

## MID DEVON LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – OPTIONS CONSULTATION



### Policy J27 (Junction 27 and Willand) – New Community

- We wish to object to Policy J27 that is included in the Draft Local Plan for reasons given below and request that it is withdrawn as an Option immediately. Policy S3 is extremely misleading in that the J27 Industrial/Leisure/Retirement element is also included in Option 1 (Town Focus). It needs to be removed from Option 1 as it has been already included in Option 2a, consistent with the original proposal by the developer in the SHLAA in June 2013.
- We have viewed the submissions of both Willand Parish Council and Uffculme Parish Council in relation to this Policy, and the Options Plan in general, and would support the views put forward in these documents. The cumulative effect on the village of Uffculme of this development and others proposed in the Waste and Minerals Plans, would have a devastating effect on the lives of people in this community and also those at Willand.
- Traffic – traffic flow at J27 is already at capacity and although the junction itself may be capable of a partial upgrade the approach roads are not. These are already extremely busy with often queues to Waterloo Cross roundabout and beyond. Some 4,000 people driving to work and home each day, an influx of visitors to the leisure area and thousands of HGVs and commercial vehicles using the commercial zone would have catastrophic consequences on the local road network. We do not feel that a satisfactory solution could be engineered. Residents from local communities would probably take longer to reach J27 than to drive to Bristol once on it!
- Jobs and Employment – this is the old chestnut which keeps coming up! The unemployment statistics for this area do not support the need to create thousands of jobs and the figures quoted by the developer are total nonsense in any case – no one could possibly believe them! There is no problem with jobs per se – we have J29 Skypark, J28 Cullompton and an almost empty Willand Business Park all giving ample opportunities for job creation. Jobs, if created at J27, would be in leisure and warehousing, would be unskilled and at minimum wage levels.
- Housing – there are plenty of houses available for locals in mid Devon if they can afford them – the problem is that most people cannot. We do not need further housing for people to relocate from other parts of the country forcing up house prices in the area as a result. What is needed, and the Plan acknowledges this, is affordable housing for rent and part buy to help families and young people to have decent housing accommodation enabling them to remain in the area.
- Development at J27 will never meet the criteria of sustainability as virtually everyone accessing the site will have to do so by motor vehicle. This is the main reason why successive Local Plan Inspectors have thrown out all previous attempts for the area to be included. The site is a greenfield site remote from major centres of population and is illogical to consider it for development with other options available, particularly at Cullompton J28, a site being actively promoted by Cullompton Town Council. This seems to accord with the NNPf that states 'that if there are viable town options, and these clearly exist, then out of town options should not be considered'.
- Development at J27 is likely to have a highly adverse impact on our local town centres and other local businesses. Out of town shopping has been the death knell of many town and village centres and this would be no different. Facilities are already available including Clarks at Street, Atlantic Village at Bideford, Crealy Park at J29/M5 and also Darts Farm, Topsham. If constructed, the spend at J27 would merely reduce the spend elsewhere. Tiverton has an ambitious project to upgrade its Pannier Market which seems to conflict with the promotion of J27!
- At present visitors are met at the "gateway to Devon" with unspoilt scenic rural views (except for that horrid solar farm at Ayshford permitted by MDDC!!), and Devon's tourist industry is built on its countryside, scenery, small villages, local facilities and outdoor leisure pursuits.

There is no evidence that visitors are attracted to Devon for cinemas, factory outlets or food sales. The best way that Devon can advertise its uniqueness is to keep the first motorway junction in Devon a rural site. Looking at other motorway junctions across the country with massive warehousing and high density housing, we are indeed lucky that J27 is still green. Let's keep it that way.

- There are also many obstacles to developing J27. These include solutions to the traffic issues that would arise, getting local people on board to support any proposals in the face of massive local opposition, drainage issues as the area used to be marshland, and persuading the land owners to sell their land.
- MDDC's slogan is 'where people matter'. Do those who live in, and on the perimeter, of the proposed site think that MDDC are caring about them? To my knowledge they have not been spoken to by the District Council and the view of the developer is that 'we will build around them'. This is the sort of attitude that is expected from developers but not from the local Council. Developers are not interested in them or their their properties, the value of which will plummet with no chance of a sale, condemning them to a life far removed from that expected in rural Devon. The developer's maps do not even show the dwellings!
- With regard to the New Community Option in the Plan we do not consider a case has been made for the amount of dwellings quoted, (no doubt MDDC want the 'new homes bonus'. With only one in three houses to be built being affordable it will not meet the objectively assessed need that requires 90% affordable housing. **If, however, MDDC commit to a New Community option then it should be constructed east of J28 at Cullompton and not at J27.** Cullompton are actively promoting such development to obtain developer's monies to improve its infrastructure and to provide and underpin the development of a successful and vibrant community market town. We feel that Cullompton Town Council should be supported in these objectives.
- **The issues discussed above are only examples to support our views that J27 should not be developed under any circumstances. The list of reasons given should not be considered as exhaustive and no doubt submissions from other minor authorities and the general public will add weight to our objections.**

Francis and Sue Welland  
6 Kitwell Street  
Uffculme  
EX15 3AP

20 March 2014