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EDDC residents and Business weekly Corona Virus update

<https://eastdevon.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/latest-updates/east-devon-residents-coronavirus-update-24-july-2020/>

Devon County Council newsletter of Friday 24th July

This has links to the following

- New powers to help us respond quicker to cases
- Care homes start to open carefully to visitors
- Face coverings to be worn in enclosed public places
- Eid al Adha guidance for our Muslim communities
- One in five targeted by COVID scammers
- 31 August deadline for 30 hours funded childcare
- Support available for farmers

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKDEVONCC/bulletins/29729a5>

The Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP)

I have raised concerns for a number of years about the GESP. The GESP you may recall is a partnership between Exeter City Council, Mid Devon Council, Teignbridge Council and East Devon District Council. However all discussions until very recently were held in secret with just 5 representatives from each council; this was raised to 10 representatives from each council in 2019. Here is a link to the consultations document.

<https://www.gesp.org.uk/consultation-phases/stage-two-policy-and-options/>

In terms of housing development, GESP is concerned with sites of over 500 houses. Land is also put forward for employment. There were no specific funds for infrastructure as I wrote last month but we were told that the government would look favourably on funding for authorities who were working collaboratively with their neighbours and that developers would also be making contributions. There were also some very inflated figures for projected economic growth which lacked the evidence required to show why this should be. One can only imagine the impact that all this 'growth' would have on the environment when we are facing a climate change emergency.

The Strategic Planning Committee met on Thursday 23rd July to discuss officers recommendations to progress with the GESP and to go out to public consultation starting on 21st September and running until 4th November.

A range of views were put forward on GESP in a meeting that lasted nearly 4 hours. Some of the concerns I put forward were about the plans to improve transport and travel to work policies. I found a lot of contradictions in the background documents, some extremely outdated evidence often from studies done between 2002 to 20011, not least that the A3052 has less traffic on it now than in 2005, which is hard to believe.

There was a concern that if one authority didn't meet its targets, its neighbours would have to pick that up. There were threats that East Devon would not be eligible for government grants for infrastructure if they did not join GESP.

You can watch and here the whole meeting here but if you wish to just watch the summing up by EDDC Leader Cllr Paul Arnott, that is at 3 hours and 45 minutes into the meeting. The Leader made it clear that despite the recommendation to withdraw from GESP, EDDC is still keen to work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities.

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=youtube+and+East+Devon+District+Council++strategic+planning+meeting&&view=detail&mid=30AB2C3304C77C44FB1C30AB2C3304C77C44FB1C&&FORM=VRDGAR&ru=%2Fvideos%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dyoutube%2520and%2520East%2520Devon%2520District%2520Council%2520%2520strategic%2520planning%2520meeting%26qs%3Dn%26form%3DQBVR%26sp%3D-1%26pq%3Dyoutube%2520and%2520east%2520devon%2520district%2520council%2520strategic%2520planning%2520meeting%26sc%3D0-66%26sk%3D%26cvid%3D0A4FE62AAF6A4FEF81057859938A6AD8>

A summing up of the meeting giving a range of views was also published by East Devon Watch:

<https://eastdevonwatch.org/2020/07/26/eddc-strategic-planning-committees-recommendation-to-leave-the-gesp-now-getting-wider-publicity/>

The recommendation of the Strategic Planning meeting to withdraw from GESP must go to Full Council (60 ward members) for a final vote. If there is a majority vote with withdraw from GESP it means that East Devon will concentrate on updating its own Local Plan, which should be revised and updated every 5 years. As the Local Plan came into being in 2016, it is time that work was being done on the revisions now. One of the concerns raised by

councillors was that EDDC officers would not review and update the East Devon District Local Plan as this would sit below the umbrella of GESP and so it couldn't be completed until GESP was.

It is worth remembering that EDDC's local plan elapsed in 2006 and it took a full 10 years before a new plan was finally signed off. In the meantime there was a presumption in favour of development which was exploited by some, not least of course CDE at King Alfred Way as we found to our cost.

Should EDDC not go forward with GESP it does not mean that EDDC can avoid development. The Conservative government has set a hugely over inflated number of houses that must be built between now and 2040. Those targets still have to be met, though there is lobbying for them to be corrected, not least from the Campaign to Protect Rural England. Some hold the view that it is time we started to build differently from just building in the open countryside in the traditional way and that we should be doing more to build housing that genuinely meets the needs of local people.

The government wants local authorities to work together and says that is how to achieve major infrastructure funding, there were threats last night that withdrawing from GESP would mean EDDC cannot get grants for major infrastructure. Cllr Arnott pointed out he didn't see the government funding a second line from London to Exeter anytime soon with or without GESP, which I think is a very good point.

DCC Councillor Claire has put a summary of the sites put forward for housing on her blog:

Her full review and analysis is here:

[Proposals for thousands of houses in East Devon, as part of new plan to 2040](#)

Suggested GESP sites for East Devon:

Higher Greendale

Proposal: 1,300 dwellings plus industrial/business use

Location: Farmland adjacent to the A3052 to its highest point at the top of Windmill Hill. Adjoins Crealy Adventure Park to the west and Greendale Business Park to the south.

Area: 107 hectares

Hill Barton

Proposal: 10,000 houses plus industrial use

Location: A large area of farmland extending from the A30 to the A3052. Adjoins Hill Barton industrial area to the south.

Area: 660 hectares

Oil Mill Lane

Proposal: 4,000 dwellings plus industrial/business use

Location: A large area of farmland extending from the A3052 to Woodbury Road. Adjoins Crealy Adventure Park to the north-east.

Area: 380 hectares

Poltimore East

Proposal: Motorway Services Area (this is a possible relocation of the services at J30 of the M5, in order to build housing on that site).

Location: A series of agricultural fields towards the River Clyst. The M5 passes north-south through its centre and Poltimore and Broadclyst are 400m to the west and east respectively.

Area: 44.3 hectares

Sandy Gate

Proposal: 1,050 dwellings with possible business/industrial use

Location: Lies between west of J30 of the M5 motorway. Includes motorway service station.

Area: 36 hectares

Sowton

Proposal: Industrial/business use. Extension to existing Science Park

Location: An area of land adjoining the A30 and close to Junction 29 of the M5. The site slopes east to west towards the River Clyst. The village of Sowton is situated adjacent to the south.

Area: 30 hectares

Topsham and M5

Proposal: 1,500 houses (permissions already exist for 286 dwellings, two care homes and 47 assisted living apartments)

Location: Between the M5 and Topsham and approximately 5 km from Exeter city centre.

Area: 95 hectares

Westclyst and Mosshayne

Proposal: 1,600 dwellings and possible industrial/business use

Location: Agricultural land and marshland surrounded by the M5 motorway, railway and the River Clyst.

Area: 117 hectares

Axminster South

Proposal: 540 dwellings and small scale business/industrial

Location: A rectangular shaped site adjacent to the southeast of the existing built-up area of Axminster. It is currently in agricultural use and includes farm buildings and a small number of houses. The site is bounded to the south by the A35, the west by the A358 and the north by Woodbury Lane.

Area: 54 hectares

Feniton

Proposal: 2,800 dwellings and business/industrial

Location: Predominantly agricultural land surrounding the village of Feniton, on both sides of the railway

Area: 352 hectares

Honiton East

Proposal: 1,100 dwellings plus small scale business/industrial

Location: Agricultural land to the east of Honiton situated primarily on land rising towards and surrounded by the Blackdown Hills and East Devon Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Site is sandwiched between the A35, Exeter Waterloo railway line and the A30.

Area: 73 hectares

Whimble

Proposal: 2,500 dwellings and business/industrial

Location: Predominantly agricultural land to the north and east of the village of Whimble, located on both sides of the railway.

Area: 242 hectares

Exeter Airport Business Park

Proposal: Business/industrial use

Location: Agricultural land sandwiched between Exeter airport and the A30

Area: 27 hectares

Exeter Airport North

Proposal: Business/industrial

Location: Within active airfield uses and hosting supporting infrastructure on the north side of the runway at Exeter Airport, south of Skypark and Cranbrook's proposed southern expansion area

Area: 22 hectares

Within GESP there was a target of 53,260 houses to be built across East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon and Teignbridge between 2020 and 2040.

The GESP promised much in the way of infrastructure but in practise there was no funding for infrastructure and we are heartily sick of being promised infrastructure that the developers then turn around and decide they cannot provide after all owing to 'financial viability'. Anyway anyone who has lived in the home counties or any big city knows that building masses of houses does not mean you get great infrastructure, or health benefits or equality, or affordable housing in any way.

In the Travel Plan documents Jacobs produced a report in 2016 which said predicting growth and traffic movements even 5 years ahead was difficult and that for 2045 was virtually impossible but that it was dependent on 3 things:

1. A naturally occurring disaster – I consider CV-19 to be of such significance to fulfil that criteria
2. An aging population – the CPRE predicted figures show that not only was the local population aging but people were retiring to the West Country and that 2/3 of the major new housing estates were occupied by residents from out of area.
3. Digital technology and changes in working patterns – again CV-19 has had a major effect on that. People no longer need to live where they work.

Some of the background reading that fed into the GESP document was very contradictory and what made it into the final document for consultation was very selective in my opinion. Plus many cllrs felt that the wide ranging effects of CV-19 need to be taken into consideration.

The next Full Council meeting will be interesting. The date is yet to be set.

Red Bridge over the River Otter, Harpford

Firstly thank you to all residents and respondents to our petition, which was aimed at showing Devon County Council that the bridge is widely used and highly valued and that its closure on safety grounds would be highly detrimental to our villages and residents.

There has really been a magnificent response to the survey, nearly 2,500 responses online and in addition we have paper petitions which some residents are signing. This really shows Devon County Council for once and for all that this is not just a bridge used by a few locals. The benefits are far reaching both for practical journeys in safely connecting our villages, for the health and well-being of residents out walking and running and for the wider economic benefits to more occasional visitors and tourism. I was interviewed on Exmouth Air last Sunday as the story has interest from wider afield in East Devon too.

DCC have agreed that the Western bridge abutment and steps are now at risk of failure due to the ongoing river bank erosion and they would like to extend the existing rock armour in this area. If funds allow they would also like to extend the existing rock armour at the Eastern end of the footbridge to protect the footpath from further river bank erosion in order to keep the bridge in a serviceable condition. They are keen to do work that will extend the life of the bridge in its current position.

In order to carry out this work DCC will need landowners consent to move machines and plant across the land to reach the bridge, which hopefully will be agreed.

I am so grateful to DCC Councillor Claire Wright for liaising with DCC officers and also to the officers at DCC themselves who have had to try to squeeze this urgent work into their already busy schedules. I will post more updates as we receive them.

Road Closure – Tipton St John

Thanks to a resident for passing this on:

I have been chasing for more info about the road closure, which is scheduled to start on 27/7 and continue until 4/9. The first part of the job is between Tipton School and Court Place, and second part is between Court Place and Footpath 17 (which joins Lynch Road at the top of the hill towards Newton Pop). The section of pipeline after Bowhayes Farm runs through the fields so hopefully will be less disruptive, although Wales & West vehicles will be parked on the road in some places.

Residents living along the main stretch of road affected, i.e. The Old Vicarage to Bowhayes Farm, will always be able to drive into and out of their properties, however their direction of travel east or west will vary depending on where the work is actually taking place.

Anyone living in the main part of Venn Ottery, or in Southerton will NOT be able to drive direct to Tipton, instead diverting south via Newton Popleford or west via West Hill.

I understand that there is no plan to bring mains gas into central Venn Ottery.

I hope this helps with planning your journeys during the 6 weeks disruption. Please update any neighbours who might also like to see this info.

Parish Council information

New signs at Webbers Meadow

Following concerns from the public the parish council has put up new signs at Webbers Meadow asking drivers not to park in front of the gates and that no horses or motor vehicles are permitted on the meadow.



Play Park now open

The play park at the playing field is now open for use with guidance on playing safely, parents may need to assist younger children with reading and interpreting this!:



Unfortunately, there has been some vandalism caused by burning to some of the wood structure which has had to be repaired.

Parking Prohibition orders

A resident sent a very eloquent letter and supporting photos re the lack of yellow lines at road junctions in Newton Popleford. This was excellent evidence for the reasons we need them. I was able to explain that these have in fact been ordered and agreed for all the side roads along the High Street, Newton Popleford but that DCC Highways have not yet brought them to fruition or in some cases started the work but never finished it (Otter Reach, Capper Close). DCC Cllr Claire Wright chased this up again last week and was assured that it is on the list.

Vacancy for a Harpford Ward Councillor on the parish council.

A resident has called for an election for this place to be filled. Unfortunately the government has said there can be no elections until May 2021 due to CV-19. The Harpford ward extends beyond the village of Harpford, it runs along the village north of the A3052, for example through the Bovis Estate and westward along to Burrow. You can watch parish council meetings online if you want to get a flavour of the meetings where decisions are made, although of course the actual work of the parish council takes place outside of the meetings themselves.

Scam warning

Having waded through the GESP documents late into the night, I received an email one day from a friend, I will call him 'Dave', asking me to do him a favour by buying some itune vouchers for him online as he was stuck in an all day meeting. The message was rather

vague. I sent back a message asking Dave to phone me with details but he replied to say he was in a meeting and couldn't reply and that is why he needed me to get the vouchers for him. I asked via email who and how the vouchers should be sent and Dave replied with an email address for the recipient, which I then realised was the email address 'Dave' was using but it was not his usual email address. I asked how much he wanted to spend and he replied £200 in £100 denominations! I don't know Dave *that* well and started to become suspicious, finally!! Fortunately too I had no idea how to actually buy an itunes voucher. I took some further advice and then rang Dave on his home telephone number. He confirmed it was not he who was sending me the messages. I reported the phishing email to report@phishing.gov.uk. Naturally, I felt a bit of a twit for nearly falling for this, but I share it here to remind you to be alert and if something doesn't sound quite right, listen to your inner voice! Or talk to someone else about it as they will likely take a more detached view.

Thank you again for you ongoing support, stay safe and well.

Cllr Val Ranger