - Cllr Dixon requested an update relating to Minute number 82. The Clerk advised that she and Cllr Letch had attended a very positive meeting with Em Wilkinson-Brice, Deputy Chief Executive/Chief Nurse at Royal Devon & Exeter Foundation NHS Trust, and discussed 'delivering differently'. Cllr Brookes-Hocking confirmed she was liaising with Dr Jo Harris.

Minute Number 97 - Cllr Wyer requested an update. The Clerk advised she had spoken to Crediton Chamber of Commerce who had advised that they believe the current CCTV set up is not much use. They believe there is no real crime issue in the High Street and advised that they do not have funds nor feel it is necessary to set up a whole new updated system. The conclusion was to keep the cameras as a deterrent.

112 To receive an update from Cllr Brookes-Hocking on the Landscore Primary School travel plan.

Cllr Brookes-Hocking advised that the School has confirmed it had as much information as it can reasonably obtain from parents. The issue remains that there is a significant proportion of children being driven a short distance to school and the reason for this needs to be established. Cllr Brookes Hocking will liaise with the Mr Read, Head teacher at Landscore, about how this can be done.

113 To receive an update on the recent Highways Conference attended by Cllrs Brookes-Hocking and Dixon and agree any actions required. Cllrs Brookes-Hocking and Dixon confirmed they had attended the recent Highways Conference. Cllr Dixon advised that he would prepare a report for the Clerk to circulate.

114 To receive an update from the Clerk on the closure of MDDC's Crediton service and the Town Council office relocation. The Clerk confirmed the move had taken place and the majority of the boxes had been unpacked. She said special thanks to the Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor, for her efficiency and professionalism during the move. The Clerk advised there are ongoing issues with BT changing the telephone line and number over to the new office, but hopefully this will be resolved over the next few days. In the meantime, the Town Council was not receiving any incoming calls.

115 To receive an update on the progress of the feasibility study being carried out by Devon Communities Together, regarding Crediton Town Council taking on the ownership and management of the Mid Devon District Council Market Street building, and to consider and agree any further actions required. The Clerk advised that the 'Building for Real' workshop had taken place on Thursday, 10th March 2016. The next meeting of the Feasibility Steering Group is scheduled for Wednesday, 6th April and further information will be available after this date.

Initials... *Ellett*

116 To consider the need for the Town Council to formulate a Community Resilience Plan.

Cllr Wyer advised that he had recently attended Flood Warning Training at Tiverton. This, combined with his involvement in the Exeter University Flood defence project, had brought him to the conclusion that the Town Council should devise a 'Community Resilience Plan'. The plan would cover most emergency situations such as extensive flooding, storm damage, deep snow, power outage or major incident. It was agreed by all members present that a community resilience plan was required. The Clerk advised that Devon Communities Together had a substantial amount of information available on their website and confirmed she would circulate further information for Councillors to read. The Clerk also advised that devising a plan will require voluntary input from the community and will require some detailed work to be undertaken. The Clerk requested that such a project was not started until after the Council's summer recess (August), due to the current workload and capacity. It was resolved for the Clerk to circulate further information on community resilience planning to committee members and to commence work on the project after August 2016. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking)

117 To receive an update on the progress of Crediton Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr Brookes-Hocking advised that the plan was progressing and shortly the aims and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan would be widely publicised. She warned that there was no news of the District Council's Local Plan proceeding with any speed.

Cllr Brookes-Hocking said that as a result of meetings she had attended with the developers of Wellparks, in her capacity as Crediton Neighbourhood Plan Chairman, it was now hoped that a round table discussion with Mr Ian Sorensen, Development Management Officer at Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council Planners, local developers, Crediton Town Council and Crediton Neighbourhood Plan representatives could take place. It is hoped these discussion will help positively shape, amongst other things, design and connectivity issues of new/proposed developments.

Cllr Wyer asked if the local bike shops were aware of the new bike scheme. With a possible 600 new homes in Crediton this could be an excellent business opportunity for them.

118 To discuss this Committee's aims and objectives for the next six years in order for them to be considered in the development of Crediton Town Council's Strategic Plan.

There were no further matters to be discussed on this item.

119 Close

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm

Signed...



Date: 03/05/2016 (Chairman)