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10.6.13.

27th May 2013

Dear Sirs,

Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension
Masterplanning Consultation May 2013

We welcome the opportunity to express our observations and opinions regarding the subject matter.

On reading the whole of the Eastern Urban Extension Masterplanning document and attending a public exhibition, one major thing stands out to us more than any other, the needs of and effect on existing residents are totally ignored.

Our first comment would be as to whether this huge (in proportion to Tiverton) residential and commercial development is really necessary bearing in mind that there is a new town currently being built outside of Exeter plus a large commercial site. In addition when we travel North on the M5 we can't help but notice the large residential and commercial developments taking place at Taunton and Bridgewater. We would be interested to see some up-to-date facts to justify this development with such details as:-

- a) How many vacant residential properties are there currently in the MDDC area
- b) How many vacant commercial properties are there currently in the MDDC area
- c) How many commercial enterprises have expressed a desire for property in the MDDC area
- d) What are the local population forecasts for the MDDC area and subsequent housing requirements?

With regard to the specific questions raised within the consultation document our comments are as follows:

1. Balance between employment & housing development.

We fail to see the logic or need to include any employment development within the specified area. The obvious location for any employment and waste disposal/energy recovery development is at Junction 27 on the M5. We have yet to be given any reason why this has not been considered. If it was considered in the past and rejected this should not, in the light of current legislation and the views of the local population, be a reason why it shouldn't be re-considered. We do wonder why the Waterloo Cross area wasn't considered for the whole residential and employment expansion which would have brought benefits to both Tiverton and Cullompton with minimal impact on existing residents and infrastructure.

2. A vision for Post Hill.

This vision for 2035 in the master plan is more akin to the current situation rather than after completion of this development!! Our vision for 2035 is of suburban sprawl, housing similar to currently being built at Moorhayes Park with the added problems of empty commercial property, traffic congestion and over stretched local services.

Currently when approaching Tiverton from the M5 the outlook is of green fields with minimal residential & commercial developments – an attractive an inviting place to visit/live. In 2035 this approach will be similar to that which exists when coming from Barnstaple (mass housing not unlike army barracks) but with the addition of commercial premises and waste disposal facilities – not somewhere to stop for any reason.

The poor design of the latest parts of the Moorhayes development (even if it planning permission was granted some years ago) does not fill us with confidence about future designs for this development.

3. Features we would like to be protected or enhanced

Our only comment would be a somewhat flippant one in so much as it should all be protected and the easy way would be to not proceed with any of this ill conceived development.

4. Inclusion of energy centre & district heating

Let's be clear, for energy centre Devon County Council reads waste disposal centre. As already stated, the obvious location for such a facility would be at Junction 27. This would not only minimise the additional heavy traffic which would result from such a centre but also reduce the possibility of pollution close to a high density residential area.

With regard to the 'carrot' of the resulting district heating scheme, as we understand the proposal this will not include current residents!! To reduce energy consumption why not insist that all new buildings within this development (residential & commercial) must have solar PV panels fitted at the time of construction.

5. Traffic & highway improvements

In our view the best link to the A361 would be by means of the 'Discarded Green Junction' with a link to 'Red Route A'. We understand that the 'Discarded Green Junction' option has been ruled out due to cost. We do not believe that just cost alone should rule out what may be best option for the community both now and in the future e.g. if only a dual carriageway between Tiverton and Barnstaple had not been ruled out due to the cost, how many fatal accidents could have been avoided.

Highway improvements with a link to the A361 MUST be in place before ANY development is started. We were amazed to discover that the representative from 'highways planning' had not even been down Uplowman Road 'recently'! Uplowman Road is a country lane with no pavement, high banks, and blind corners and in places only just wide enough for cars to pass. The 2 residential roads (Pool Anthony Rd. & Pomeroy Rd.) that feed onto Uplowman Road plus nearly all of the existing residences have poor or nonexistent sight lines. An additional 200 houses generating in the region of

600 additional traffic movements on this road is a recipe for disaster. Build the new road first then either make Uplowman Road a no through road or install major traffic calming measures in the hope of stopping it becoming one of many 'rat runs' resulting from these plans.

Traffic calming in Blundell's Road will not discourage it being used by the majority of the extra traffic from this development; it will only serve to increase congestion and pollution. Fuel prices are such that both private and commercial vehicles will always use the shortest route which from Post Hill to the town is Blundell's Road and from the M5 to Post Hill is via Halberton. Lea Road through Moorhayes Park is a typical example; it being the shortest route from this side of town to Morrison's, the Leisure Centre, the Hospital etc. is used by the majority of vehicles in preference to the A361.

We note that the 'Summary of constraints and development area' chart recommends that residential development should be avoided within the 'pink' No 7 area due to high road noise levels. Why therefore is it acceptable to add a new major road carrying both private and commercial traffic even closer to existing properties? We do not accept that slower moving traffic generates less noise quite the opposite, gear changes etc. produce higher levels of noise and pollution which is also one of the problems associated with most traffic calming measures. It was mentioned that a possible 2 metre high earth mound (or similar) could be used to reduce noise levels from this new road. Bearing in mind that the A361 runs in a cutting well over 2 metres deep and is also screened by both many trees and a hedge and the noise level is already too high for new residential development, we can't see that a 2 metre high earth mound would be sufficient.

6. What types of housing and where located

Every effort should be made to make the new housing compatible and sympathetic to the existing buildings. Generously proportioned family housing with good sized front and rear gardens plus pavements and no building to be more than 2 storeys high with a 20/25 maximum dwellings per hectare should be the aim. We have an aging population (even more so in the West Country) and bungalows as well as sheltered accommodation must be included.

Bearing in mind that a) the developer's ultimate motivation is profit and hence the more houses at the lowest construction cost the better and b) the council will be aware of potential council tax revenue and the new build infrastructure levy which also means the more houses the better, we therefore can't see our suggestions going very far.

7. What types of employment floorspace?

We are not convinced that we need any, especially with so much already available in the surrounding area. What has been asked for by local or national companies? We can only think that office space would be suitable within this area but there is plenty already empty in Tiverton.

8. Green areas and recreational space.

The green space should be varied and be the maximum possible – woodland, open grassland, lakes, allotments etc. Green corridors connecting residential areas with footpaths and cycle paths which should of course be traffic free.

9. The local centre

Both of the two options put forward have the local facilities in about the same place which seems O.K. Bearing in mind that this development will bring about a dramatic increase in the local population, other additional services such as a Health Centre (doctors, dentists, etc.), nursery, sports facilities should also be considered. Is this also the time to consider the relocation of the fire station?

10. Comment on the two options.

Unfortunately the two options used different schematics (option 1 being easier to understand) which didn't help when trying to compare the two. Also there were only representatives from option 1 at the public exhibition we attended hence no chance to query option 2 to the same level.

Our first choice would be for zero development but given that we are now 'between a rock and a hard place', as option 1 is clearer and proposes a lower number of dwellings and housing densities this would be our preference of the two.

11. Proposed masterplan document

We have grave misgivings about the whole proposal. Well before this urban extension of Tiverton had even been thought of we paid a premium price for our property because of its rural location, green fields and local wild life whilst being close to local facilities. That premium has now been wiped off the value of our property and we very much doubt if our Council Tax Band will come down as a result. The thought of 10 to 15 years of disruption and noise from continuous construction in our retirement years is depressing to say the least. We may just be classed as cynics but we do wonder if this whole process (public exhibitions, consultation requests etc.) is just a legal requirement and that the wishes of local residents will be ignored and that the Prime Minister's comments that "the views of the local community should be paramount in planning decisions" is just political spin.

We are members of the public located within the boundary of the allocated site at Post Hill.

Mr & Mrs C. Steele

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