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Phoenix House  
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EX16 6PP

9<sup>th</sup> March 2014

*Dear Sir or Madam,*



### **Comment on Mid-Devon Local Plan and Hemock Proposal**

My wife and I would like to comment on the Mid-Devon Local Plan and, in particular, the proposal to build a possible 195 dwellings in the village of Hemyock. In principle we support the move to develop Devon in a manner that is sustainable for the long term and recognise the overall need for additional housing in England. Comments are as follows:

- General Comment. Additional dwellings will attract more people who will require sufficient employment opportunities, an adequate road system, effective and adjacent public transport, medical support, schools and an effective drainage system to prevent flooding.
- Hemyock. We oppose the proposed build of 195 dwellings in Hemyock as the infrastructure of the village is unsuitable to support the large increase for the following reasons:
  - Employment. There are insufficient employment opportunities in Hemyock currently requiring a large number of the 1,600 (approx) voters to commute (mostly by car) to locations outside of the village.
  - Roads. The road system both in the village and the neighbouring feed-in roads has not changed substantially in decades. There are many 'choke points' that are evident during busier transit periods, usually involving modern, large vehicles, many of whose drivers are following sat-nav instructions that do not recognise the topography of the Blackdown Hills and the severity of some of the choke points. Widening and straightening the roads would be necessary to cope with the expected additional traffic (possibly 400 vehicles), however, this would increase traffic speed and have a large visual impact on this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty by removing many beautiful hedgerows.
  - Public Transport. Without the use of private vehicles, the public transport system in Hemyock could not support the needs of commuters. Additional, road passenger services would be required, however, they would still need to link to rail (Tiverton and Taunton, 9 and 12 miles distance) and the M5, A303, A30 arteries to be useful for the longer distance commuters.

- Medical Support. This is a critical support feature, particularly as the demographic trend of Hemyock shows an increasing percentage of villagers either approaching or are already of a pensionable age. The present Medical Centre has recently had to move many of its administrative staff out of Hemyock due to lack of available space in the Centre. A larger Medical Centre would be required.
- School. Hemyock Primary School is at maximum capacity and would need additional classroom space and other facilities to support an increased number of children.
- Drainage + Flooding. Additional housing would probably cause increased rain water run-off which would exacerbate the present situation in the Hemyock area which is already prone to flooding.
- Visual Impact. The proposed sites in Hemyock would be situated on hillsides that would be highly visible from the surrounding hills. This would have a large and detrimental visual impact on the village and its location in the Blackdown AONB.
- Conclusions. We do not consider that Hemyock has an adequate supporting infrastructure, as detailed above, to support the proposed development of increased dwellings in the Village; any further development must address these crucial issues. On a wider view, we further consider that to accommodate large numbers of additional dwellings, people and traffic, a robust infrastructure would be necessary. Preferably this development should have close, accessible and major road and rail links to facilitate ease of travel throughout the UK. We believe that the proposed Tiverton development would offer the best transport links due to the close proximity to Junction 27 of the M5, the A361 Link-Road and Tiverton Parkway. Therefore, this is our preferred choice and Hemyock should not be chosen.

Yours faithfully,

*T R BARTON*

*L BARTON*