



12 Sycamore Close  
Willand  
Cullompton  
EX15 2SH

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2014

Mid Devon District Council  
Planning Department  
Emailed to: [planningconsultations@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:planningconsultations@middevon.gov.uk)

Dear Sirs

RE: LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – OPTIONS CONSULTATION – WILLAND PARISH

Following my attendance at the meeting held in Willand Village Hall on 7<sup>th</sup> March, I wish to write as follows on the subject of the five potential housing sites and two industrial sites identified for expansion within Willand Parish, where I have been resident since 1981.

“REGENERATE CULLOMPTON – DON’T DEGENERATE WILLAND” is my message.

There are under-used industrial estates already in Willand so we don’t need more; planners need to take the option to change their use from industrial to residential if more houses are deemed to be needed, rather than to build on green-field sites. The former Mole Valley Farmers site in South View Road is a brown-field site which is ideally placed for residential use as it’s right in the middle of other housing anyway.

The Primary School (where our sons attended) has already been expanded and is full to capacity with no more scope to expand – this fact cannot be ignored. Having worked in a local primary school for 13 years I have seen first-hand the problems faced by schools in this situation.

Willand has already grown hugely in the last 25 years but has lost facilities such as a general store and garage in that time. Willand residents rely on nearby towns and cities for goods, services and employment.

Cullompton used to be a thriving market town with a good variety of shops and services; today it offers very little to the shopper and the high street is tired and shabby.

Cullompton does however possess and offer:-

- A successful secondary school
- New library
- Supermarkets (second one soon to re-open) and Mole Valley Farmers
- Sports centre
- Golf and fitness at Padbrook
- Public transport links (primarily buses), with potential to have a new train station
- Regular Farmers markets and pannier markets
- Motorway services and potential to attract visitors into the town. (The Waldrons has been restored – we need to get people in to see it and to spend their money in the town)
- Swimming pool planned
- Excellent health centre, veterinary practice, opticians, dentist etc

Cullompton is a TOWN – Willand is a VILLAGE so obviously they are not, by definition, able to expand and support a growing community in the same way as each other.

Is the car park off Station Road in Cullompton, behind the Police Station (that's something else that Cullompton has – a Police Station) fully used? Is there potential to consider alternative or additional use for this area? A public garden area would be nice – a little oasis for locals and visitors to enjoy. What parking opportunities will the new Aldi store provide for the lower end of the town and anyone wishing to visit the High Street shops?

Cullompton's traffic problems such as congestion in the High Street could be assisted by employing a Traffic Warden and having more control over roadside parking through the narrower section (between the Town Hall and Library); also to knock down part or all of the former bank on the corner of Tiverton Road to improve the road splay and facilitate access for vehicles at that junction.

There should be NO commercial development at Junction 27: it is midway between Exeter and Taunton, both of which attract local people for jobs, retail and leisure and both would suffer a decline if a large scale development was allowed at Junction 27 (with negative impact on our local market towns of Tiverton and Cullompton also).

Junction 27 is already a traffic bottleneck with links to the North Devon Link Road and A38, especially at peak times and in holiday season: it would become gridlocked with extra traffic and have a resulting negative impact on the local area and its residents.

We must preserve the Green Gateway to Devon – once it's gone, it's gone forever.

The proposal to build housing between Willand and Junction 27 makes no sense: no-one will benefit from it in our local communities; it would put extra pressure on local roads, schools and health care and where are the jobs for anyone moving in? More prime agricultural land and countryside would be lost forever for no good reason.

The traffic impact of rural development is significant because people are reliant on their cars; whereas town development should have less traffic impact as children can (and should) walk to school and more schemes should be in place to support and encourage this.

Planners should be looking to develop brown-field sites in Cullompton e.g. the former Devon Growers site, for housing and scale the size of any developments appropriately according to the available or planned infrastructure. There is also a massive area of land and buildings at Hele Mill lying empty and unused – surely this brown-field site can be used for housing or business?

Cullompton badly needs a bypass and the past failure to incorporate a motorway junction near Little Copse was a major oversight: if in place this would serve traffic from both directions, including support for any future developments at Hele Mill.

Looking specifically at the 'options' for Willand, firstly Dean Hill Road is a ridiculous location for building 54 houses between a railway and motorway, on an already busy country lane which is heavily used by employees of Two Sisters and is on a junction with the main road on a blind summit!

Secondly, building on three fields off Meadow Park should not be considered because they are productive agricultural land and are inclined to be boggy in places; these fields provide a green margin between the village and the M5 and are a valued amenity for walkers using the Public Right of Way. Importantly and environmentally, development of these fields would negate the positive contribution made by the Woodland Trust's woodland which would become a play area (or worse) with an adverse effect on the birds and wildlife which depend on it.

Thirdly there should be NO proposal to build on a flood plain (as in the Two Sisters site proposals): planners are becoming ostriches burying their heads in the sand if they even contemplate this, let alone approve it!

It is essential for Government and Planning Authorities to have joined-up thinking and cohesive planning; they need to redevelop in other areas of the UK where housing stock lies empty before burying more countryside and amenity land under homes, roads and industrial estates.

This letter is written from the heart and I would urge you to consider the points made. Thank you.

Yours faithfully

Barbara Bodkin  
(also on behalf of Graham Bodkin)

