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22nd March, 2014

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



Dear Sir / Madam,

I wish to state my opposition to Options 1 and 2a in the Local Plan Review Consultation Document.

Options 1 and 2 are in fact not 'options' at all. MDDC have already clearly stated their preference for urban centred development. It is assumed that the majority of development should take place in and around Tiverton. However, the potential for development in Tiverton is not sufficient to satisfy the stated housing and employment needs, and further areas of development at Junction 27 or 28 would also be needed.

The need to develop Tiverton further is dependent on the assumption that Tiverton should continue to be the centre for retail and employment in Mid Devon, as well as being the administrative centre. This assumption is not substantiated.

There is also an assumption that the need for additional housing and employment will continue to grow at the present rate, outstripping national, South West and Devon trends. There is no clear rationale for this assumption presented within the consultation document.

Tiverton is not well placed in terms of future sustainable transport and communications. I consider that development at Junction 28 would better enable integrated development of road and rail links within and beyond Mid Devon.

I wish to express my strong opposition to the proposed development at Hartnoll Farm. This development would be directly contrary to several of MDDC's stated aims:

- *Optimising social and environmental benefits. Traffic pressure on the village of Halberton, and the Blundells Road area of Tiverton would become intolerable. The interests of current residents should be given as great a level of cognisance as those who move into the proposed developments.*

- **Conservation of countryside and environmental assets.** A large area of Grade 1 agricultural land would be destroyed. Current population forecasts predict that the UK population will grow from 63 million to 70 million within the next ten years. Prime agricultural land will need to be valued and used even more intensively in the future, and the need for sustainable development in producing food locally will become ever more important.

The beauty of the Mid Devon countryside is valued and loved by current residents, and sought after by those who wish to live here. A large development at Hartnoll Farm, in addition to the Eastern Urban Extension, would decimate a large area of open countryside, visible over an extensive area.

- **Provision of tourism and leisure enterprises.** The Grand Western Canal Country Park is one of the prime attractions in Mid Devon, and one which offers leisure facilities to tourists and local residents alike. The peaceful environment of yet another section of the canal would be spoilt by this development.
- **Protection of biodiversity.** A wide variety of habitats would be destroyed in this development, and important 'green corridors' between areas of surrounding countryside would be disturbed.

I am also opposed to the proposed retail, leisure and entertainment development at Junction 27. There has not been a convincing case made that there is either a demand or need for such provision within the local area. The public are discouraged from coming into the town centre by the lack of good quality shops and high parking charges. Currently, the centre of Tiverton has many retail outlets either lying empty, or being used by charity and discount shops. Business rates are overwhelmingly high, and cripple the small, specialist trader. I believe it is wrong to consider decimating yet another area of our countryside, when the trade opportunities within the town are not being maximised.

The effect of the Junction 27 development would also be detrimental to tourism. Mid Devon and Tiverton proudly boast of being 'the gateway to Devon'. If this development were to go ahead, the first impression of Devon that visitors would have on driving down the M5, would be of urban sprawl, and not the glorious countryside they have come to see.

Our rich countryside is Mid Devon's most valuable asset. MDDC should now recognise this fact, and steward the countryside for the future, not allow it to be ruined for ever.

Yours faithfully,

Joan C. Cudmore