



Mr and Mrs Biddulph
3 Myrtle Close
Willand
Devon
EX15 2SU

18th March 2014

Re: Mid Devon Local Plan 2013-2033

In response to the above document we would like to make the following comments:

The proposal for the development of Quicks Farm

- **The proposed development at Quicks farm is outside of the existing village settlement line.**

We would question the point of a settlement line if this can just be ignored to suit planning policy as and when the local authority needs to identify potential housing sites. The settlement line exists for a reason - to limit development within the village and keep Willand a village that can exist with its current supporting amenities i.e. school, medical facilities and local shop(s).

- **Lack of suitable infrastructure**

At the local planning meeting we were informed that the planners are looking at options for provision of access through the current Willand Moor Road estate roads to the Quicks Farm site. The design and layout of the existing estate does not lend itself to this increase in traffic or access. Larger vehicles already struggle to navigate the estate and this would only get worse if all traffic (residential and commercial deliveries) for the new development is routed this way. In places the roads are single track and don't even have footpaths and therefore would provide additional danger to pedestrians including children.

The entrance/exit onto the Uffculme Road from Quicks Farm would also be dangerous for farm vehicles and speeding traffic along the Uffculme straight. Once again there is also the issue of provision of footpaths along this road to allow for the increased pedestrian access – this is currently not available.

- **Loss of prime agricultural land and the impact on the local farming community**

The farmer at Quicks Farm has stated that the field proposed for development is his best field and the removal of this field from the farmer may significantly impact on the viability of the farm business. (RABI owns the field and it is RABI who have proposed to sell the field). Surely this is at odds with the RABI charity's own core values and Mid Devon District Council's corporate plan focus of 'Thriving Economy' and 'Caring for our environment'.

- Environment

The Quicks Field site is bordered by established hedgerows and is a haven for wildlife. (Bat colonies (protected species), Deer and Foxes are known to live in and around the field.

The field is bordered by an historic Devon bank.

- Neighbourhood impact

We have concerns regarding the potential loss of the residential amenity of neighbours to the development by reason of: overlooking, loss of privacy (currently residential gardens back onto the field site either with a low Devon bank/wall) and overshadowing.

For the number of dwellings proposed we have concerns over the potential density of the development and the adverse impact on the character of the existing neighbourhood.

If Quicks Farm remained a viable farm business then the potential development would be immediately adjacent to a working and productive farm. This would not be a suitable location for residential use due to operation of farm machinery and the potential impacts of slurry, flies and noise.

- General points of consideration around development of the Quick's Farm site:

- The village primary school is already overcrowded (50 pupils over the agreed intake) with no scope to expand without removing much needed playing fields.
- Increased traffic through the village and therefore increased safety concerns.
- A lack of amenities generally to support residents of Willand – there is a reliance on the use of cars which increases carbon footprint and has environmental impacts.
- Willand has already greatly expanded over the years and has 'had its fair share' of development.
- The local plan proposal provides no options for use of any brown field sites within the Willand settlement limit or potential re-allocation of land assigned for industrial use. Such sites remain vacant in Willand i.e. The Mid Devon Business Park which already has the road infrastructure in place (roundabout entrance and public footpaths) to accommodate a housing development.
- Willand is already taking on its share of development with the agreed affordable housing schemes already in the existing plan.

- Section 2.18 from the local plan proposal: “The Council is seeking community views on a range of potential development sites in rural areas and will aim to allocate a level of development that reflects local need and demand without harming village character”. The current proposals appear to be completely at odds with this statement.
- If this development were to be allowed it would increase the village housing stock by 4.5% and due to previous decisions there is no retail provision close by.

The proposal for J27 Commercial and Residential Development

This proposal would effectively be an ‘extension’ to Willand with no separation between the village and the new settlement. This would lead to a large sprawling town with Willand being potentially a poorer ‘suburb’ of the new development.

As stated above Willand is at peak capacity in respect of its current amenities and the construction of houses in the new development will stretch these amenities even further given the new town’s facilities are unlikely to be ready from the start of the project. Thus the new residents will look to Willand to provide schooling, medical care etc until their own facilities are fully functioning. Willand will not be able to cope with this.

The new town will bring with it additional traffic and safety issues on the B3181 and the J27 motorway junction – the road is not currently set up to cope with the proposed volume of traffic resulting from the development.

The proposal will once again result in the loss of prime agricultural land and the green fields and hedgerows that define Devon.

