



Homes &
Communities
Agency

Advisory Team for Large
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By Email

Dear Jonathan

TIVERTON EASTERN URBAN EXTENSION – DRAFT MASTERPLAN SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

As you are aware, ATLAS (Advisory Team for Large Applications) has been working with Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) and providing support and impartial advice to the Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension (EUE) project since November 2011. Overall, it is ATLAS' view that the emerging Tiverton EUE Masterplan SPD responds well to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which provides that SPDs should be used where they can help applicants make successful planning applications or aid infrastructure delivery. We are very pleased to endorse the emerging document and the collaborative approach to its preparation to date.

ATLAS is a part of the Homes and Communities Agency and we provide a free enabling and advisory service to local authorities and their development partners. The advice provided is always impartial and independent. The team has built up extensive experience from a portfolio of large scale projects and at any one time is working on between 40 and 50 large scale development projects across England. The key remit for ATLAS work is to seek to secure the timely delivery of high quality sustainable development that responds to local ambition through effective planning processes, collaborative working and the promotion of good practice. ATLAS has worked closely with the Council, its delivery partners and key stakeholders over the last 2 years on a number of aspects of the Tiverton EUE project and has provided a range of support to the production of the emerging SPD, as follows:

1. helping to define the scope and purpose of the Masterplan SPD;
2. establishing and supporting a collaborative, open and transparent approach to the production of the SPD;
3. drawing on examples and best practice to support the drafting of key components of the SPD; and
4. an overview of whether the emerging SPD is likely to deliver its objectives and is 'fit for purpose'.

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In the prevailing circumstances, the emerging SPD strikes the right balance in terms of prescription and flexibility, is likely to deliver its objectives and is fit for its intended purpose. ATLAS' view is that the master planning process is a continuum, as is the related application approval process, and that critical to delivery of a successful place is ensuring that these processes are properly aligned and that the right aspects of development form are examined, resolved and fixed at the appropriate stages. The advice of ATLAS, agreed by MDDC officers, was that the SPD should take the form of a development briefing document to complement the existing policy context in establishing a strategic framework for more detailed master planning work. The necessary, more detailed analysis and work would then be most appropriately undertaken by the prospective developers as an integral part of the planning application process when the urban extension, of parts of it, are brought forward for development.

In terms of the collaborative approach that has been created and utilised to generate and test the emerging SPD, again this has been done with an appropriate degree of rigour, transparency, inclusiveness and pragmatism. The Council has carefully followed its own requirements as set out in its Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). It has supplemented this with a positive approach to engagement and collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders including utilising the resources available from some of the principle landowner/developers. This approach has produced much of the required evidence base and resulting content for the emerging SPD. It is particularly noteworthy, however, that this approach was under-pinned by a clear project management approach. Through this approach, MDDC officers were able to direct the work being done and retained full editorial control of the emerging document. It is also the case that MDDC officers, working with ATLAS, have contributed significantly to the content of the emerging SPD including the crucial areas of the design concept; approval process; and the infrastructure, implementation and phasing requirements. ATLAS advocates positive, collaborative approaches such as this in its work and has referred to the approach at Tiverton in advising on other projects.

In general, the emerging SPD demonstrates a collective and collaborative approach to plan making and development management and is likely to facilitate the timely delivery of high quality sustainable development. We are happy to support its continued preparation and publication for consultation.

Yours sincerely

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