

TIVERTON CIVIC SOCIETY. STATEMENT FOR HEARING 5a (J27) ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20th 2019

- We are disappointed with the Planning Inspector's conclusions that he sees no 'in principle' difficulty with the allocation, following the Hearing ID08 on September 20th 2018. However, we accept his decision with reservations, but would like to see modifications to Policy J27 to allow greater flexibility for other employment uses, preferably of a skilled and professional nature.
- We agree with his reservations 'about the specific nature of the policy and the way it seems to be directed at a particular scheme'. The policy as it stands is far more detailed than those allocations for employment land elsewhere in the Draft Local Plan, most of which, including those for Crediton and Cullompton, are accompanied by the statement. *'The amount of floorspace to be provided by commercial development depends on the use. For instance, office development on multiple floors provides a greater amount of floorspace per hectare than a single-storey warehouse, and some commercial uses require more land for parking than others. Floorspace assumptions for different uses are set out in the methodology for Strategic Commercial Land Availability Assessment (SCLAA), but the Council recognises that this is only a starting point and a higher or lower density of development may be justified depending on the nature of the proposal that comes forward'*. The policy is also far more detailed than that for the 30,000 square metres of commercial floorspace outlined on Page 85 in the adopted Masterplan for Tiverton's Eastern Urban Extension. We agree that much greater flexibility is needed before masterplanning for land at Junction 27 occurs.
- We recommend that the policy, especially Paragraph 3 on Page 28, should be revised to include far less specific detail for development on land allocated at Junction 27, allowing alternative schemes to come forward, but excluding employment uses that would bring only limited and low wage employment such as warehousing. Bearing in mind Malcolm Dudley -William's statement 'that plan B would be to use the land for logistics and distribution sheds' and the strong local opposition to such a development, we feel that it is essential that the employment types permissible for the site should be strictly stated and adhered to, given that an area of land should be allocated for tourism development. We feel that details of any schemes that may come forward should be left until the planning application stage.
- We would like to see modifications which would make the scheme smaller, giving greater protection to farmland and to the Culm Grasslands, and providing greater mitigation to the floodplain where there have been considerable problems, with flooding of roads and properties in recent years.
- As it stands it would appear that plans for Junction 27 would appear to provide little scope for skilled and more highly paid employment. We would like to see the wording modified to include opportunity for skilled and highly-paid employment. Tiverton and Mid Devon needs to retain and increase the opportunities for skilled and well-qualified workers in the area. The research and education space outlined for the Agronomy Visitor Centre needs to be strongly encouraged, but more flexibility in the policy is required to provide further opportunities for skilled and professional employment. In this context, there appears to be no plans for the 'mini Eden project' (Tim Smit) on this site. This would have the potential to provide further skilled employment. Further skilled and professional employment could be provided if the policy was flexible enough to include, for example, possibilities for extended research opportunities related to agriculture such as an agricultural advice centre for farmers, linked to research and development at south-western universities and colleges.

Jeremy Salter, Fern Clarke, Mike Sanderson

