

# Briefing Note

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## Bolitho Farm development

### 1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 In November 2016 at its public meeting, Councillors were asked to approve inclusion of a note in the Liskeard Neighbourhood Development Plan that referenced Menheniot parish. The NDP included this proposal:

#### **Allocation of employment land outside but abutting the Liskeard neighbourhood plan designated area**

That the Menheniot Parish Council be requested to support, in its forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan: 1. The use of 12.72 ha of land at Bolitho Farm for the following purposes: a) A grouping of related industries – for example related to agricultural technology and processing b) A development related to the growth hub initiative of the Plymouth and South West Peninsula City deal c) The development is for use class B1 only, or mixed b1/b2 uses

At the time, Cllr Tucker explained the reciprocity between this parish's neighbourhood plan and that of Liskeard. Because the proposed site of employment land is on a steep hill, there was no loss of usable agricultural land, and councillors resolved to support the request for inclusion in the plan.

### 2.0 PROGRESS TO DATE

2.1 Land at Bolitho Farm, located within the parish boundary of Menheniot, has been designated as being suitable for use for agricultural technology and processing. This has now been incorporated into the Liskeard NDP and the Cornwall Local Plan which includes Objective 1 'Deliver economic growth/ employment providing much needed jobs to counterbalance current and future housing development in and on the edge of Liskeard.

Liskeard Town Council is now at a stage where it wishes to commission a demand study that will be used to determine what type of businesses are willing to relocate or establish new enterprises on the site. This information will be used to plan infrastructure and determine what level of land charges are feasible by incoming enterprises.

2.2 The demand study is supported by the Local Enterprise Partnership, Liskeard Town Council and the landowner. The cost will be met by a combination of the LEP, landowner, Liskeard Town Council and other interested parties. As the employment and economic benefit of the project will embrace both parishes, the Chair of Liskeard Town Council has asked if in addition to indicating general support for the concept, Menheniot Parish Council may wish to contribute financially to the study.

### **3.0 LEGAL SITUATION**

3.1 Contributions to a demand study are not included in the listing of statutory expenses that a parish council is permitted to make. However, provision is made under section 137 of the 1972 Local Government Act for councils to make a limited amount of money available for projects such as this. In approving this kind of expenditure, it must ensure that the direct benefit accruing to its area or residents is commensurate with the expenditure incurred. This means that a council should not spend a disproportionately large amount on something which has no or very little direct benefit.

3.2 There is an annual limit on the funding that councils may make using Section 137. The formula is based on the number of registered electors in the parish (1324 at 1 April 2016) and an appropriate sum decided by the Department of Communities & Local Government each year. The current figure is £7.42 which means that the parish may spend up to £9,824.

### **4.0 OPTIONS**

4.1 Make a full or partial contribution towards the cost of a demand study using the S137 facility.

4.2 Decline to make a financial contribution.

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