

Sandra Hutchings

Ack

From: Brian Holmes
Sent: 21 March 2014 11:17
To: DPD
Subject: MDDC LOCAL PLAN RESPONSE

Rose Mullion
 Old Village
 Willand
 Devon EX15 2RP

21st March 2014

MID DEVON LOCAL PLAN

Dear Sir/Madam

I write to express my objection and deep concerns with regard to the potential proposed development within the Willand Parish, as specified within the Local Plan Review documentation. There have already been planning applications submitted for new housing within the Willand Settlement Area. One of these, in my view, is removing the availability of an 'Infrastructure' site in South View Road.

Willand is one of the smallest parishes in Devon and is almost certainly the most densely populated for its size. The existing Settlement Area is almost totally developed - and in 1996, the Inspector for the Devon Structure Plan said at the time that Willand itself was over-developed. Since then, large areas of Willands green fields have been covered by over a thousand new houses, with the added infrastructure being limited to additional classrooms onto recreational areas within the Primary School. Employment potential has been restricted to a small number of units on the Mid Devon Business Park, not helped by the inability of MDDC to stop the conversion of further local privately-owned agricultural farmland to storage and Industrial use. There is no further space within Willand for infrastructure, unless one considers the empty brownfield space at the afore-mentioned Business Park. And this lack of space is no doubt the reason for ALL of the Local Plan housing proposals for Willand being outside of the existing Settlement Area.

We are told, on a regular basis and by numerous people, that we need housing in the area. No one has ever been able to provide a sensible or valid reason why or for whom. With no employment potential, only commuter families are likely to want to live here. Information currently available on the Internet shows there are already a minimum of six hundred and eighty one houses for sale in Mid Devon – 166 in the EX17 Crediton postal district, 189 in the EX15 area and 326 in the Tiverton, EX16 area. Houses that are already built and available for instant occupation. So why, it has to be asked, do we need an additional 344 houses within the Willand parish boundary? Or, for that matter, a potential 3000 between Willand and Junction 27?

More information, made available by a Freedom of Information request, is of great concern to me when I have always believed (rightly or wrongly) in the due process of democracy. My concern is that the deliberations of Council planners and committee members could be overshadowed by the implications of the New Homes Bonus, introduced by Central Government in 2011. To quote from the information given, *"The New Homes Bonus was introduced to provide an incentive for growth and to provide funding for communities where an increased population in the area could result in a deterioration in the level of*



public services and other amenities. Or put in another way the Governments way of incentivising new development. It was introduced in April 2011 and provides an additional sum, equivalent to the national average for the Council Tax band on each additional new home, and on any brought back into use, for the following six years, as a grant, which is not ring-fenced". With the average annual Band D Council Tax currently set at £1590.89, the incentive, grant, or whatever word you think appropriate, is a considerable sum of money for each new home over a six year period and would be of great benefit to Heads of Department in MDDC in their attempts to keep services and amenities at an acceptable level for residents. And it would be difficult to ignore when it came to making decisions, especially as £1.25 million has already been utilized from the scheme.

There are no advantages or benefits for the existing residents of Willand in this proposed Local Plan. There is not even the certainty that when Affordable Housing is included in any of the developments, they will remain as such. If the developer, having been given approval, then pleads 'poverty' because he suddenly discovers his plan is 'no longer financially viable' with these houses, and demands they become of 'marketable value', will the green light be given for him to amend the approved plans? You will no doubt remember your decisions with regard to Willands Park Street development!! With the knowledge that the Town Council in Cullompton is anxious to regenerate their area and with the possibility of the re-introduction of a railway station, it is difficult to justify new local development elsewhere.

Yours sincerely Brian Holmes.