

I am not against building more homes in Hemyock 'per se', but do feel that the village, which is quite heavily constrained geographically, is being proposed as a development opportunity in a way which is contrary to the objectives of the AONB in which it is a part, and more importantly beyond its capability to support such developments.

My particular concerns about any proposals for future housing development in the village are that they must include a serious investment in the underlying infrastructure for flooding, roads and sewage:-

Flooding - this has become the 'norm' in the village over the last few years; concreting/tarmacing over yet more ground surface will only increase the risk and frequency of this unless significant work is undertaken on the River Culm. The Environment Agency, in their response to the original consultation, raised the issue of flood defence infrastructure; any proposed developments affecting river flows from Hemyock will have major impacts downstream at Culmstock and beyond.

The floodwater drainage throughout the village is marginal at best, with a number of bottlenecks causing floodwater to exceed capacity and come up out of the drains and manholes rather than going down them – this includes Culmbridge Road where two of the proposed development sites are adjacent. These two sites (Culmbridge Farm) are either adjacent to/on or very close to the existing defined floodplain area, I would contend that were these extra developments to go ahead it will be necessary to redefine the floodplain area unless serious improvements in flood defences and/or flood water management are undertaken.

Roads - People do not move into Hemyock for employment, as proven by the extreme difficulties faced in trying to find tenants for existing commercial premises and very poor take up for commercial development opportunities (the old station yard area is now going to residential development following years of standing idle/empty, the planning restraints on the live/work units in Culmbridge Road were lifted to enable the converted barns to be sold without the work units, units on the Station Road Industrial Estate continue to prove difficult to lease). Therefore all the 'new' residents that would be attracted by any development will be travelling in and out of the village, the majority of these 'commuters' will not add anything to the village making it a 'dormitory town', whilst this may be satisfactory in the suburbs of a major town it is not the way to develop a village in an AONB.

No road infrastructure improvements have been carried out in the last 20 years and all the routes in and out are hopelessly inadequate for the current traffic loads. The topic of traffic problems on Pencross Hill is a regular feature of local parish council meetings and the issue of Hemyock traffic passing through Culmstock has already been raised in responses to the original consultation document. Roads through the centre of the village are often gridlocked when lorries going in one direction meet buses/coaches/cars going in the opposite direction.

The overall Spatial Strategy states the development will be managed to: "Reduce the need to travel by car, increase the potential for public transport, cycling and walking" – there is very little opportunity to cycle or walk to any employment areas from Hemyock (distance), the new residents will in the main be of a level of affluence where they would probably avoid using public transport so will travel by car, this will also be contrary to another of the goals of the spatial strategy, that of reducing carbon emissions.

Sewage – whilst, I believe, some improvement work has been undertaken on the sewage processing infrastructure it is still marginal when heavy storm water levels enter the sewerage system. The levels of sewage entering the system would be significantly higher if the proposed developments go ahead, even without the increase in flood water.

I have raised these issues on a number of occasions at Parish Council and open meetings but am always met with a "that's a Highways issue" or "that's an Environment issue", this proposed strategy is for the next 20 years and must include plans and finance for all aspects of the infrastructure to support the proposed developments or it will lead to a total collapse of the village's infrastructure.

My worst fears are realised when the document refers to an Infrastructure Plan being published in "Summer 2014" (how can we comment on housing development proposals when we don't know what the supporting infrastructure is going to be?), when Mid Devon Council will ensure "appropriate infrastructure is provided for" by "partnership working" with Devon County Council and "there is currently a significant infrastructure funding gap" – and you want the support of residents who are to be affected by these plans?

Finally, Policy statement S16 states "Development will be limited to proposals within their defined settlement limits" – this is patently not the case with the proposed developments in Hemyock.

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