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Great Western
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Bampton
Tiverton
EX16 9NQ

Local Plan Review Consultation
Forward Planning
Mid Devon District Council
Phoenix House
Phoenix Lane
Tiverton
EX16 6PP

1st February, 2014



Dear Sirs

We write in response to the Local Plan Review Options Consultation document of January 2014.

As Bampton residents we wish to comment on the review as it affects our village and in particular to the inclusion of the South Molton Road site for house building. This site has already been ruled out on the grounds of visual impact after a previous consultation yet is now included again and doubled in size. The cynic in me wonders if it has been doubled in order that it might be halved later to "prove" that objections have been listened to.

We are pleased to learn from the document (2.71) that Bampton has been re-classified to match the other 21 designated villages in Mid Devon. Policy S14 states that development in these villages will be limited to small scale housing. The South Molton Road site has an allocation of 80 houses. We fail to see how that can be described as small scale.

According to Policy S3 the development target for residential expansion in rural areas is 1,600 (Option 1) or 1,040 (Option 2). If these figures are divided by the number of villages (22) the amount of new house construction Bampton should expect over the next 20 years is 73 or 47. Because Bampton was previously classed as a town it has already had considerable development. Over the past six years 46 houses have been built at the Scotts site and other sites at Scotts, School Close and Ashley Park have planning permission for a further 77 with construction on going. This together with the sites already allocated at Bouchier Close and Newton Square mean that Bampton has already far exceeded its fair share of development and there can certainly be no need to include a further allocation of 80 houses in South Molton Road.

Any further development in Bampton will mean more car use. The introduction to the Options Consultation recognises the strong pull from Exeter for employment. Bampton is about the furthest of the 22 villages from Exeter as possible within Mid Devon. A glance at the bus timetable will show that it is impossible to reach Exeter by public transport before 09.53 and the last bus to return leaves at 16.30. Both these journeys involve a change of bus in Tiverton and are obviously not an option for employment. Even Tiverton cannot be reached before 08.37.

The other barrier to Bampton employment is the road system as stated in paragraph 2.70. This has meant that businesses have been reluctant to set up here as evidenced by the empty industrial units. Sadly another long standing distribution business will close in March with the loss of 10 jobs and another 600 sq metres of warehouse space will be empty. The lack of high speed broadband is also a discouragement and there is still no date given for an upgrade to the Bampton telephone exchange.

Much of Bampton's employment comes directly or indirectly through tourism. More development will scar the landscape that brings tourists here especially if the buildings are of the "white box" variety as constructed in the Scotts site which bear no relationship to the rest of Bampton. Fortunately that site with its very bright street lighting is divorced from the centre of Bampton as is the Bouchier Road allocation. The South Molton Road site adjoins the Bampton Conservation Area and there are two Grade II listed buildings nearby. It would also be an eyesore as it is on a slope and, viewed from below where most current residents live, would appear as one row of houses on top of another removing the only green space that many School Close occupants can see.

We have not gone into the destruction of green fields that more construction in Bampton would bring nor the increased flood risk caused by more run off nor the problems that would be generated within a sewerage system which is already operating at over capacity as lorries are regularly removing excess waste.

We believe that we have shown why no more development sites should be allocated in Bampton. If there is any doubt then reference should be made to the Bampton Parish Plan 2013 which was produced following questionnaires returned by 57% of the population. It clearly states that any development should be at brown field not green field sites.

Yours faithfully

Stewart and Penny Hookins