

Ack

Sandra Hutchings

From: Nikki Padge
Sent: 24 March 2014 23:25
To: DPD
Subject: Mid Devon Local Plan Review 2014-2033

Nikki Padget
The Cleeve
The Cleeve
Culmstock
EX15 3JR

Dear Sir/Madam,



I am writing to register my comments on the MDDC local Plan review 2014-2033.

I support MDDC policy to focus further development in existing urban areas where I believe there is the greatest opportunity to ensure the provision of the required supporting infrastructure. Indeed I feel that further development such areas will generate greater critical mass and make many of the facilities more viable whilst also securing sustainable future investment and employment opportunities in the same. In addition such development would focus infrastructure and public services in areas where service delivery of the same could be streamlined and the taxpayer would benefit from economies of scale.

Development outside these urban areas would be counter to central government's desire to minimise carbon emissions by increasing dependence on private cars for commuting and access to essential services and also increasing the likely dependence on oil for domestic heating. Public transport provision in the rural villages is poor and badly integrated. Indeed I found commuting from Tiverton Parkway to Exeter required not only a private car journey from home to the station but also that I increased the length of my working day as services were infrequent and poorly timed for the common 9-5 core hours. Commuting by bus is impossible.

As a Culmstock resident I specifically object to the development proposed at The Glebe and Highfields sites in Culmstock. Both are greenfield sites outside the current village boundaries and their size appears to have the potential to accommodate substantially more residences than those initially proposed. Development of the Glebe site in particular would materially alter the linear nature of the village and would also overlook the conservation area and directly abut a number of listed properties surrounding All Saints parish church.

Both sites noted above are also sloping. Their current agricultural use assists in slowing run off and discharge to the River Culm which experiences rapid flow changes as a result of a localised rainfall catchment area. Development of these sloping sites would therefore both increase the volume and speed of runoff with a likely detrimental affect on the probability of flooding in Culmstock and potentially further downstream. The current village waste water facilities appear to be at capacity and flooding has already occurred in the village as a result. I have first hand experience of the impact of neglected waste water infrastructure, as our property is affected by a collapsed run off drain, which we have been advised is low priority for repair.

The scale of development proposed in Culmstock and Hemyock stands to also substantially increase local traffic. As a local resident I have personal experience of the impact of increased traffic flows on rural roads both in terms of highway maintenance, damage to private property and historical infrastructure such as the bridge at Culmstock and personal road safety. Parking is currently at capacity in the village and the reliance on onstreet parking at local services such as the Church, school and shop as well as elsewhere restricts traffic flow and increases the risk of accidents. All of the access roads to Culmstock are single lane in places and Blackwater Lane in the vicinity is currently closed due to a collapsed culvert. The Parish Council have been advised that this could remain so for 18 months because of a lack of funds for the repair. Neither this nor the evident neglect of public infrastructure noted above supports the view that resources exist to maintain existing infrastructure to the standard expected. Further pressure can only have a greater detrimental impact on residents and property.

The impact on local education provision from the proposed developments to the East of Tiverton is also unclear. Village primary provision is often oversubscribed and is a positive attribute in local communities but is often accompanied by specific challenges of small sites and multi age teaching. The Secondary level provision in Uffculme is noted as being of national excellence and could be a flagship for education provision in Mid Devon. Provision of high quality schooling is not simply a matter of physical infrastructure (which appears to lag new housing development and occupation) but also development of a suitably high quality staff. I therefore believe MDDC development plans should consider where there is capacity to grow existing education provision both in terms of scale and quality or where there are opportunities through critical mass to develop new education provision of the highest quality and with due consideration to all levels of education and their interdependence.

I note that the Culmstock village plan identifies affordable housing as a need. The proposal for Linhay Close phase 3, would appear to address this need in linear nature of the village and where factors such as highways access, drainage etc have already been considered for earlier phases. Finally I believe government policy has very recently changed to permit less restricted residential development of agricultural buildings. This would seem to have the potential for a major impact in Mid Devon over the lifetime of the plan until 2033. I therefore strongly urge MDDC to consider the likely impact of this policy on its quotas for housing provision and also to mitigate the risk of overdevelopment of rural areas through a combination of unrestricted development as a result of national policy and planned local development.

Yours faithfully

Nikki Padget