

2A Ham Place,  
Tiverton,  
EX16 6PQ.  
8. 12. 2011.

**Ref. Housing needs (spd) & Green infrastructure plan.**

Our ref. :-RD/ MD SPD

Dear Sir

*These two plans are obviously complimentary & therefore I propose to comment on them as one.*

The housing needs plan is full of statistics but short on solutions & I suspect that this consultation will be little more than a public relations exercise with the council ploughing on with discredited policies which have in the last 10 years produced some of the most appalling housing schemes I have ever seen in over forty years in the construction industry. From the `Colditz development on Lea Rd in Tiverton to the ghastly ribbon development on the Cullompton/ Willand Rd.

The relatively small disparity between the number of houses/flats available and the needs do not justify large-scale development as envisaged in the local plan.

The ageing population and government statistics which show that nationally immigration will account for the majority of population growth during the life of this plan and beyond, coupled with increasingly rigid controls on immigration driven by the concerns of the indigenous population, will I believe lead to a stabilisation of the housing supply /demand equation.

Indeed if many of the flats & houses currently empty were brought back into use the housing need would be further reduced.

Given incentives (Tax breaks, renovation grants etc.) many shopowners would be willing to bring the empty flats over the shops back into use. Just look around Tiverton to see the number flats which could be used.

I also believe that the councils plan to concentrate building on the three major urban centres to be based on flawed assumptions especially with regard to commuting. In the SPD documents, only 39 % of responses gave being closer to work as a reason for living in the urban centres. Meanwhile our villages are dying as the elderly `pop their clogs`.

I think that concentrating small developments in the villages would not only re-vitalise the villages, but, if young families from these villages were given the first refusal with other mid-Devon youngsters next in line- would help them get on the housing ladder.

One innovative method of doing this would be for the council to adopt a French plan with modifications. In France councils buy a site, provide the services (water electricity site roads etc.) and then sell plots to individuals.

Controls on the development would be achieved via the existing planning & building controls and perhaps covenants.

If this were done here it would reduce the initial cost of owning a house by half. This would allow first time buyers to get a foot on the housing ladder.

And again I would prioritise with the first opportunity being given to local people. When the original buyer wished to sell the cost of the plot would be taken from the sale, or the council could be given the first chance to buy the house at the market value pertaining at the time of the sale less the value of the site.

The town centres should be improved, I suggest along the lines of the ANGEL PROJECT in Tiverton. This scheme combines aspects of the green infrastructure plan which shows the town as having a G.I deficit addressed by the garden element of the plan, renovation of empty housing, neighbourhood participation, economic enhancement. The scheme with its garden, which would be available to hire for weddings, birthday parties anniversaries and so on, contemporary iconic building, links to the museum, river walk enhancement etc. would begin to make Tiverton a tourist centre. In due course small niche market shops and other businesses would follow.

All this with a negligible amount of public funding plus it could be accomplished in stages.

A glaring omission from the SPD is the lack of information on mobile homes. I believe that mobile home sites could be set up either private or better still by the council.

These sites are quick to erect, flexible & relatively cheap and could provide a short to medium term housing solution, especially for homeless families. An incidental benefit would be a reduction in the councils' bills for bed & breakfast.

These sites would be managed with the manager living on site to ensure a nice environment.

In conclusion I do not think massive housing projects are necessary or desirable for the reasons given. If innovative solutions such as I have outlined are adopted these will go a long way to solving many of the problems in the Supplementary planning and Green Infrastructures document. Should you require any further information I would be willing to talk to your representative.

Yours Sincerely