

The Old Rectory,
Church Lane,
Cheriton Bishop,
Devon,
EX6 6HY

17th 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 existing planning strategy as set out in your document - 'Allocations and Infrastructure Development Plan - which seems to strike a realistic and sensible balance between the needs of the urban and rural communities in Mid Devon, and namely that;

- The markets towns of Tiverton, Cullompton, Crediton and Bampton will be the main focus 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.

Cheriton Bishop Local Plan

Recently residents in the village, guided and led by the Parish Council, have been surveyed in order for a Local Plan to be developed. This consultation has shown that residents agree there is a need for housing, but these needs to be focussed on the needs of the local community and the desire to maintain the atmosphere and character of a small, historic and rural village.

The village plan, which is supported by a demand study, identifies the need for a further 15-30 houses up to 2026 and the focus should be aimed at continuing to bring 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 to the village.

Due to its historic nature and modest size, Cheriton Bishop would not and does not suit large scale development. In order to minimise the impact on the village it has been envisaged that the 15-30 houses required would be developed on a number of small and infill sites across the settlement. This would be in keeping with how the village has been developing in recent years.

Cheriton Bishop a local perspective

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 is centred around the medieval church and the school and Cheriton Cross where the majority of village amenities are located. These include a thriving local pub, village shop and a successful commercial business.

Church Lane, which links Cheriton Cross with the area around the Church, becomes very busy at school times and realistically the road infrastructure is completely unsuitable for any substantial 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.

This Northern part of the village forms the historic hub of the village with numerous thatched and listed buildings all contained within a conservation area that sustains the character of the village.

Suggested Potential development sites

The public consultation documentation identifies 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)

Collectively these sites have the 'potential' to provide a minimum of 480 dwellings, far in excess of the needs of the village and far beyond the capacity of the local infrastructure to accommodate them. Allowing development on this scale would completely 'swamp' the existing village, destroy its historic fabric, overwhelm existing facilities and provide a level of over provision that is out of all proportion to the needs of this rural Devon community.

Sustainable local development

There are, however, a number of potential development sites in the village, which if utilised in whole or part, would allow the village to develop in line with Parish Plan whilst maintaining the character and vibrancy of the existing community.

These sites would provide sensibly sized developments that will easily integrate with existing facilities and amenities;

- They are proportionate in size and capable of meeting the identified local need for housing
- Access to these sites will have minimum or no impact on the traffic on Church Lane
- They would not have the negative impact on the historic buildings/conservation areas.

Further these sites are fully aligned to your own well thought out strategy for the named villages including Cheriton Bishop, in that development will be limited to MINOR proposals within their defined settlement limits and to allocations for:

- a) Affordable housing meeting a local need,
- b) Small scale employment and tourism,
- c) Services and facilities serving the locality,
- d) Other very limited development which enhances community vitality or meets a local or social or economic need.

We are grateful for the opportunity to present you with our views, which we trust will help you ensure that any future development plans for Cheriton Bishop are proportionate and fully aligned to the needs of the local community. We therefore suggest that the approval to allow the development of a further 480 homes is rejected, and that any future development is limited to that set out within the village plan

Yours sincerely,

Ian Cowley & Dr Fiona Underwood

