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**Uplowman Road
Tiverton
Devon, EX16 4LU**

Masterplanning Consultation
Forward Planning
Mid Devon District Council
Phoenix House
Phoenix Lane
Tiverton
Devon EX16 6PP



CONFIDENTIAL

24th January 2014

Dear Sirs

Re: Tiverton Masterplanning Consultation December 2013

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this second stage of masterplanning.

It is noted that the Council Report to Cabinet on 28th November 2013 lists the changes made to the SPD (Section 11.0 of the report) since the first masterplanning consultation held in May 2013.

It is disappointing that so few changes have been made and that these are largely confined to alterations made throughout the document relating either to the affordable housing target or, the phasing of provision for a new primary school.

Only one of the major concerns raised by residents in May has been addressed within this revision. This relates to the need for the provision of dedicated site access infrastructure prior to commencement of any other construction work and this is inadequately addressed in the revised document.

Access and movement

Post Hill / Blundell's Road is the main road into Tiverton for all Mid Devon residents East of the town and is also used by traffic from the M5 via Sampford Peverell and Halberton into Tiverton. Thus, it already carries a significant amount of commercial and domestic traffic. The size of the proposed EUE is likely to increase the traffic loads on these roads by up to three times current loads.

Uplowman Road and Putson Lane are the only roads directly linking the North eastern sector to Post Hill / Blundell's Road. . These are small rural roads that are quite narrow in places, and are not suitable for carrying a sustained large increase in traffic arising from any significant sized development (as well as the associated construction traffic). These roads are frequently used by walkers, runners and cyclists to whom there would be significant safety implications should motorised traffic increase substantially as they certainly would under the recent scheme proposed by Waddeton Park Ltd.

Safe, effective, dedicated road accesses must be provided before any housing development is permitted to start.

It is essential, before any ground works are started, that a properly constructed access road is provided on to the A361. The MDDC Planning Committee rejected the Hartnoll2 application for reasons including its impact on traffic in this area. This should be warning enough of the need to properly resolve issues of road access and safety first, and foremost.

Such a junction must be located well away from existing properties that, together with imposed speed reductions and effective modern bunding and planting, could considerably benefit the health and well-being of existing and any new residents in this area with respect to traffic related nuisance including noise, emissions, vibration and extraneous light pollution.

The north-western sector could be accessed via the Heathcoat Way area and the southern sector by an extension from this. Provision of a new A361 junction together a link through the Heathcoat Business Park would provide significant relief for Blundell's Road. Other potential accesses could include via the old hospital site on Post Hill and / or, a spur taken from a new 'off slip' from the A361 North bound carriageway with a return that takes traffic to the new half clover leaf junction; these could be dedicated accesses for the new Waddeton Park housing estate.

The imposition of artificial 'triggers' for the construction, or not, of new accesses is counterproductive when dealing with long-term health and safety matters. These new housing and commercial estate developments will be permanent fixtures as brownfield sites and multiple accesses are necessary to ensure their viability, and that of the immediate locality into the longer-term future.

During the 2013 road surfacing works on the A361, the much reduced speed of the traffic considerably reduced the noise levels to bearable levels even during periods of heavy traffic. A permanent speed reduction requirement between the Bolham roundabout to just east of Craze Lowman would benefit all in this area.

Energy from Waste plant

We have already made comment in an earlier consultation on the subject of an energy from waste plant in the proposed EUE area and we are aware of the current consultation on the same subject. We understand that the North-western sector of the proposed EUE area is a likely location for such a plant.

We are, in principle, in favour of energy from waste plants. New plants should be designed for the maximum conversion rate and constructed to the highest of technological, health and safety standards.

Any new industrial units, including energy from waste plants should be located in situations already designed and operating as industrial areas. In the Tiverton area, the M5 Junction 27, South View Trading Estate and the South Devon Business Park areas that are already served by necessary infrastructure and services including roads for access, power and water facilities. These locations are well situated to receive waste from an area large enough to keep an energy from waste plant in sufficient feedstock supply for the consistent production of energy to, at least, the industrial location in which they are built. They would also, importantly, keep the heavy 'feeder' traffic well away from residential areas as well as a school of major importance to Tiverton.

The negative effects on the health and well-being of inhabitants of the area including both humans and wildlife in so many of the categories considered in the earlier sustainability appraisal consultation as well as the categories considered concerning land loss, landscape, heritage, climate change, surface water, air quality and noise pollution issues must make Tiverton East a non-starter for the location of any kind of waste plant.

The costs involved in laying the necessary groundworks for supplying energy from a waste conversion plant to housing developments are high and the more distant the development from the plant, the less likely it is to be a viable proposition. A more cost effective use of such energy is to commercial premises located in the immediate vicinity of the plant.

Sites in current use for industrial purposes should be the first sites to be considered for placing new waste to energy plants and not, new land near to schools and residential properties..

Type of development

The scale of the proposed development is far too large for the area designated and MDDC aspirations should be lowered to be more accommodating of existing natural features of this, currently, rural area.

The masterplanning document should include clearer and more robust statements of intent in relation to new developments being required to preserve the local heritage, archaeology, ecology, natural features and hedgerows and maximise open green spaces. This should also include reference to a requirement for all new developments to be sympathetic to the type of dwellings already in existence in each location with respect to:

- density and number of properties
- layout of the new estate
- property types,
- quality of build,
- garden sizes suitable for children to play in without resorting to public 'play areas' requiring Council funding for future maintenance
- and visual outlook for existing and new residents.

Properties are bought and sold with premiums paid for prime locations and new developments should be supportive of this long accepted practice.

An earlier MDDC AIDPD (proposed submission) AL/TIV/1, paragraph 5.7 stated 'affordable housing will be required only after 400 dwellings are occupied after which the provision will be about 35% of dwellings.' This is to help development viability by ensuring a speedy return on investment for a developer given that the high infrastructure costs are in the early phases of any development. Although the final AIDPD of January 2011 did not repeat the '400 dwellings' limit, there was still a recognition that 'the proportion and timescale of delivery of affordable housing' was subject to further assessment of viability for the same reasons related to return on investment due to the cost of infrastructure in early stage development. This recognition is reflected in section 6.2 of the revised masterplan and, given that much of the new main road infrastructure is planned for the North Eastern part of the proposed EUE a more robust statement could be made in the masterplan relating to this area being designated for market housing in keeping with existing property types; this could help encourage the significant investment required for this road infrastructure to be delivered ahead of any property construction. This in turn, would help ease residents' concerns over some of the local road safety issues.

The 2011 census indicated that, for Mid Devon, the greatest percentage change in population age group since 2001 was in the 65+ years group i.e 1.8% increase with decreases in the 0-14 years and 15-64 years age groups and only a small increase of 0.4% in the 0-4 years group. In addition to ensuring appropriate support to help residents continue to live in their own homes, good quality alternative accommodation should be provided for the rising population of older residents who may prefer this, for example, a high specification retirement village may be appropriate for some part of the area. This approach would then make more existing family sized houses available.

New gypsy sites should be located close to main facilities e.g. Bolham Road junction (north side), where they are close to the road links necessary for travellers and where there are medical, supermarket and DIY facilities close at hand, not in the furthest corners of the proposed EUE with more difficult access and away from such practical facilities.

Commercial heavy works premises should be located close to good transport links e.g. M5 junctions and office premises closer to main town centre links e.g. Lowman Way Business Park.

Noise – Innovate acoustics

Since the noise survey was carried out, the A361 has been resurfaced. The original stone mastic asphalt has been covered with 'surface dressing' (bitumen used to stick chippings to the road surface). The noise levels from traffic along this road are now higher than were measured during the survey.

The results recorded in the 2012 report do not seem to support the final conclusion of the report on page 15 that noise will not be a significant constraint on residential development of the site.

For the A361 in particular, if we have understood this, 30 results were recorded from separate 5 minute periods over approx 26 hours in March 2012 on a dry Wednesday / Thursday. Twenty-one of the 30 results were categorised in the category D band where 'planning permission should normally be refused'. Even the summary averaged daytime figure (Table 4) is a category D level of noise

Notwithstanding our reservations about the time of year, weather conditions and length of time given to the survey work, what they have produced seems to indicate that measured noise levels under 'good' conditions are unacceptable let alone what they may be under 'bad' conditions and without a new junction and another road built alongside the A361.

It appears that no road traffic noise surveys have ever been carried out during or since the construction of the A361 around Tiverton by Devon CC or Mid Devon DC. Nearby residents already endure the considerable noise and emissions pollution from the traffic volumes that have increased steadily year by year on the A361 and any new junction with this road bringing additional traffic must be considerate of the health of current residents.

The increase in research and knowledge relating to road traffic noise associated with health problems including cardio-vascular disease is discussed in the World Health Organization's publication in 2011 on the 'Burden of disease from environmental noise – quantification of healthy life years lost in Europe'.

The health and well-being of residents is stated to be of primary concern in MDDC's Local Plan 3 (September 2012) DM/7 which implies that development will not be permitted where direct, indirect and cumulative effects of pollution will have an unacceptable negative impact on health, the natural environment and general amenity; an additional junction and associated increase in traffic so close to existing properties should certainly stop the purple junction plan, at least.

The masterplan should contain clear and robust statements requiring that the health and well-being of residents must be respected and taken into account for safeguarding in all aspects of the design and construction of infrastructure, housing and commercial premises..

Given that the even the very limited survey commissioned by Waddeton Park Ltd. produced a significant proportion of noise level results at unsatisfactory levels and likely 'health hazard' categories (>65dB), it is essential that a more extensive and realistic noise survey is undertaken in the Tiverton area of the A361, at least between the Bolham roundabout and the Craze Lowman over-pass road. This is especially necessary since the road has been resurfaced since the survey.

Flood Risk Assessment – soakaway testing

Very few test pits were dug resulting in few results to consider. The results presented appear to confirm residents' observations that the ground in these fields is not readily infiltrated and quickly becomes waterlogged.

We know, from seeing the evidence, that the field to the North of Uplowman Road and the ditch along its southern and western boundaries (the latter within private residential property grounds) act to slow large volumes of water run-off towards the A361 and Craze Lowman during periods of prolonged rainfall.

The ground in this area is clayey and remains sodden for a long time after rainfall, presumably also taking run-off from the higher fields on the south side, and the ditch has filled to overflowing onto Uplowman Road several times in the past three years with water reaching a depth of around 2ft even in the western boundary ditch.

The recent month of very heavy rains has demonstrated a very significant surface water drainage problem in the Uplowman Road fields and, considering the permanent nature of a new housing development in a vulnerable area, a clear directive in the masterplan should require flood mitigation measures that take account of eventualities of >300years.

Soakaways are only necessary periodically, although increasingly so, but it is of utmost importance to ensure that no new development in this area makes the drainage situation worse than it is and consequently increase flood risk.

The masterplan should contain clear and firm requirements for the constructive practical assessments of the water / ground interactions necessary to provide a realistic and sound basis for determining a strategy and solution for flood risk management in this area.

Tree survey

We can only really comment in relation to the trees referred to in tree reference numbers G10

and G11. The ditch referred to is within the grounds of the adjacent private residential property and the trees on both sides of the ditch belong to the same. The barbed wire live-stock fence forms the boundary between the field and the residential property.

These trees will continue to be cared for by the residents and it is expected that the growing area of the trees will be respected by others as required by law.

Utilities

A large part of the Northern side of this proposed development is still very much rural in nature so some property service systems are, perhaps, not so streamlined as found in urbanised development. These properties were selected by residents for their location so such facilities were accepted. We draw attention to this so that any developer or utility company can take proper account of what currently exists 'on, and in, the ground', for example, septic tanks and associated soakaways.

Ecological Appraisal (Area 1)

Quite rightly, this report recognises the importance of maintaining and protecting the current natural habitats of the wildlife that abounds in the area.

In the Northern eastern sector on the north side of Uplowman Road, we have recorded 24 species of birds in addition to buzzards, owls, pheasant, mallard and falcon in and around the vicinity of the trees and hedges of the western boundary of the field. We have also seen, or seen the fresh evidence of hare, rabbits, voles, moles, dormice, bats, fox, hedgehog, shrews, squirrels and deer; frogs, toads, newts and slow worms. Also, several species of bee, many different moths, butterflies and beetles including stag beetles. The mixed hedgerow habitats in our immediate area clearly suit a very wide variety of creatures and the detailed species surveys recommended by Engain are certainly warranted.

MDDC's Local Plan 3 (September 2012) states that new development should improve the environmental conditions in the area. Building on pristine open countryside in a rural landscape in no way accords with this statement. The MDDC's Planning Committee rejected the Hartnoll2 application partly on the grounds that 'the proposal by virtue of its location in an open agricultural area would have an adverse visual impact on the character and appearance of this rural area'. The proposal for the EUE would, equally, have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of this rural area.

The masterplan should contain clear and robust statements requiring the maximum preservation of existing habitats within any planning application submitted for the EUE area.

Archaeology (North eastern sector)

Although little seemed to be found during the archaeological survey carried out in 2012 it is possible that the A361 construction spoil deposit that lies in an area between the Long Barrow and the Craze Lowman Round Barrow does cover some relevant archaeology. We support the suggested green preservation of the setting of Long Barrow together with its visual connection to the Round Barrow.

Yours faithfully,

Dr C. Bell
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CONFIDENTIAL

26th January 2014

Dear Sirs

Re: Tiverton Masterplanning Consultation December 2013

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this second stage of masterplanning.

I object to the scale of the proposed development.

It seems the MDDC's evidence underpinning the apparent need to increase the area covered by Tiverton by some 30% or more and its population by >10% employs information gathered when the last Labour Government were 'in power'.

The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (published March 2012) refers to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 42/187 which defines sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Mr Neil Parish MP informed us that 'in the UK, the amount of agricultural land available has decreased from 39% to 25% between 1989 and 2009' and more is disappearing under concrete year on year. It should be noted that the MDDC's Planning Committee rejected the Hartnoll2 application for reasons that included 'the loss of 7.9 hectares of Grade 1 agricultural land contrary to policy S9 of the Mid Devon Local Plan'. Far more high-grade agricultural land would be lost to this current proposed EUE development.

Covering an area of approximately 153 hectares of productive agricultural and amenity land with new builds will incur significant costs with demands on infrastructure and services, energy, food and water supplies which are already under considerable pressure in this country.

This combination of pressures is making us increasingly vulnerable to experiencing under-supply of foodstuffs, energy and water in which we should be striving for more self-sufficiency. Destroying such a large area of productive Devon agricultural land, which is an

increasingly valuable asset, will most certainly contribute to compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The NPPF also asks councils to take account of the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. This EUE proposal seems to be evidence that MDDC has not done this.

The Department for Communities and Local Government are clear that 'housing to meet the needs of an area must be based on sound evidence' and that Government 'wants to see sustainable development, not development at any cost'. Re-generated empty homes, and 'brownfield' sites as well as underused offices should all be used for housing stock long before good agricultural land is built over.

It is plain common-sense to regularly review and revise, as necessary, your evidence for such a large new housing and commercial property development. It must be the County and local Councils' responsibility, in their constituents' interests, to very carefully re-consider the necessity for, and justify, such a massive development on greenfield land given the very real economic, population and National policy changes that have occurred in recent years and will clearly continue for some years to come.

MDDC's 'Consultation Statement' issued with the minimally revised masterplanning document re-iterates the standard response to our requests for a review of the need for such a large new development i.e. 'The need for the level of development planned for, its location and the allocation of this site were extensively tested via the examination in public by a Planning Inspector preceding the adoption of both the Core Strategy and Allocations and Infrastructure Development Plan Document. They are therefore adopted and are not able to be reopened within this document'.

According to *The Planning Inspectorate* 'Unless Mid Devon Local Authority invites representations on the adopted Core Strategy and Allocations & Infrastructure Development Plans there is no requirement to review new representations' (Pers. Comm.; letter dated 11th December 2013). This statement must surely imply that MDDC can invite new representations on both of these adopted documents if it so wished.

It has been made clear to MDDC that local residents have repeatedly questioned the need for the level of development planned. Surely the level of local concern over this matter gives MDDC a mandate for reopening the discussion rather than dismissing residents with a 'political' response?

Yours faithfully,

Dr C. Bell

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Devon EX16 6PP



27th January 2014

Dear Sirs

Re: Tiverton Master plan Consultation December 2013

I would like to object most strongly to the scale of the proposed plan to build approximately 1500 houses in what is currently described as a semi rural part of Tiverton. Building over good agricultural land is short sighted as in 20 or 30 years time there will be an acute need to produce our own food, you cannot do this when farmland is covered in concrete.

On the approach to Tiverton on the A361 all the tourist will see is serried ranks of houses and industrial units, they will not stop and so the town will not benefit from passing income.

With the increased population, infrastructure such as gas, electricity and sewage will have to be addressed. I understand development can be started within the existing sewage works capability, but it is not sufficient to take all 1500 houses, so will a new sewage works have to be built somewhere nearby?

The Police, Hospital, Ambulance and Fire Services will need to rethink current operating procedures as the population increases, also new GP and Dental Practices will be required. How does this tie in with all the frontline funding cuts?

The traffic along Blundells Road will increase to an unacceptable level; at certain times of the day it is already very heavy, it would have been better to locate this expansion of the town somewhere were a new road could be built between the new development and the town centre. The increased noise and traffic emissions from all these extra vehicles will have a detrimental effect on the health of people living or working in the vicinity of Post Hill and Blundells Road.

With the expected increase in population will the Planning Department allow the development of a major new supermarket as the existing ones will be inundated, at times it is already difficult to find a car parking space.

At the moment we live in a green and pleasant land with good clean air, please do not turn it into a crowded concrete jungle where all you can breath are traffic fumes and stale air.

Yours hopefully,

Mrs S Bell