

Glebe View  
Church Lane  
Cheriton Bishop  
Exeter EX6 6HY

March 2014

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



Dear Liz and Team,

### Local Plan for Development

I am writing with regard to the second stage of consultation on the Local Plan Review, specifically regarding Cheriton Bishop.

In principle we agree with the overall strategy for the local plan review namely that;

- The markets towns of Tiverton, Cullompton, Bampton and Crediton will be the main focuses of new development in scale with their individual infrastructures, economies, characters and constraints and,
- A network of villages with sufficient services and public transport provision will be locations for limited development, targeted to protect and enhance their environmental assets, including their character, biodiversity, heritage and setting.

With this in mind we are dumfounded that land with a capacity for 480 dwellings should have been identified in the Cheriton Bishop locality an area which currently has less than 300 homes. This is completely disproportionate and contradicts the aforementioned strategy.

### 1. Accuracy Issues

With regards to the public consultation documentation the first matter to examine is one of accuracy. The Local Plan Review Options paper and the Sustainability Appraisal appendix 2 state that there are 5 potential development sites within Cheriton Bishop;

- Glebe (0.9 hectares, 29 dwellings)
- Land near the church (2.9 hectares, 40 dwellings)
- Land adjacent to Woodleigh Hall (9.2 hectare, 221 dwellings)
- Land east of Hillview (1.3 hectares, 5 dwellings)
- Land North of Brakes View (7.7 hectares, 185 dwellings)

When measuring the sites as marked out in the Cheriton Bishop land allocation map there appears to be discrepancies on two of these sites. Land near the church as marked out is approximately 2.4 hectares rather than the stated 2.9 and Land East of Hillview is only 0.13 hectares rather than the stated 1.3.

## **2. A Residents' Viewpoint of Cheriton Bishop**

Cheriton Bishop is a small historic village with less than 800 residents and less than 300 dwellings. Although seen as one village there are, in fact, two discreet areas; the north end of the village which resides around the medieval church and Cheriton Cross which is situated around the shop and pub amenities at the Southern end and located by the main road. The north end of the village is where the school (and pre-school) are located and this can only be accessed by the narrow Church Lane.

The school has approximately 60 children and is at near capacity (capacity 70). Church Lane becomes very busy at school times and realistically the road infrastructure is not suitable for much increase in school demand. Church Lane contains a historic cob pavement that is sporadic but forms a vital part of the historic charm and character of the village. Any increase in school demand would require significant development of both the school and pavement infrastructure without impacting the historic cob pavement already in situ.

The north part of the village forms the historic hub of the village with numerous thatched and listed buildings and houses a conservation area that sustains the character of the village and provides a peaceful location for the local wildlife.

The north end of the village provides better infrastructure from an access point of view but any development needs to consider the schooling issues regarding its capacity and pedestrian and road access to it.

## **3. Specific Assessment against Sustainability Appraisal/Development Management Policies**

The following are specific points regarding the 5 sites in relation to some of the Sustainability Objective categories and Development Management Policies;

- *SA Objective A - Protection of the natural environment/DM27 Protection of Heritage Assets*

Land near the church borders the conservation area. It is not uncommon for residents in the conservation area to have 20 different bird species visit their gardens in a day along with bats at dusk and owls at night. This natural environment has been generated over hundreds of years around the thatched buildings and the open countryside. Development in this area would have a detrimental impact on this natural and historic environment.

- *SA Objective B - Protection and promotion of quality built environment/DM27 Protection of Heritage Assets*

As above, building on Land near the church would impact both the conservation area and the feel of the historic environment that surrounds the thatched and listed buildings at the north end of the village.

- *SA Objective C - Mitigating the effects of climate change/DM28 Green Infrastructure in Major Development*

There are a number of streams running within Cheriton Bishop which have been impacted by the recent bad weather. A contributing factor has been the water that runs off the road which has a significantly worse impact than the water that comes off the fields which drains in a more organic manner.

The following link highlights that there are 3 areas of Church Lane, as identified by the Environment Agency, that have a significant risk of flooding from surface water.

<http://watermaps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/wiyby.aspx?topic=ufmfsw#x=276920&y=92959&scale=11>

Any development built within 300 yards of these streams would increase this surface water flood risk and these impact the development opportunities within Land North of Brakes View, Land near the church and the Land adjacent to Woodleigh Hall. The eventuality of a flood caused by development in these areas would impact Church Lane and could therefore make the school inaccessible.

- *SA Objective G – Meeting housing needs/DM28 Green Infrastructure in Major Development*

With less than 300 dwellings in the village at present the land identified as suitable for development would increase the size of Cheriton Bishop by nearly 3 times. Whilst we accept the need for growth and development, this land allocation is excessive requiring the entire infrastructure of the village (including electricity, water, drainage, sewage, road access and schooling) to be redeveloped.

- *SA Objective I – Delivering the Necessary Infrastructure/ DM28 Green Infrastructure in Major Development*

Church Lane simply cannot cope with a traffic increase of more than 10%-20% regardless of the requirement being for residential access, school access or any other access.

#### **4. Recommendation – Number and Type of Developments**

Whilst in agreement with the need for housing, it is unnecessary to allocate such a large area in a small, historic and rural village.

Our recommendation is that the village will need 15-30 houses to 2026 and the focus needs to be aimed at bringing young families into the village in order to maintain the pre-school and schooling facilities that currently provide the correct proportion of vibrancy and employment in the village.

We therefore ask that Mid Devon District Council work on providing;

- Housing suitable for young families
- Housing that attracts young families to the village and,
- Strategies that make housing affordable to this demographic – we don't want it owned by property gurus that will charge the demographic unaffordable rents.

Additionally, due to its historic nature and modest size, Cheriton Bishop does not suit large scale development. In order to minimise the impact on the village the 15-30 houses recommended above would best be delivered by splitting in to 3 or 4 smaller developments that are accessed independently from the main road. This would be in keeping with what has been achieved in Chestnut Close.

#### **5. Recommendation – Location of Developments**

Of the 5 sites identified there are two that appear most appropriate;

1. Land East of Hillview
2. Glebe (next to the main road/Chestnut Close)

These sites provide a sensibly sized development with minimal large scale impact;

- They are proportionate in size to meet the housing need

- They are accessed via the main road limiting the impact on Church Lane
- The main road is wider at these locations meaning that pavements could easily be located to provide route back to the village amenities
- They would not cause the flood risk associated with other sites
- They would not have the negative impact of the historic buildings/conservation areas present near other sites

The only negative impact is at the Glebe which is, at present, partially common land for use by the villagers. As it stands it is not used significantly and this is probably due to its location just outside of the village hub. A sensible solution would be to turn this area into housing accommodation and to re-site the common land closer to the village playground. Land North of Brakes View adjacent to Church Lane would be an appropriate site for this and would likely create an area that would be used frequently by the villagers whilst freeing up space (the Glebe next to Chestnut Close) suitable for development.

The above information is intended to provide 'local' knowledge of the area that cannot be understood by central policy makers. There is no intention for criticism and we fully appreciate the need for development and sustainability across mid Devon. Please consider these comments and we would very much appreciate a response so as to understand how we can further influence any future planning.

Yours sincerely,

Joanne and Chris Carter