

**Ward Report to Rockbeare Parish Council
July 2023**

The period since RPC's June meeting has largely been dominated by EDDC-level developments, primarily concerning a report known as the 'Verita report', documenting an independent investigation into what EDDC knew about allegations regarding and the police investigation into child sexual exploitation by former Councillor John Humphreys. My report this month is relatively limited on local issues.

Report to Strategic Planning Committee ref. Local Plan consultation feedback

Officers have published a summary of responses to the Draft Local Plan Consultation of November 2022 to January 2023. The full report is some 600ish pages; I have highlighted what are in my view the most relevant chapters/sections and summarise some key points below, though there is undoubtedly relevant and important commentary elsewhere regarding other topics. The full report is available at <https://democracy.eastdevon.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=12109#mgDocuments>.

Noting that the most significant issue for local development in and around the ward concerns the expansion of Cranbrook, the report is relatively light on items of specific relevance to Rockbeare as development at Cranbrook is covered by the separate and recently-adopted revised Cranbrook Plan, which the new Local Plan is not proposing to supersede. As such, Chapter 6, which concerns specific development sites, is largely not really of relevance to Rockbeare Parish – though there are references in some sections of this to the importance of green wedges/separation between Cranbrook and surrounding settlements, most notably in Chapter 6 Part B regarding Broadclyst and Chapter 6 Part C regarding Whimble.

- Chapter 7 on Climate Emergency – generally strong support from public bodies, communities, etc. (if anything seeking more stringent policy), with pushback from developers and related agents against EDDC seeking to set standards above Building Regulations and that affect a large number of sites, and seeking inclusion of language referring to “viability” and a transition period of requirements in reference to environmental policies
 - On renewables/battery developments, seeking watering down of policy from “where there are no unacceptable impacts” to “[supported unless there is] significant and demonstrable harm”
- Chapter 8 on meeting housing needs – developers pushing back against e.g. Biodiversity Net Gain/employment land allocations, overly-prescriptive affordable housing formula; comments on need to address affordable housing, housing specifically for local/young/elderly people; need to protect rural character and villages
- Chapter 11 on sustainable travel – little by way of specifics to report, though some note proposed policy appears too loose/vague and isn't properly reflected throughout the remainder of the plan; e.g. contradictions between site allocations in locations without a bus service and stated desire to promote public transport use
- Chapter 12 on landscape – generally strong support for proposed policies, seen as providing substantial protection for the rural nature of East Devon, but suggestions of conflict with other policies, principally concerning housing, employment, and solar
 - Specific discussion of Policy 78 on green wedges, p. 431 to 433, focussing on need for more stringent enforcement of green wedge protection policies
- Chapter 13 on biodiversity – again strong support for the proposed beyond-national-requirements approach, though questions raised regarding enforceability, and specific

suggestion of importance for wildlife corridors/connectivity within urban areas and developments, as well as criticism of replacement/offsetting/translocation measures

- Chapter 15 on historic environment – strong support for policies seeking protection of heritage assets, including suggestion that non-designated assets need more consideration
- Chapter 16 on community facilities – highlighted need for development to include new and improved community facilities, with appropriate enforcement of this requirement against ‘viability’ arguments, and strengthened protection against the loss of village facilities, e.g. village halls, public houses

Per Mr Freeman’s report covering the consultation response summary, this meeting will be primarily concerned with agreeing a way forwards for the development of the Local Plan, rather than addressing specific issues.

Regular Surgeries & Website

I’m pleased to have established a schedule for regular surgeries occurring twice-monthly – 4pm to 7pm on the first Monday of every month, and 8am to 12pm on the third Monday of every month – all to be held at The Hive, School Hill, Whimble, EX5 2TS.

These details will be shared in a leaflet I hope to be able to get produced and distributed soon, are regularly shared via Rockbeare Residents and Marsh Green Residents Facebook groups, and are available on my page on the East Devon DC website.

I have also established my own ‘MyCouncillor’ website, available at <https://toddolive.mycouncillor.org.uk/>, where I will be posting messages/news/Ward Reports.

Highways issues raised at previous RPC meeting

I have raised issues regarding the degradation of highway surfaces between Rockbeare and Marsh Green by email but not yet had any response.

EDDC Five-Yearly Recycling & Waste Audit

Late last year, EDDC conducted sampling and analysis of recycling and waste collections from around 250 East Devon households, selected to cover an appropriate range of socio-economic groups and property types – the idea being to finely separate and weigh each class of waste to give a comprehensive quantitative picture of East Devon’s waste in order to support further improvements.

I’ve attached below some graphics produced by EDDC that have come out of analysis of these figures.

cheer up your bin and give it what it wants

I only want stuff no-one else does

Did you know **32%*** of what's going in bins needs to be **recycled instead?**

***that's 2,316 tonnes a year**



East Devon is great at recycling. But we still need to do more to recover our planet's valuable resources.

I love to talk trash

I'm no foodie

15% of what's going in bins needs to go in **food recycling caddies** instead

IN YOUR FOOD RECYCLING CADDY

- ✓ Fruit and vegetable peelings
- ✓ Cooked and uncooked food
- ✓ Meat and fish (bones are OK)
- ✓ Plate scrapings
- ✓ Cat and dog food
- ✓ Tea bags and coffee grounds

It's clean and easy

Doesn't smell bad: line your caddy with any plastic bag or newspaper

Convenient: keep your indoor food caddy easy to get to when you're cooking in the Kitchen

Quick collection: recycling your food means it gets collected every week, instead of three weeks if it's in your wheelie bin

I just want to be a waster

14% of what's going in bins needs to go in **recycling containers** instead

IN YOUR RECYCLING SACK

- ✓ Cartons
- ✓ Empty aerosols
- ✓ Metal cans, trays and foil
- ✓ Plastic pots, tubs, trays and bottles

IN YOUR RECYCLING BOX

- ✓ Glass
- ✓ Card and paper
- ✓ Small electricals
- ✓ Textiles and shoes
- ✓ Batteries

Not sure if you can recycle it? Quickly find information and an A to Z list of what can be recycled at eastdevon.gov.uk/recycle

Your wheelie bin only wants what can't be recycled

- ✓ Crisp packs
- ✓ Pill cases
- ✓ Plastic bags
- ✓ Polystyrene
- ✓ Plastic film




Try to use again
Re-use rigid plastics like toys and plant pots. If you can't, take to your local recycling centre or put in your bin.

Last year we surveyed what's in East Devon bins. This helps us in our work to recover more of the Earth's resources and help the climate crisis. Here's what we found:

- 15%** Food waste
- 13%** Dry recycling
- 3%** Green waste
- 1%** Electricals, textiles and batteries

Recycling question? Ask Alexa.
Get the Alexa skill at eastdevon.gov.uk/alexa. You can ask East Devon District Council, 'how do I recycle leftover food?', 'what can I recycle?' and 'when is my next recycling collection?'

Want a collection reminder? Get the East Devon App.
Join over 57,000 people and download for free at eastdevon.gov.uk/app

eastdevon.gov.uk/recycle    [eastdevon](https://www.instagram.com/eastdevon)

If you need to contact us and can't find what you need on our website, you can phone 01395 574545
Blackdown House, Border Road, Heathpark Industrial Estate, Honiton, EX14 1EJ

To ask for this in a different format or language please phone 01395 574545 or go to eastdevon.gov.uk/contact

♻️ You can put me in your recycling box. Printed on recycled paper. Correct at time of production. RW0020

Cranbrook Gribble Lane Extension – application to planning committee

As RPC is already aware application 19/1798/MOUT concerning an expansion of Cranbrook on the South side of the old A30, within the Gribble Lane expansion area designated by the new Cranbrook Plan, is coming to committee on Tuesday 18th; by the time this Report is made, this will have happened and I will be in a position to report the Committee's conclusions back to RPC. I will be

speaking as Ward Member at Committee to oppose the proposal, and include my comments from within the Officer's Report below:

"Firstly, I note comments by Cranbrook Town Council and EDDC that the proposal includes an incursion into land designated in the adopted Cranbrook Plan as SANGS. The officer assessment suggests that this incursion is mitigated by provision of an additional parcel of land separated from the site by the access lane to Grange Court over which the applicant has rights of access; this assumes that a SANGS area divided by a designated access road, in reasonably regular use, with a much longer boundary shared with existing dwellings, and also directly bounded to the North by new residential space, is of the same quality and amenity value as a cohesive SANGS area with uninterrupted landscaped boundary. On account of the access road introducing vehicular traffic and related safety issues, and splitting the amenity space, it seems clear that this cannot be the case - and that as such the proposal cannot comply with policy. If every site in the Grange Expansion Area under the Cranbrook Plan extended residential provision into the designated SANGS area, and justified the same by designating further open countryside as SANGS space instead, the clear cumulative effect of this is functionally to expand the settlement boundary beyond the extent that the Council has decided is acceptable under the NPPF and according to its own strategic planning objectives - the clear implication of this being that this application cannot proceed and consequently set that precedent.

On a more fundamental level, the proposal is clearly contrary to the spirit, if not the letter, of the Rockbeare Neighbourhood Plan, which clearly sets out to protect countryside within the Parish from further residential development comprising encroachment on open countryside surrounding the main village of Rockbeare in order to preserve the village's intrinsically rural character. While the Cranbrook Plan has been adopted, I am concerned that assessment by officers has effectively neglected any consideration of the clear provisions of the Rockbeare Neighbourhood Plan, and that this should hold material weight against the proposal as a factor in the planning balance test.

In addition, I would highlight the issue of safe and convenient pedestrian access between the site and services located in Cranbrook town centre as a component of social sustainability - London Road is not a particularly safe road to cross at the best of time, with substantial and continually increasing traffic levels, and as such the desirability and feasibility of pedestrian access to Cranbrook services via any footpaths must be questioned and in my view should weigh against the proposal being judged to properly achieve accessibility criteria.

Finally, there is the significant issue of climate change. The application is effectively totally dismissive of the issue, making a number of general comments and suggesting that mitigation of carbon emissions is an issue to be dealt with subsequently at condition discharge stage; no detail on the expected emissions of the development is provided, nor any specific measures to reduce these emissions in the long-term. Indeed, the applicant simply claims that if every development site is required to account for its emissions implications, nothing would ever get built. Beyond the question of the balance test I consider in the next paragraph, I strongly object to the application being passed on the back of this assessment: given the robustness of policy in the emerging Local Plan concerning the emissions footprint of new development, EDDC's declaration of a Climate Emergency, and commitments by national government to rapid emissions reduction - noting in particular that the requirement to reduce CO2 emissions by >45% by 2030 for a reasonable chance of restricting global heating to 1.5 degrees falls along similar timescales as this development would likely be coming into operation/occupation, EDDC would in my view be negligent to pass the application without proper consideration of the emissions impact and proposed mitigation measures at full planning stage

where such detail can be properly scrutinised and considered as the critical component of the planning balance test that it is.

Setting aside the issue of insufficient information on carbon emissions, which in my view should preclude the Committee from granting permission at this stage, I now turn to the question of the broader sustainability test. The assumption in officer appraisal that, because much of the land on which the proposal is sited comprises a designated Cranbrook growth area, it must inherently and on balance be considered sustainable on the grounds of accessibility to local services and inclusion in the broader settlement, outweighing any impacts on net loss of countryside, effectively precludes the proper application of the sustainability test, and in my view fails to give appropriate consideration to any of the issues addressed above. As outlined above, the application is clearly contrary to, and indeed compromises, recently-adopted policy on Cranbrook expansion, is definitively contrary to provisions of the Rockbeare Neighbourhood Plan, has genuine issues with pedestrian access to central Cranbrook services on account of the intervening major London Road, and frankly utterly fails to properly consider the critical issue of the Climate Crisis; in my view, the application cannot be considered to pass the sustainability test at this time.

For the above reasons, individually and in the round, I strongly object to the application, and recommend at minimum that Committee defers considering approval of the proposal until the applicant has provided additional assessment of the proposal's emissions impacts and intended mitigation strategies."

I also note that I have been asked by the Chair and Clerk of RPC to ensure that RPC's comments on the application are appropriately represented at Committee and have committed to do so.

Marsh Green Solar Farm appeal

I have been undertaking substantial work with MGVPG to support their efforts to oppose this proposal as a Rule 6 party to the relevant planning appeal. I understand more detailed commentary will be provided directly by the Group so will not duplicate here, but to summarise I have been engaged in extensive discussions with local residents and in starting the process of working with experts, principally the barrister proposed to represent the Group, as well as producing on the Group's behalf both a Case Outline document in advance of case management discussions, and the Group's full Statement of Case running to over 7,000 words.

Millenium Green – planning

I have been approached by Cllr M Nequest on behalf of RPC/Marsh Green Hub to provide advice regarding what planning permissions might be needed to facilitate the siting of a container on the Millenium Green. While at this stage, having researched the issue I can advise that temporary storage containers would likely require a full planning application, and that this would require at minimum the production of key drawings (location plan, existing site plan, proposed site plan, and possibly elevations) and possibly also ecological/arboricultural surveys depending on specific characteristics of the site and proposals, but without further discussion with RPC on what is actually proposed it is difficult to provide specific advice.