

## **ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING**

**28 May 2021**

### **Member Questions**

#### **Question from Cllr Morgan**

##### **SAVING OUR PRECIOUS NATIONAL PARKS**

*Does the Leader of the Council agree that our precious National Parks, including Dartmoor and Exmoor, are loved by millions and used by many thousands of people?*

*Is the Leader aware that the LOCAL Park Authorities comprise LOCAL representatives who know and serve the community and keep LOCAL oversight of Dartmoor National Park and Exmoor National Park?*

*Further, is he aware that the Government is understood to be considering setting up a National Landscape Service which would centralise services under one, nationally run, new organisation and does he regard this as a positive reform?*

#### **Response from the Leader**

The potential threat to the future of Dartmoor National Park, and the other national parks such as Exmoor, is one that should concern us all.

It is difficult to see how a new national organisation, perhaps based in London or the north, could possibly hope to match the work done by Dartmoor National Park Authority. I fear a National Landscape Service would simply wipe away any local engagement and involvement in the management and conservation of Dartmoor. That would be a huge detriment.

#### **Question from Cllr Nutley**

##### **Protecting Dartmoor National Park**

*Is the Leader of the Council aware that the 2019 Conservative Party Manifesto stated that “the days of Whitehall knows best are over” (p.26) and pledged to give communities of all sizes far more control.*

*Should we question how a centralist National Landscapes Service would achieve this compared to the existing National Park Authorities.*

*Does the Leader agree that the move is contrary to international good practice in the management of protected landscapes which emphasises the importance of management being undertaken with and through local people and mainly for and by them.*

*Would the Leader agree that locally run and locally manager National Parks are able to respond in the most appropriate way to their own unique qualities and without the burden and red-tape of national management.*

*What action can Teignbridge District Council take to protect and support Dartmoor National Park?*

### **Response from the Leader**

I do agree that a locally run and managed National Park is the best option. It seems to me that it has worked well for the past six decades and I'm sure most people in Devon do not want to see the park authority swept away and Dartmoor managed by an anonymous quango sat in London, or somewhere else. As a council, I hope we will want to support the Dartmoor National Park Authority in its lobbying to oppose the creation of a National Landscape Service. As Leader, with agreement from the council, I will also take up the issue with local Members of Parliament as, ultimately, the decision will be made by the Government.

### **Questions from Cllr Bullivant**

*Given the council provided financial support towards the delivery of the A382 improvements and now the stage 1 improvements are running 9 months behind schedule can TDC confirm the anticipated dates for completion of stage 1, and the start and completion dates for stages 2,3 and 4.*

*Also, Will TDC be required to provide any additional funding, has funding for Stages 2,3 and 4 been secured?*

### **Response from the Executive Member for Planning**

A summary of the latest position with overall improvements in this area is available on Devon County Council's website at the link below:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/traffic-information/transport-planning/a382-corridor/>

Phase 1 of the A382 improvements between Forches Cross and Whitehill Cross is now complete. Teignbridge agreed a contribution of £5.1m in 2019 and no further funding is required for this part of the project.

The Drumbridges to Forches Cross section and Jetty Marsh Link both benefit from planning permission. Together with improvements along Exeter Road, these sections of the A382 corridor have secured funding from the Department for Transport on the Major Road Network bid this week [Government announces £38 million for major new Devon road scheme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

The start and end dates of these next phases of the A382 improvements will now be programmed.

A local contribution towards the remaining A382 improvements is likely to be required. Teignbridge and Devon will continue to work together in order to determine the best solution. An in-principle commitment has already been made to direct up to £6.55m of the Housing Infrastructure Fund loan from South West Exeter towards this project. This funding will become available once the loan starts to be recovered from developers there.

The first phase of the new Houghton Barton link road between Forches Cross and Ashburton Road is now under construction. Teignbridge has taken an innovative approach and agreed to provide up to £1.25 million towards these works. Once the new neighbourhood there is under construction, the developers will pay us back and also be required to complete remaining sections of the link.

*Can the executive confirm how many building sites with 50+ houses have been under construction since 2016, How many of these sites continued working through the pandemic Can the executive confirm how many quarterly site visits have been made since 2016?*

### **Response from the Executive Member for Planning**

Post 2016 there have been 20 planning permissions issued of 50 or more dwellings.

SWE1 – 6 approvals

NA1 – 1 Approval

NA2 – 1 Approval

NA3 – 2 Approvals

DA2 – 3 Approvals

CH1 – 1 Approval

CH4 – 1 Approval

KK1- 1 Approval

BT3 – 1 Approval

KS6 – 2 Approvals

Exeter Road, Kingsteignton – 1 Approval

Whilst there were lockdown periods where development halted on many sites last year, development has generally continued.

A total of 426 homes were completed in the year to March 2021, which is around one third fewer than the average number of homes built across the district since the Local Plan was adopted. Housing completions data is gathered from a range of sources, including building control records and feedback from the developer sales offices.

11 of these schemes have commenced on site.

5 of these sites have been visited at least once with a total of 13 visits across these 5 sites.

There remain 4 sites that need visits to be carried out (Colway Lane, Chudleigh; Penns Mount (Kier), Kingsteignton; Potters Lea, Kingsteignton; and, Gatehouse Farm, Dawlish)

Site	Number of visits to date	Ward Members present?
Hele Park, Newton Abbot	4	Yes
Whitehill NA2, Newton Abbot	5	Yes
Challabrook BT3, Bovey Tracey	2	No
Victoria Heights SWE	1	No
Rocklands, Chudleigh	1 (with a further postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions)	No

Officers are in regular contact with developers of active sites and with the final easing of lockdown and a return to normality post pandemic, Officers will be looking to catch up on outstanding visits over the next 6 months. They will continue with regular visits going forwards on a quarterly basis on all relevant sites.

Members have not been present at all visits but officers will ensure invites to relevant meetings are issued to members in the future.

### **Question from Cllr Mullone**

*We are all aware of the flurry of anxious emails that preceded this meeting, making it quite clear that many members still worry about Covid 19. No doubt this anxiety extends to all the Novel viruses that are certain to follow it in coming decades.*

*It is the scientific consensus that Covid-19, like Ebola, SARS, hantavirus, MERS, Marburg and bird flu before it, were created by human expansion putting extreme stress on natural environments so that animal diseases are shaken loose from their hosts in favour of humans. This has happened in the Navajo desert, in the rainforests of Gabon and in temperate countries like ours. There is no place on earth where a new pathogen cannot emerge from degraded habitat.*

*The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that three-quarters of “new or emerging” diseases that infect humans originate in animals under stress from human expansion.*

*I must therefore ask whether this inconvenient truth has been considered at all in the recently published Chapter 4 of the Local Plan, ‘Housing options in the heart of Teignbridge’; some of the ‘options’ being clearly horrific from an environmental point of view and apparently dangerous in terms of the massive burden they will place on bat populations – the suggestion we concrete at the primary roost of Conitor Copse is particularly sickening (and I use that word pointedly).*

*Is this council comfortable that it is suggesting developments that are not just contrary to its purported willingness to tackle Climate Change, but which may be seen in years to come as biologically delinquent?*

### **Response from Executive Member for Planning**

The Local Plan process requires the Council to assess all sites that have been submitted to it for potential future development.

This consultation includes sites that have been identified as potentially developable through the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment. If anyone has concerns about any site in the document they are invited to submit their comments as part of the consultation.

The responses to the consultation will be used to refine the Plan and, along with other technical appraisals of the sites, identify which sites should be included in the Local Plan that will be submitted for independent examination.

If sites haven't been properly assessed and tested before the submission of the Plan it could result in the Plan being found deficient by the Independent Inspector, and either rejected outright or the Council being required to undertake further consultation and work. Such delays in the adoption of a new Plan will only serve to weaken the Council's position in negotiating on future planning applications and resisting development proposals that may not otherwise have been included in the Plan.

The inclusion of a site in this consultation does not indicate the Council's final preference or policy.

### **Question from Cllr Bradford**

*I would like to ask TDC why they are supporting animal cruelty?  
Three horses have been euthanised at the three meetings already held this season.  
At the end of last season three horses were euthanised in one afternoon. Fifty seven horses have been raced to their deaths at Newton Abbot Racecourse since 2007.*

### **Response from the Leader**

The assertion made in this question is rejected.

For clarity, Teignbridge Council does not support animal cruelty.

Councils are now required to once more meet in person. Use of the buildings at the racecourse is the most practical option in terms of available space, given the necessity for socially distanced meetings to help keep everyone as safe as possible.

Council policy, for example, does not permit the use of Teignbridge owned land by circuses and, additionally, hunting is not permitted on council land.

### **Question from Cllr Daws**

*Could I ask the Council to reassure the public that now the future high street fund grant has been confirmed, that they will use their very best endeavours to secure an outcome that preserves the integrity of the interior and function of the Grade 2 listed theatre that is the Alexandra?*

**Response from Executive Member for Economy and Jobs**

The Market Hall and Alexandra Cinema are listed in its entirety, based on the original Corn Exchange, not as two separate buildings. The proposals will be developed in full awareness of the building's historic character, while acknowledging that there are a number of later additions and changes within and to the building that have been less than sympathetic.

The proposals for the building will be subject to future engagement, and any significant changes to the building will require Listed Building Consent, which ensures there is significant public scrutiny of any plans. We will always work to bring forward the best plans for the building and the town, to deliver on the ambition for Newton Abbot to be the 'Premier Market Town in Devon.