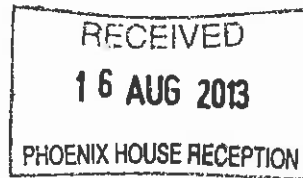


Local Plan Review,
Forward Planning,
Mid Devon District Council,
Phoenix House,
Phoenix Lane,
TIVERTON
Devon
EX16 6PP



62 / 7
Ack
c/o The Town Clerk,
Bampton Town Council,
Chapel Cottage,
Mary Lane,
Bampton,
VIC TIVERTON
EX16 9LZ

RESPONSE OF BAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL TO THE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW SCOPING REPORT (July 2013)

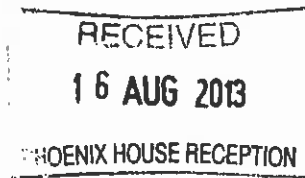
Individual members of the Town Council may have already submitted their own response to this document, either online or on paper.

However, Bampton Town Council is a "key stakeholder" [LPR 1.3], in that it is well placed to represent "the current needs and aspirations" [LPR 1.1] of Bampton residents. At a recent meeting of Town Councillors, it was resolved that the Town Council respond to the Scoping Report on the Local Plan Review, as it relates to Bampton. Please confirm that you will also treat this as a response to the Scoping Document on the Sustainability Appraisal of the local Plan. [LPR 1.4]

As far as we are aware, the first mention of Bampton being thought of as on a par with Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton, as a focus for the forward planning of development in the system of Local Plans which has evolved since then, was in a document circulated by Mid Devon District Council in 2003. When this was brought before the Town Council at the time, it was not made clear that there was any opportunity to contest this seemingly arbitrary change in Bampton's status. We had, in fact, just approved the outline plans for housing at Scott's, a derelict brownfield site, because it was hoped that (a) planning consent there would clean up an unsightly and dangerous derelict site; (b) Bampton would thereby be spared any further proposals for larger-scale development; and (c), there would be provision for "affordable" housing there. The Town Council unanimously expressed the (unminuted) view that any further proposals of this size would need to be considered as and when they came forward, and resisted if necessary, in order to preserve the character of Bampton. The Inspector who subsequently examined the 2006 Local Plan, commented in his Report on the total lack of representations from Bampton, about it being included with the other three towns in the District Council area - an indication that the process of consultation in 2003 was not as comprehensive as it is now.

In 2007, there were a few months when the Town Council did not have a quorum of members, and a further election was held; after which, several Councillors attended the inquiry process which resulted in the currently adopted Local Plan, now under review. Written and oral representations have also been made, in relation to the Local Plan, and on planning policy for Bampton in general, by several Town Clerks; or by individual Town Councillors on behalf of the Town Council, notably Mrs Celia Hicks and Mr Francis Stoner; and later by Mr Les Hartley, Ms Lucie Moore, and Mrs Rachel Gilmour. We request that these be made available as part of the current Review, since they are on file with the District Council. It has not yet been possible for us to prepare a Schedule of such representations, given the relatively short time allowed for consultation on the current Review of the Local Plan.

You will be aware of the number of objections received from local residents about at least one of the Allocated Sites, on pasture land adjacent to the Morebath Road, just beyond Bouchier Close, and the reasons for those objections, with which we agree. There are other unresolved problems with all the other Allocated sites, which are also of considerable concern to local residents.



Bampton Town Council is in favour of Option Two on Page 40 of the Scoping Report, just below 3.27 on that page. We have considered 3.22 to 3.27 which relate specifically to Bampton, and reiterate the concerns of local residents mentioned there. Bampton is geographically and historically unusual, indeed unique, and we consider that it would be an act of folly at this time, to try and squeeze in more larger-scale development, either of housing, or of commercial premises. Bampton would wish to retain the status of a Town, for historical reasons; but from the point of view of its development status into the future, we are strongly in favour of Bampton being classified as a larger village. The population of Bampton has very seldom been more than about 1,400 (fourteen hundred) at any time within living memory or recorded history, in sharp contrast to the numbers for Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton; and this, along with inadequate roads, and physical as well as social infrastructure deficiencies, suggests that it is entirely inappropriate for Bampton to have been classified alongside those towns.

As mentioned in the Review, there are aspects of general Planning Policy which are (as yet) unclear. This is another reason why we recommend the adoption of Option Two. However, we also know that because of demographic changes, and the increase in the number of older people, demand for affordable housing is pressing, and ought to be addressed in the interest of social cohesion, so that young people born and brought up in Bampton are not forced to look elsewhere for jobs and housing.

The revised Local Plan will cover the period up to at least 2031. As a Town Council, we are prepared to identify land in our ownership which could be allocated for housing and employment at some future date within the period covered by the Plan. In the last twelve months, Bampton Town Council has been reduced to a bare quorum of three Councillors owing to resignations; and only now, after several by-elections, is up to the full complement of nine Councillors. This has somewhat delayed our active consideration of how to proceed, in relation to the Local Plan Review.

Although no formal resolution has yet been debated or approved by us, the Town Council has previously suggested that some land in its ownership, on the Old Tiverton Road opposite Ashley Park, could be made available for housing. The Station Road Car Park, which is also owned by the Town Council, has similar potential. But it must be emphasised that these sites have not yet been considered by us for inclusion in the Plan, for the reasons stated in the previous paragraph. Likewise, we have not considered the possibility of a wholly new area being proposed for development, away from the historic town centre, but within the area we represent, though this could be an option if such a place could be identified or agreed with land-owners between now and 2031. It is likely that any such proposal would not be received favourably by us, because of the extra burden placed on the road network in its present form.

16/08/13

Brian Smith

Chairman
Bampton Town Council