

Lower Bowdens Farm  
Bowdens Lane  
Shillingford  
Tiverton  
Devon  
EX16 9BJ

**Local Plan Review Consultation**

Forward Planning  
Mid Devon District Council  
Phoenix House  
TIVERTON  
Devon EX16 6PP



21<sup>st</sup> March 2014

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Local Plan Review Consultation regarding Land off Bowdens Lane, Shillingford Option (page 227/8 of Appendix 2: Sustainability Appraisal of Policies and Site Options Document)**

I am writing to register my objections to the above site being considered as part of the Mid Devon local plan for future development for the purpose of providing new housing. I live at Lower Bowdens Farm, which adjoins the site for proposed development, and I am strongly opposed to development of the land off Bowdens Lane between our own property and the rest of the village of Shillingford.

The reasons for my objections to the proposed development of land within Shillingford are as follows:

1. **Scale of the proposal.** The above document quotes an area of 1.6 hectares, to contain 51 houses. There are only circa 80 existing houses in Shillingford, which is a small village. Building this number of additional houses would increase the size of the village by 68%, which would drastically and unacceptably change the character and nature of our small rural village.
2. **Setting a precedent for further development.** If permission was granted to build any houses on this land, I am extremely concerned that over time the development would grow with further houses being built, with the potential to dominate the landscape in our beautiful rural valley.
3. **Green field site.** The land proposed is currently good quality, productive agricultural land. Developing this land would contradict current policy not to create new homes in the countryside. It also concerns me the rate at which we are losing good quality agricultural land to other purposes be it housing or energy production i.e. solar farms etc, all of which is having a negative effect on our ability to produce food. This land, combined with the local lakes is also very beneficial for our wildlife in the area, which we have actively taken steps to improve within our own property. There would certainly be a negative impact for the local wildlife.

4. **Other sites already with approval for development.** There is already a brown field site in Shillingford, which has permission for 3 new houses, and has had for some time. This site is an eyesore in the centre of Shillingford, but has still not been developed.
5. **Visual impact.** The proposed site is in a low lying area of grassland in a beautiful valley. It would therefore be extremely visible from all directions, and would have negative impact on the views of our beautiful valley, not only from our own property, but from the whole area. A development especially of this size would monopolise the local landscape.
6. **No defined need for additional housing in Shillingford.** There is property for sale locally, including low cost housing, which has been on the market for a very long time and has not sold. If there is already property for sale in the area, including that of a similar type to that being proposed, then there appears to be no need for further housing in the immediate area.
7. **No existing infrastructure to cope with additional housing.** The sewerage system, storm drains and water supply are coping with the existing houses in Shillingford. However it would not be adequate for additional houses, and would certainly not cope with the additional strain on the systems, especially the sewerage system. The local broadband is also already inadequate, and a number of new houses would increase the contention on the network, and therefore make extremely poor broadband even slower. This would have a severe negative impact on my own business, as well as many others I would suggest, as I am completely reliant on my internet connection to earn a living.
8. **Lack of Local Amenities.** There are no local amenities within Shillingford, except the local park, which is under threat should this development go ahead. There is no shop, school or public house. Currently there are no employment opportunities in the immediate area either, with new residents being likely to need to commute out of the area, increasing traffic and pressure on the roads network, which is already under stress.
9. **Bampton School and Health Centre.** Both the school and health centre in Bampton are full to capacity already. We already know of local children being turned away from the school, and the health centre are at their limit for the number of patients registered within them, with no intention to increase the number of doctors or nurses. Therefore people will have to travel to other places to access either of these vital amenities. Bolham School is the nearest school (within Devon), which is 8 miles away, and will create problems with addition time and travel expense for any families with children.
10. **Access and increase in traffic.** The proposed number of houses is conservatively expected to bring an additional 87 cars. This is going to increase the risk of accidents within the village, especially in Bowdens Lane, where there is no pavement and the narrow width of the road would preclude one from being installed. This will significantly increase the risk of injury to pedestrians who use this lane, such as for dog walking, running and in particular the risk to children walking to the park. The entrance to Bowdens Lane is only a few metres within the 40 mph zone, and is a fast stretch of road with many motorists already driving at speeds far in excess of this. Visibility is also restricted on the junction itself due to cars parking further along the main road. The risk of accidents at this junction will therefore increase.

We have met as a local community, and it is clear that all residents who have expressed an opinion about this development are opposed to it, with the only two in favour of it being the landowners who stand to profit from the development. There is therefore strong local opposition to the proposed development.

I chose to move to this area in order to live in a quiet country location, as I expect did many of the other local residents. We certainly do not want to live where the countryside is being inappropriately developed for further housing, especially when it is not required in the local area.

I ask that you please discount the proposed development within Shillingford from the Local Plan to provide additional housing throughout Mid Devon, where it is neither wanted, nor needed and would negatively impact on our local area. Please consider far more appropriate locations for development within the Local Plan, where there are other communities within the Mid Devon district that would actively welcome additional housing, and that have the infrastructure in place to cope with it.

Yours faithfully

Mr David Ross

*By email dated 21<sup>st</sup> March 2014*

