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Response to consultation on
Liskeard's Community Strategic Plan
From the Transition Caradon network Liskeard Group

Transition Caradon is a Network of local groups and individuals who are concerned about the effects of local actions upon energy security & climate change. The groups seek to take a long view to plan for a low carbon future & address this BIG question:

"for all those aspects of life that this community needs in order to sustain itself and thrive, how do we significantly increase resilience (to mitigate the effects of Peak Oil – rising fossil fuel costs) and drastically reduce carbon emissions (to mitigate the effects of Climate Change)?"

This leads to a collectively designed energy descent pathway leading away from an economy reliant upon fossil fuels .

We would draw attention to the Economic Development Strategy for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly 2007 – 2021 which has as an objective.

To achieve sustainable prosperity for all by placing energy sustainability at the heart of the future economic development and growth of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, to establish the region as a national and European exemplar for sustainable energy, and to create the mechanisms for this to be achieved in the most cost-effective manner.

A key action is to
Establish a 'low-carbon', competitive economy for Cornwall

Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly will take the lead in creating an economy based on carbon reduction, establishing an exemplar model for other regions to follow. A robust 'carbon test' methodology will be developed and applied to all planned projects and programmes.

Actions will be required to reduce predicted carbon emissions, principally through the reduction of energy demand and an increase in the use of local and renewable energy sources. In the case of all new development, a target will be set for incorporating renewable energy technologies.

We believe strongly that the Community Strategic plan for Liskeard should reflect the importance of striving to be more energy efficient and to establish a low carbon economy more proactively than it does at present.

If we collectively plan and act early enough there's every likelihood that we can create a way of living that's significantly more connected, more vibrant and more in touch with our environment than the oil-addicted treadmill that we find ourselves on today. It will also encourage the local economy and slow the flow of local finance out of the area, thus increasing our collective wealth.

The following comments are the views of the Liskeard Transition Group which represents 30 individuals & businesses living in the town or in close neighbouring villages. They are based upon the information contained within the Thematic reports in the strategic plan and also draw attention to what we believe are omissions within the plan.

We have provided a rationale for our comments and drawn upon examples of what has worked elsewhere and provide reference to this in our comments. We intend these to be a constructive contribution to the emerging plan, action plan and list of recommended projects. We would like to give our appreciation for the efforts that have gone in to develop the plan thus far.

1. Population and 2. housing:

We accept the estimates for required population growth to be accommodated within the town and that the bulk of this requirement will have to be accommodated within green field sites. However this should be viewed:

- within the context of a **master plan which should proactively consider what large scale sustainability initiatives are appropriate to such planned developments. The current plan should be strengthened in this area.**
- **In particular the provision of linked district heat networks, preferably managed by a community controlled Energy Services Company, would be appropriate to be determined by such a master plan. Consideration should be given to the inclusion of District Heating being a condition of development (under section 106) on any site.**
- **In the interests of future affordability, ownership of some of the development sites by a Community Land Trust would assist in the provision of affordable housing & developing (managed) workspaces to encourage enterprise. This could be facilitated by the transfer of assets from Liskeard Town Council & Caradon District Council to such a trust under the**

well being powers contained in S.123 of the Local Gvt Act 1972

- **Genuinely perpetually Affordable Housing could also be provide via the Mutual Home Ownership model laid out by the Cooperative Development Society, CDS co-ops. See http://www.cds.coop/document_store/Doc156.doc for more details. This is an alternative to the social housing for rent & shared ownership models proposed in the current plan. Consideration should be given to including policy clauses which give weight to provision of affordable housing via this route.**
- **These initiatives would positively contribute to the local economy of the town, providing jobs and sustainable revenue streams from the provision of essential services (housing, employment space and energy).**

3. Spatial, Planning and design:

As a general rule, development should be evidence - based, and should have minimum impact on the local environment.

We do not wish to comment upon broad issues of aesthetics and styles of design most appropriate to a Cornish market town. Except to note that

- **The history of the area was dynamic, shaped by industry, innovation, mining and agriculture. The contribution of modern technology & rural diversity towards a living history should be encouraged and celebrated, particularly where the motivation for such schemes comes from the communities that will benefit from them. This should not be prohibited due to undue weight being applied to conservationist views outside of the designated historic areas.**
- **There may be appropriate locations for medium scale wind generated energy within the virtuous circle and the Caradon Hill Area Heritage Project boundary**
- **Best practice in building design would maximise passive solar gain and there may be sites where this will be appropriate and this may produce innovative designs.**
- **District heat networks can provide for upgrading of historically significant buildings to be more energy efficient without effect to their external or internal appearance.**

In relation to spatial planning & sustainability, Housing developments should have a low environmental impact, allow for sustainable / renewable energy solutions, and be based wherever possible around established transport links.

- **The Coldstyle Rd site is a step further away from transport links, particularly increasing the distance to the railway station, and the A 38 junction at Morrison's. It is hard to justify the building of a completely new road network to supplement the good links that already exist.**
- **In energy terms, the West to North -West aspect of the Coldstyle Rd valley may militate against the effective use of passive solar heating within these houses.**

Sustainability issues:

The Cornwall Strategic Partnership has defined climate change and energy supply as a 'mega-risk' to our county's economic prosperity, social stability and environmental sustainability.

We note that the plan examines the requirements contained within the Code for Sustainable Homes, due to come into force in May 08, to improve the sustainability of housing. It points out that 90% of the lifelong environmental impacts are created by the actions of the occupants. We concur with this but would point out that this being the case it is **imperative that the town plan reflects this and that policy contains every incentive to ensure developments are delivered that minimise the energy use of end users** and contains all measures possible to support & enable people to act to reduce their ecological footprint.

Again we consider that the strategic plan as it stands is not explicit enough about this and should be strengthened. This should include the requirement for measures above and beyond the minimum requirements of the code for sustainable homes to be expected of new developments during the period of transition towards the Government's target of national zero carbon housing provision by 2016. Evidence from the current experience in regeneration nationally shows whilst social housing has already to be delivered to CSH level 3, speculative developers are not readily delivering the increased standards of housing. Local planning policy must therefore be strengthened to ensure all new homes meet higher standards and that existing properties are improved to reduce the footprint of their occupants where ever possible.

- We would suggest that the local policy state **all new housing on the designated new sites around Liskeard within the virtuous circle be constructed to a minimum level of CfSH level 4.**

- **We support the broad concept of utilising Ground Source energy but would add the caveat that the energy to power the ground source pumps ,where used, should come from a renewable source.**
- **We believe that district heat networks would provide a better and overall cheaper solution to heat provision in the new housing than Ground Sourced heat and should be considered as a recommended project. NB Ground sourced heat can be fed into such heat networks.**
- **The use of large scale buried rainwater harvesting systems in new developments should not be encouraged without very careful analysis of the overall energy cost. Life cycle analysis of such systems have shown that they have a significantly increased carbon footprint over mains sourced water where it is readily available.**
- **Encouragement should be given within the policies for the retrofitting of sustainability measures to existing properties.**

The English Partnerships' report "a cost review of the code for sustainable homes" Feb 2007 examines what is involved to deliver housing at the different levels of the code.

It clearly demonstrates that the **chances of achieving level 4 and above are maximised by provision of site wide approaches**. On developments of 200 units or more, whether delivered in one go or in smaller phases within neighbouring sites, this could be by provision of a local heat distribution network (District heating). Where 350 units or more are anticipated then an Energy Services Company (ESCo) could offset all or a large proportion of the additional capital expenditure associated with the use of low carbon technologies. Hence the adoption of this policy would not put developers under undue financial pressure.

To facilitate this we would suggest that Liskeard Town Council:

- **Consider, as a recommended project, working with local stakeholder partners such as Caradon DC, Cornwall County Council, the Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership, Community Energy Plus & SWRDA to establish an Energy Services Company for Liskeard** which could then undertake to coordinate and seek funding for the delivery of heat distribution networks, deliver energy efficiency measures across the town, deliver and manage the provision of renewable energy generation equipment across the developments, employ local people, stimulate the wider economy and create a revenue income stream for the

community. There are numerous examples of such arrangements working already, such as in Woking and Southampton. This would demonstrate true forward planning by the town council.

- Incineration Southwest already operate in Liskeard, close to proposed industrial expansion areas and would provide an existing source of waste heat to feed into a potential network.

An example of how this economic stimulation and other benefits might be achieved would be via a heat distribution network which could have heat fed into it via a variety of sources such as; a biomass energy centre like the one established by the Slough Heat and Power Company or individual boilers within various developments.

This centre might contain a Combined Heat and Power engine; even burning gas this is more efficient than stand alone heating systems though biomass fired versions are available. Or more simply a Biomass fired boiler. Thus **the fuel to provide the heat (and possibly electricity) for the inhabitants of the new homes and businesses could come from local farmers and foresters reinvigorating the local agricultural sector. Local people would work for the ESCo.**

The end users would save costs as ESCo customers have usually achieve relatively lower fuel bills than from other utility providers. Thus the issue of fuel poverty within the population (highlighted in the town plan) could be addressed.

Revenue surpluses generated by the ESCo can be recycled for the benefit of the community, such as subsidies for small scale renewables to retrofit existing properties. The business could also be structured (as it has in other towns) to provide a small revenue stream into the council, provided it is a partnership which the Town Council is part of.

This demonstrates how a great opportunity for the town could be created. But only if there is sufficient foresight at this point in time to write policies into the Town Plan that would ensure that developers do not have carte blanche to deliver "business as usual" piecemeal on the sites to the current minimum standards before the implementation of National policy catches up with them.

Planning gain contributions for community benefit – tables 1, 8,9 &10:

- **If heat distribution networks were included as a project within the plan contributions from other developments where such energy gains were not achievable could contribute towards the capital costs.**

4.1 Good Food:

Looking forward 25 years and more, we might anticipate that patterns of agriculture will have needed to change radically, with an emphasis on food locally produced with much reduced energy inputs (fertilisers, pesticides, agricultural machinery, transport)

This being the case Liskeard is ideally located in the middle of an area of fertile farmland to have a major role in food production and distribution. Current trends of increasing energy costs could also return agriculture to a much more significant part of the economy. While local farming is currently mainly focussed on meat and dairy, there is considerable scope for increased vegetable production and fuel crops. Liskeard could look towards developing its role as a market town with an emphasis on fresh vegetables.

This will hopefully tie in with a social trend over the next 25-50 years towards reducing the proportion of processed foods currently in fashion (high salt, sugar, saturated fats) and replacing this with a higher proportion of fresh vegetables. Current international healthy eating advice, and food security issues support this trend. We might expect to see a substantial swing in public opinion and dietary habits that reflect this over the next few decades.

- **The issue of releasing enough suitable land to enable vegetable growing at on a smaller, but important, scale at household level should not be overlooked within development proposals.**

Traditionally this has been done through allotments. The demographics of UK allotment gardening have changed in the last 10 years. Allotment gardeners are no longer predominantly man of retirement age, but are younger women who are keen to change the diets of their families and reduce their food expenditure. Encouraging this within Liskeard will contribute to preventive and public health measures within the town and militate against poverty as food costs rise.

- **More prominence should be given in the plan to the issues of production and distribution of food locally.**
- **We whole heartedly support the call for provision of allotments and other small food - growing facilities as proposed in the community services and recreation and leisure sections.**
- **In addition we would suggest that the Council consider the planting of fruit trees, nut trees and soft fruits with public street planting, especially within the new developments, to contribute to the overall quantity of foods being grown within the town.**

- **Thought should be given to different legal structures for managing & utilising land such as enabling a Community Land Trust to develop and form.** (see also the potential benefits of this to affordable housing and employment creation) This mechanism would put responsibility for the land in to the hand of enthusiastic individuals, and give greater security of tenure than is normally possible through the allotment system.
- **Whichever legal structures are used there needs to be an adequate supply of such land, and it needs to be placed as near to (newly planned) housing as possible – this permits effective cultivation by householders. The supply of land for cultivation at household level should be made integral to the planning permissions of new dwellings**
- **We support the proposal for a pannier market in the town centre and suggest that this could be developed to incorporate the sale of fresh produce.**

Good Jobs for the locals:

We support the move to increase the levels of ICT connectivity within the local area to facilitate the increase in knowledge based industries and home working. All measures to remove the need for individuals to travel far to access work should be encouraged.

We understand the conflicting factors impacting on the town centre shopping, the need to stimulate the local economy and note that the resident's survey indicated a desire amongst the community for major retailers to be attracted to the town. However we would urge caution in the approach toward such businesses and would support any measures to encourage more local small businesses to succeed.

We support measures to encourage business growth that reduces the lure of working in Plymouth.

- **Consideration should be given to mixed use Live/work developments within both the proposed town centre developments and the new residential areas.**
- **New Business parks, offices and industrial buildings should all be constructed to achieve the lowest levels of energy use. Again local policy should be in place to militate against developers submitting plans without these measures in place before the National policies that are currently agreed come into effect. If expert opinion is that these measures are necessary nationally then why allow less to be delivered this year or next locally?**

Transport and Access :

We support the need to try and reduce the footprint of transport as much as possible.

- **Transport proposals should be heavily influenced by the need to reduce energy consumption, encourage efficient travel, and allow greater use of walking, cycling, and public transport to satisfy the needs of residents and visitors.**
- **We support the introduction of Town Hoppa Buses, utilising a hail and ride approach.**
- **A fund contributing towards subsidy for these buses could be explored as part of the planning obligation for developers of employment & leisure sites.**

Walking and cycling - Recognising that Liskeard is a valley site with some steep hills, it still has great potential for walking and cycling as it is concentrated on a small area, and travel distances are short.

- **We support the development of an off road cycle network.**
- **With some thought over traffic management at critical junctions, and adequate signposting, cyclists can travel between most key sites using contour following routes, and these could be developed and encouraged.**
- **Town centre plans should include sufficient provision for secure parking of cycles to encourage their use.**
- **We support encouragement of walking by development and enlargement of the Heritage Trail, and local walks network.**

Travel to work - The current road network provides excellent links between local industrial sites, housing developments, and the A38, thus allowing effective car travel to work, both within the Liskeard area and towards Plymouth and Bodmin (a reality though less desirable).

- **The railway station is out on a limb as far as much of the housing is concerned, and this would be made worse if future housing development took place to the North of the town.**
- **The centre of the "virtuous circle" could be considered seriously misplaced in respect of transport as it draws new development away from both the railway station and the major junctions with the A38. This is a major issue when**

considering the sustainability of the plan and it would not be improved by the proposed link road to Moorswater, which does nothing towards improving access to the Railway station, and adds little to the access to the A38, which would be reached more effectively via an extended Charter Way.

Recreation - One of the great virtues of Liskeard is that it is possible to walk, cycle or ride into beautiful country, within a few minutes of the town centre, and future transport links should build on this. Most of the walks in the local guide to walks are to the North of the town, focussing particularly on Coldstyle Road and Old Park Valley. Indeed, this area was considered sufficiently precious in 1994 to be proposed as an area of great landscape value. This area is also part of the Caradon Hill Minions Regeneration and Heritage Site, and plans for this propose the use of Venslooe Hill as the main multi-use route to the site, to be developed as a footpath, cycleway and horse-riding route. As mentioned elsewhere, some traffic management action and better signposting could enhance this facility.

- **The proposals to use this area and that at Old Park for housing and cutting across the whole area with a ring road would have a severe impact on its recreational value and the links with the Heritage Site.**

Visitors to Liskeard - The report emphasises the congestion problems in Liskeard centre, although in terms of travel generally throughout the UK, this would seem to be overstated within the plan and could be alleviated by traffic management.

- **In a context of sustainability, walking, cycling and public transport should take priority, including effective links between the railway station and the centre.**
- **The underlying need would seem to be to encourage people to linger in the town, walking around the shops and using local cafes and cultural facilities. Road links, shop delivery routes, and parking should be sensitive to this.**
- **Minor changes to the Road network in town could potentially free up the "pinch point" at the top of the Parade. For example a link through Passmore Edwards site/West Street car-park, to Dean Street.**
- **The proposals for development of the Market place as an enhanced shopping area seems central to the rejuvenation of Liskeard as a bustling town, and as such, transport planning around this will be critical.**

Through Traffic - The A 38 linked to Charter Way provides for through traffic to and from all major directions (apart perhaps from Station Road).

- **Any future major road building could be viewed as incompatible with sustainability considerations.**
- **There would have to be a clear evidence-base for developments such as the Northern ring road. There are no figures for measured traffic flows in the report, and the case for the road is not strongly made, and this would certainly be an issue in the context of sustainable development and transition town planning.**
- **Encircling Liskeard with a "mini M25" would not encourage visitors to stop in the centre, and would have a severe impact on the "town in the country" nature of Liskeard.**

Heritage Culture and the Environment:

Any hotel development encouraged within the town should be of a high environmental standard. Tourism is a double edged sword and steps to encourage good sustainable tourism practice should be encouraged.

- **Consider offering a small incentive, such as a partial business rate rebate to tourism businesses accredited to Gold level through the Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS).** The GTBS is the leading sustainable tourism certification scheme in the UK, with over 1400 members. Businesses opting to join are assessed by a qualified grading advisor against a rigorous set of criteria, covering a range of areas, like energy and water efficiency, waste management, biodiversity and more. **CoaST provides free support for all businesses wishing to become accredited.**

We hope that Liskeard Town Council will find these comments and suggestions constructive.

Member's of the Group would be willing to put it's "money where it's mouth is" and assist in any way possible to move these ideas towards reality (ie the ESCo), raise funds, sit on Boards of community organisations etc.

Yours Sincerely

Transition Caradon - Liskeard Group
(By Email)

Appendix to Transition Caradon, liskeard Group response

More information on District Heating

District heating is the use of a centralized boiler installation to provide heat for a number of buildings. This can use a heat only boiler, or the heat from a combined heat and power (CHP) plant.

Boilers to burn woodfuels such as wood chips and pellets tend to be physically larger and more expensive than equivalent gas or oil boilers. This is partly as a result of the physical requirements for a high temperature combustion environment and transporting the solid fuel. As boilers get larger however the disparity with gas and oil boilers becomes comparatively smaller, and so woodfuel becomes more economically attractive, especially for installations of the scale of a few hundred kW.

District heating makes use of these cost advantages, as well as the administrative benefits of using a single boiler installation to provide heat to a number of buildings. These might be a number of individual houses, blocks of social housing, local council offices, a school, etc.

District heating is much more common in some European countries than in the UK. In Denmark for instance district heating provides around 60% of heating. However there are now a number of successful district heating schemes in the UK, both using fossil fuels and biomass.

A typical district heating installation consists of a highly insulated "heat main" of flow and return pipes distributing hot water (or steam) past all buildings which might be connected. A junction point allows easy connection to each building, from which hot water can be taken from the main to a heat exchanger (heat substation) within each building. The heating circuit within the building is thus isolated from the heat main. Temperature measurement of the flow and return lines, plus a flow meter (together forming a heat meter), allow the actual heat usage within each building, or even apartment, to be separately measured, and delivered heat billed for accordingly. Remote meter reading by modem, secure web interface or drive-by are all possible, as are remote diagnostics to ensure reliable operation.

In Austria there is a well established protocol for introducing a district heating scheme to a village or district. Farmers can form a co-operative to sell wood chips in the form of heat by installing and operating a district heating plant, operating as an Energy Services Company (ESCO).

District heating can be provided using the co-generated heat from electrical power generation in a Combined Heat and Power (CHP) installation. This can increase the overall efficiency of power generation by a factor of three or more.