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TIVERTON EASTERN URBAN EXTENSION
MASTERPLANNING CONSULTATION

Response from Roger G Harman

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The Mid Devon District Council Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension – Masterplanning: Options Report – presents a golden opportunity for Tiverton to become a centre of distinction, and the chance for us all to benefit. The plans offer the scope to add much needed economic growth and prosperity to the locality. However many issues need to be addressed before more detail plans are formulated.

Accurately forecasting the requirements for employment space in the Urban Extension to the end of the development period is crucial – space needs should be matched especially to local employment needs given the number of proposed dwellings, and other housing developments, including the three hundred additional homes likely at Farleigh Meadows. The employment space provisions will also depend on demands driven from outside the confines of Tiverton Town and particularly the strategies adopted by the Council in relation to other business developments forecast for the future within reasonable travel distance from Tiverton.

For the homes proposed in the Urban Extension well designed living spaces, imaginative, innovative, and landscaped housing development(s) within this rural location will add significant value to the housing stock within Tiverton. Safeguarding the existing housing/residents of Post Hill is essential. Employment and housing land development must not in any way blight existing housing. The Council's Community Housing Strategy as it affects Tiverton and the locality is only one element. The Council's identified long term needs for council, affordable, and private housing should be part of the development strategies for the area. Overall housing requirements will also depend upon the Council's strategies for long term housing in areas within reasonable travel distance from Tiverton. There should be no housing development in the Eastern Urban Extension that lead to inappropriate piecemeal building schemes that do not meet identified objectives and quality criteria.

The two major strategic issues of the scope and nature of employment space and housing developments have not been elucidated or justified in the document, save for identifying employment and housing provision in Options 1 & 2 in paragraphs 3.21 & 3.24 respectively, making any judgement on the Options very difficult.

In respect of transport, new access from the A361 will be determined by how and when site development(s) take place and the demand placed on the road network but the early construction of the A361 junction should be viewed as imperative to facilitate and encourage the development of the Eastern Urban Extension sites and ease potential traffic pressures in the immediate locality.

On a wider basis the Tiverton Urban Extension proposals must be addressed in the context of a Tiverton Town Development Plan – particularly given the significant anticipated rise in the population locally. There is a need for masterplanning for Tiverton Town to compliment the master planning for the Eastern Urban Extension. Short term projects, particularly for the town centre, need to fit with the “structural” issues that need addressing to inform the planning processes over the longer term. “Structural” planning should help inform housing provision, which in turn informs education, health, and transport needs.

Master planning for Tiverton should include:

- identifying all potential development sites with Tiverton
- creation of arts and cultural centre(s)
- enhancing leisure provision
- increase retail and other non- retail space(small and large) for in, and out of town, shopping and other uses
- significantly developing tourism including the provision of more hotel accommodation, family dining, visitor welcome centre and exhibition space(s)
- identify where industry, commerce, and business can be relocated within the locality, and attracted from outside, to create further employment opportunities

A great deal more discussion with representatives from commerce and industry, tourism, retail, arts, leisure, housing, education, health, and others should take place to obtain wider views from within Tiverton and the locality with a view to crystalizing development needs for the future before the next phase of consultation. Further research may point to different needs and different development scenarios. The findings in Consultants reports need to be corroborated with findings locally.

The potential for identifying a unified strategy for the development of Tiverton in the longer term must not be lost.