

EXECUTIVE

LEADER: Cllr Jeremy Christophers

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Cllr Humphrey Clemens

DATE: 4 September

REPORT OF: Simon Thornley, Business Manager Strategic Place

SUBJECT: GREATER EXETER STRATEGIC PLAN: UPDATE AND VISION

PART I

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is recommended to resolve that

1. The Greater Exeter Strategic Plan document “Our Vision and how we make it real” attached as Appendix A to this report is agreed as the basis for public consultation; and
2. Modifications to the draft consultation document can be made with the agreement of the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, jointly with the equivalent Portfolio Holders in the other GESP local planning authorities.

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide an update on the progress of preparing the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP) and to recommend that a public consultation on a new vision for the plan, together with engagement on homes and infrastructure matters is held in October and November 2018.

2. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The four Local Planning Authorities of East Devon, Exeter City, Mid Devon and Teignbridge confirmed that they will prepare a joint plan to cover strategic matters for their area, known as the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP). Devon County Council has supported the progress, and joint funding and staffing arrangements have been set up. An “Issues” consultation was undertaken in 2017, which included an earlier draft vision. Responses to that consultation can be read on the website www.gesp.org.uk together with other GESP information.
- 1.2 The joint GESP team has been preparing evidence (including procuring it from consultants) and considering the responses received. The aim is to prepare a draft plan for consultation in the summer of 2019, in line with the most recently

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agreed Local Development Scheme. A number of the completed studies can be found on the GESP website and more will be published between now and the draft plan consultation.

- 1.3 During the issues consultation, comments were sought on the vision, and in relation to housing and infrastructure policy. Given this interest, and the further work now undertaken on these matters, an additional consultation event is now proposed to engage further on these matters in advance of consulting on a draft plan.

3. MAIN IMPLICATIONS

“Consultation: Our Vision and how we make it real”

- 1.4 The work undertaken, and the issues raised during previous consultations have resulted in the recommendation for a further consultation on the specific issues covered in this consultation.
- 1.5 The consultation will be held between 5 October and 30 November 2018. The draft consultation leaflet attached as Appendix A to this report will provide the basis of the consultation. This contains some explanatory text and diagrams to prompt people to respond. It will be accompanied by a more detailed infrastructure evidence document, to which people will be signposted during the consultation.
- 1.6 As a joint consultation document, the four GESP local planning authorities will need to sign it off before it is formally published. This should happen during meetings in September, allowing the October consultation date. The recommendation includes a mechanism to allow further modifications to the document before it is finally published. This allows for minor changes such as typos, etc. It also ensures that a recommended change to the document by one authority does not hold up the consultation by requiring a further round of committee meetings to agree the change.

Vision

- 1.7 The previous consultation included a draft vision and responses provided views on whether it was appropriate for guiding the future of the Greater Exeter area up to 2040. The responses have been analysed and published on the GESP website as part of the ‘summary of responses’. Comments were varied but feedback suggested that the vision should be more locally specific and include more specific targets. In this context, the vision has been reviewed and is now separated into three sections covering ‘the plan’, ‘the place’ and ‘the priorities’. This explains the role of the plan, what kind of place we are trying to create and the key priorities to make this happen.

Transport

- 1.8 Transport investment generates significant interest and debate, and is an important element of delivery the GESP vision of an “accessible and networked

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city region". The consultation will set out the main concepts and elements of a potential transport strategy for Greater Exeter. Like other forms of infrastructure, this will need continued work alongside the spatial development strategy leading to the draft plan. The transport approach concentrates on an avowedly sustainable approach to movement, and seeks to harness the swift technology changes affecting the transport sector, tying in with the digital theme of the vision.

Infrastructure

- 1.9 The consultation provides information regarding recently provided and currently planned infrastructure to provide a context for GESP strategy. The financial considerations are highly relevant given the cost of infrastructure and the continued importance of viability in plan making. The document sets out the kind and broad scale of new infrastructure needed, although clearly any site specific information will need to await the draft local plan consultation next year, when the spatial strategy is being considered. During the consultation, people will be provided with the opportunity to set out their key issues and infrastructure projects to give us more opportunity to take those concerns on board. A key message concerns the benefits for infrastructure (including transport) of a more certain long term funding regime.

Homes

- 1.10 The Government has changed the way in which housing targets for Local Planning Authority areas are set, instead now providing a formulaic methodology using Office of National Statistics demographic projections and relative housing affordability. This forms the basis of the housing targets which should be included in plans. Previously it was for Local Planning Authorities to set housing targets based on a recommended assessment methodology. As a result of this change, and because the four Local Planning Authorities are jointly planning to meet the development needs of the area, the current housing needs figure for the area has been identified in the engagement document. The total provision (as currently published) is about 2,600 new homes per year, although this will change in the future with new data. For example most recent affordability data suggests a further increase in the target is likely. The document reflects this, and refers to the need for additional flexibility in housing supply.

Working with government to deliver high quality development

- 1.11 It has already been noted that additional housing development will be required in the period up to 2040 and that one of the principal roles of the GESP will be to identify overall housing requirements and the locations of development. Furthermore, it also anticipated that significant investment will be needed to deliver the infrastructure required to support this development and overcome existing issues. These challenges are not new although they are being faced in changing circumstances in which the Government is providing renewed focus on the need for accelerated delivery of additional housing of a high quality supported by key infrastructure. This change in Government emphasis gives

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the opportunity for councils or (more commonly) groups of councils to negotiate deals with the government to fund additional infrastructure. Even more importantly, long term security of transport and infrastructure funding will be very helpful going forward in the context of long term development proposals. The consultation seeks views on how this could work, particularly focusing on 'asks' of Government and 'offers' from the GESP authorities. Such a deal would enable the councils to improve the long term planning for infrastructure in association with growth.

Future work

- 1.12 Responses will be analysed and used to inform further work on the GESP. This will take place in late 2018 and early 2019 and will result in the preparation of a draft GESP document. As per the adopted Local Development Scheme, a further public consultation on the draft plan will be held in June 2019.

4. GROUPS CONSULTED

- 1.13 The report has been agreed jointly with officers of the five participating authorities and is being presented (with appropriate variations to reflect local matters) to each.

5. TIME-SCALE

- 1.14 The consultation is proposed to run for eight weeks between 5 October 2018 and 30 November 2018.

6. JUSTIFICATION

- 1.15 Approval is required to enable the Authorities to hold a joint consultation. The consultation will build on the information provided during the 'issues consultation' in 2017 and enable debate on key issues which the GESP will address in advance of a draft plan consultation being held in 2019.

7. DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION (CONFIRMATION OF DECISION SUBJECT TO CALL-IN)

10.00 a.m. on Tuesday 11 September 2018.

Simon Thornley
Business Manager Strategic Place

Cllr Humphrey Clemens
Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing

BELOW TO BE FILLED IN BY REPORT AUTHOR:

Wards affected	All outside Dartmoor
Contact for any more information	Simon Thornley
Background Papers (For Part I reports only)	
Key Decision	Y / N
In Forward Plan	Y

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In O&S Work Programme	N
Community Impact Assessment attached:	N
Appendices attached:	A: Draft consultation document