

Dr & Mrs C. Bell
18, Uplowman Road
Tiverton
Devon EX16 4LU

GIP
ID NO: 2575
REP NO: 15
ACK: ✓ 5.12.11
SUMMARISED:

SPD Consultations
Forward Planning & Conservation
Mid Devon District Council
Phoenix House
Phoenix Lane
Tiverton
Devon EX16 6PP



27th November 2011

Dear Sirs

Re: Green Infrastructure Plan (including Strategy to 2026 and Delivery Plan as Supplementary Planning Document)

We write in relation to the above consultation draft document. It is a large document covering a wide range of topics. We have, necessarily, restricted our comments to matters concerning Tiverton.

Our responses in January and November 2009 (see copies attached herewith) to the proposed Eastern Urban Extension scheme noted a number of matters relating to Green Infrastructure that are generally supportive of some of the statements made in this latest document. In particular, we support an approach that encourages local food production, conserves energy and water supplies and protects wildlife habitats, all of which enhance the health and well-being of the local population.

We do not support the change in settlement limits depicted in the GIP as this adversely affects the existing attractive and productive landscapes around Tiverton and that are also essential for local food production, water conservation and wildlife. At the same time, such natural and agricultural landscapes serve to mitigate the effects of climate change. How is it that settlement limits can be changed so easily? We would appreciate your reference to the legal authority that allows this please.

The agricultural land around Tiverton and in Devon generally, is a priceless heritage that once lost will never be retrieved. The biodiversity that is absolutely necessary for food production e.g. bees are mentioned in the document, will continue in decline as more green land is given up. We agree with the statement in the document that 'just the sight of undeveloped land with no public access can benefit health'. Our green open spaces, much of which is agricultural land must not be given up lightly to development 'fever'. More innovative and less destructive ways of providing the housing and employment needs of local people should be determined.

New buildings on green sites will demand additional precious resources that are already stretched in Devon, they will also generate more light and noise pollution with consequent ecological impact as well as material and chemical wastes, all of which will be detrimental to the environment and, the health and well-being of the local population.

We urge that you protect the green environment in and around Tiverton, the open spaces including agricultural land with its precious ecosystem and our natural resources. Aspects of the document suggest these are your aims; they should not be lost in future discussions about development or, to commercial interests.

We look forward to hearing from you concerning the reference requested above.

Yours faithfully,

Allocations DPD Consultation
Mid Devon District Council
Phoenix House
Tiverton
Devon EX16 6PP

6th January 2009

Dear Sirs

Re: Preferred Option Consultation- Eastern Urban Extension

We write to comment on the Eastern Urban Extension (EUE) element of the Tiverton 'Preferred Options' document published in November 2008.

1. According to the Mid Devon local plan adopted July 2006, the settlement limit of the town is clearly marked and limited to the west of the small complex formed by Uplowman Road, Pool Anthony Drive, Pomeroy Road, Fairway and Mayfair which are noted and under official constraints as 'outside settlements', 'hamlet / open countryside'. This remains the case today. These are sensible constraints for an area that is served by only small 'country' roads and encompass operational farmland some of which drains only poorly. The radical EUE proposals would destroy the classification of this area with the loss of a significant swathe of open countryside that is required for food production and the health and well-being of the local Devon and wider population facing global changes in economic, water and energy availability and weather patterns.

2. The ground between Fairway and the A361 slopes downwards from approx. contour levels 350 feet to below 300 feet towards the River Loman. The 300 feet level is where the ancient barrows are situated. For the construction of the A361, some field drainage systems were altered and now, the fields on the north side of Uplowman Road in particular, that are well below the level of Fairway, become very wet and large pools regularly form in parts of the field to the east of our address. The ditch around this field and the adjacent road recently flooded just a little south-west of Putson Cross. Building over this area can only exacerbate the flood risk and does not accord with the Core Strategy 2026 document item COR 13h: reduce the risk of flooding.

3. The EUE proposal would completely undermine and negate the Council's own constraints for this rural area, and urbanising this area will create environmental problems affecting the neighbourhood and the A361 that is already close to a floodplain nearby. In addition, the EUE looks to potentially increase the town's footprint by some 25% or so which is not in keeping with its status as a 'market town'.

4. Such a proposed, significant increase in the population of this area through the building of homes and business units would be bound to create an unreasonable and impracticable burden on the local rural roads as well as undue pressure on domestic services (potable water,

gas and electricity supplies and sewage disposal facilities) which, for a number of properties are rural in nature (overhead cables, long service pipework etc.). A heavy investment would be required to provide such services to such a large development. The requisite essential services in the form of policing, fire brigade services, health services, education services, local government etc. for such a substantial population increase would also need considerable development and financial support.

5. Given the current and very reasonable concerns over 'green' issues, climate change, UK self-sufficiency in food and energy supplies, potable water shortages, sewage disposal, waste disposal / reliable waste recycling etc., it must be right to get these reliably operating for the current population and ensuring they could cope with a gentle growth and development of the town and area before considering a massive scale development that would destroy green belt forever.

6. The Core Strategy 2026 document under COR 13f refers to the green setting of the town. The main approach to Tiverton for visitors is via the A361 and the current approach towards the town along this road gives a positive rural and countryside impression however, building over the land on the north side of Blundells Road / Post Hill will create a 'sprawling' impression and greatly diminish the green view that currently exists. We believe the northern part and the bulk of the eastern part of the proposed EUE area would be more beneficially maintained as a rural resource for the local and wider population of Tiverton.

Although we understand there may well be a need for the long-term development of the town, time could usefully be allowed to assess the impact of the current economic situation on top of the already significant building programmes that have been undertaken both in Tiverton and Cullompton and see how these settle down before embarking on others that, unthinkingly pursued, could themselves damage the town both economically and ecologically. Maintaining the town's current settlement limits should be a key priority.

Yours sincerely,

Allocations DPD Consultation
Phoenix House
Tiverton
Devon EX16 6PP

11th November 2009

Dear Sirs

Re: Allocations and Infrastructure Development Plan Document – Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension

We wrote to you on this very subject on 6th January this year, see our copy letter attached herewith. An article published in *The Gazette* on Tuesday August 25th 2009, then suggested the 'Far eastern expansion is put on hold' to be severely scaled back, which would have been a sensible decision. The current DPD relating to the eastern expansion is largely unchanged to that of the November 2008 version so what happened between August and October 2009 to cause a reversion to effectively, the same plan?

If it is employment land that is the main requirement as suggested by recent local press discussion, the various brown-field sites in and around the town should be prioritised for development and any genuinely required industrial development would be more suitably sited in areas that are already supplied with appropriate infrastructure e.g. M5 Junctions 27 and 28.

The October 2009 plan seems now to exclude the Hartnoll farm complex but includes the entire northern length of Uplowman Road part of which (containing a listed ancient monument) was delineated with Pool Anthony Drive, Pomeroy Road and houses on the north side of Post Hill (west of the hospital) in the last plan. Is this correct and therefore a change to the earlier plan of November 2008?

The settlement limit of the town is clearly marked and limited to the west of the small complex formed by Uplowman Road, Pool Anthony Drive, Pomeroy Road, Fairway and Mayfair which are noted and under official constraints as 'outside settlements', 'hamlet / open countryside'. This remains the case today. We note in recent local press articles that planning applications have been turned down due to e.g. 'policy of not allowing major development in the countryside' (*The Gazette* July 7th 2009); 'proposals were situated outside the settlement limits of the village' (*The Gazette* August 25th 2009); 'the site is outside the town development limits' (*The Gazette* September 15th 2009). These same constraints *must* apply equally to the areas marked AL/TIV/1- AL/TIV/7 (the eastern development) in the current proposal.

Our views and comments made in our letter dated 6th January have not changed, only strengthened in the light of the severe economic constraints we know we are now being faced with for at least the next 2 – 3 decades by this country.

It is high time that we questioned the Government's demands for increased levels of building

that require resources we do not have and are very far being from self-sufficient in, especially when it involves eliminating forever the diminishing natural environments we have left that can and do provide at least some of the food and water resources we need. Indeed, the national definition of Sustainable Development quoted in the latest DPD specifically refers to and expects continued maintenance of the natural environment and limitation of resource use employing phrases such as 'without compromising the quality of life of future generations..', 'protect and enhance the physical and natural environment..', 'respecting the limits of the planet's environment, resources and biodiversity..', 'natural resources needed for life are unimpaired...'. Such expectations will be totally disregarded if such wholesale building over open and valuable countryside were to be allowed.

The level of build suggested for Tiverton of 3200 dwellings, aside from industrial, schools etc., represents a very significant increase to the town's housing levels (percentage figure not readily available from the Forward Planning Office this morning) as well as population and building footprint. We are already being warned that power supplies are increasingly likely to be disrupted during the next decade or two due to under-resourcing and such significant increases in demand by population and industry both locally and across this county and country will make precious power and water supplies scarcer and more expensive to all of us already facing harder financial conditions due to recent economic failures.

NHS Trusts, Police Forces, Fire services, Town and County Councils, among other public bodies, have all been cited in the recent news as facing budget cuts which must, in turn, affect infra-structure services required by all of us. The significant increases in building and population levels afforded by the Development Plan would, in turn, further undermine the stretched services we inevitably face.

We stand by the comments we sent in to you on 6th January and believe it is even more urgent now to take a step back from plans such as this and completely review the role a most fortunately placed Tiverton and Mid-Devon could play in the greatly hard-pressed economic, and climatic situation we all face.

In relation to all of the above and the matters referred to in our previous letter, we urge you to re-consider and halt and shelve this destructive plan.

Yours sincerely,

cc:

Mr D. Hannon, Devon County Councillor
2 St. Aubyns Park
Tiverton
Devon
EX16 4JG