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Local Plan Review
Mid Devon District Council
Phoenix House
Tiverton EX16 6PP

Mrs E Trebble
30 High St
Silverton
EX5 4 JD

18 February 2014



Ref: Draft Local Plan Consultation Document

Dear Sir/Madam

I strongly object to the plan put forward by Mid Devon District Council to build 160 houses in Silverton.

Community life is important, no less in a rural village, additional housing is often needed, but in a sustainable way to meet local needs without destroying a community that has built up over hundreds of years. Silverton has been proactive and building has taken place, particularly by infill over the last sixty years, but to build the amount of housing proposed would, I understand increase the houses in the village by around 30%. This proposal will erode the essential character of the village and is outside of the settlement limit plan reaffirmed in 2007 and updated in 2011.

The largest sites are predominantly on green field agricultural land, and at Old Butterleigh Road include building on allotments which have been worked by villagers for decades, resulting in the destruction of a well used local amenity. The Glebe is at the heart of the village and development would destroy this peaceful setting so important to many villagers.

Everyone I am sure are very aware of the devastation that flooding causes to homes and land, yet the Document acknowledges that some of the development incurs the risk of flooding. Park Road regularly floods a problem of many years, the runoff is into the field where 60 houses are proposed. Old Butterleigh Road into High Street has been continuously running with water for the last three months and the road has become eroded by it.

Access from most of the proposed sites is very restricted with single track lanes and little or no pedestrian facility. Access to Livingshayes is by an old single track farm lane, access to the Glebe is via narrow single track lanes which also have many blind bends. Neither of these sites are accessed by pedestrian footpaths. Access to Old Butterleigh Road is predominately single track due to the width of the road and the need for on street parking, this extends from the proposed site through High Street into Fore Street and the Village Square, in High Street there also is only intermittent footpaths. This lane is also constantly used by large farm vehicles, horse riders and walkers, it is the original Toll Road with ancient Devon hedges rich in flora and fauna including a network of badger runs.

The previous planning application for the smaller development at Old Butterleigh Road was refused a few years ago, access being a major issue as well as it being outside of existing policies.

Many households now have more than one vehicle, the Draft Plan, if acted upon would result in an increase of upwards of 300 vehicles negotiating the narrow lanes around the village significantly increasing the ongoing problem of road safety for those in cars as well as on foot. As there is very little or no opportunities for additional employment within the Village I believe that the volume of traffic movement around the narrow streets and lanes of the Village will be increased to unacceptable levels.

The pressure on the limited amenities within the Village is a concern, particularly in regard to the capacity of the school and health centre and the loss of the allotments. There is also the need for leisure activities, what provision is intended within this plan? Silverdale was built in the late 1960's, within the planning consent was the provision of a children's play area and additional parking with land earmarked for this purpose. This was not enforced and the land was built on.

Silverton has been pro-active in providing affordable housing, how much of the proposed developments have been designated for this purpose, and what strategies would MDDC put into place to avoid the present practice of developers, who once planning consent is given claim that it is too costly to provide this provision and have successfully had the provision recinded as has been recently reported in the news at a large development at Seaton.

These proposals do not take into account the needs and wishes of local communities and is ignoring the huge impact it would have on the existing residents of the village, disregarding previous planning rules to safeguard village life and destroying agricultural land and impinging on conservation areas and the few green sites still existing within the village.

It is a concern that the publishing of these plans occurred just before Christmas when there is less likelihood of people being aware of them. The posting of notices of consultation viewings also appeared to be planned for minimum impact, these were displayed in areas where only a small number of people were likely to see them and only a few days before the viewings. I could not find such a notice on the Village noticeboard in the Square, something that impinges so dramatically on the lives of all the village should be displayed where the maximum amount of people would see it.

The push to build homes within the UK is evident, but does it need to dramatically alter the character and heritage of villages? I understand that alternatively there are plans to direct development to the existing main towns in the area, and that Option 2B is to build a new settlement near junction 28 of the M5, a plan which I understand that Cullompton Town Council is in favour of. With the obvious advantage of the access to the M5 to alleviate traffic congestion in narrow Devon lanes this would appear to be a much better option than large unwanted developments in villages.

It is important that the people of Silverton have the opportunity to express their feelings on these proposals whether they are for or against, and that MDDC take these seriously and listen to the people of the Village.

Yours faithfully

KNUCKEY, Mike

From: Elizabeth Trebble
Sent: 20 February 2014 16:18
To: STRIDE, Mel
Subject: MDDC Local Plan Proposals for Silverton
Attachments: Local Plan Review MDDC.docx

Please find attached a copy of the letter that I have lodged with MDDC objecting to their proposal to the building of 160 houses in the Parish of Silverton.

I am very concerned about the affect that this will have on the existing residents of Silverton, the building outside of the settlement plan which will result in building on greenfield sites and the increase of traffic in our narrow lanes.

Although the fate of my own village is of great concern to me, I am also concerned that the Government's drive to build houses and their relaxation of planning regulations takes no account of the possible destruction of rural communities, and that decisions are made favouring developers not residents.

Can you advise of the safeguards that the Government has put into place to prevent this happening - or are my fears confirmed?

Regards
Elizabeth Trebble

Local Plan Review

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