

WADDETON PARK LTD
REPRESENTATIONS ON THE EAST DEVON LOCAL PLAN (2020 – 2042) REGULATION 19
CONSULTATION DRAFT (MARCH 2025) BY BELL CORNWELL LLP

INTRODUCTION

Waddeton Park Ltd is a very well-established and successful local housing land promoter and investor with considerable interest across the district. Waddeton Park Ltd has helped to facilitate new homes, affordable housing and other uses in the area. Specifically, Waddeton Park Ltd has interests in land at London Road, adjacent to the Cranbrook built-up area boundary, which they consider has potential for residential development. We attach a plan that shows this land (please refer to the Framework Plan produced by Clifton Emery Design)

Given the nature of their long-standing interests across the district, Waddeton Park Ltd is an important local stakeholder and is interested in the proposals in the East Devon Local Plan for future development in the district.

Against this background, Bell Cornwell LLP has reviewed the policies and information set out in the East Devon Local Plan (2020 -2042) Regulation 19 Consultation Draft and makes the following representations.

CHAPTER 3. SPATIAL STRATEGY

Strategic Policy SP02: Levels of Future Housing Development

Strategic Policy SP02 includes a requirement for at least 29,909 dwellings (net) to be delivered within the Local Plan area in the Local Plan period. The supporting text explains that the housing provision follows the transitional arrangements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024).

There are significant concerns that the housing figures for the district have not been positively prepared and have been contrived just to try to meet the requirement to benefit from the NPPF transitional arrangements.

Furthermore, it is not considered that East Devon District Council (EDDC) can benefit from the transitional arrangements in any event. Paragraph 234 of the NPPF states that the policies in the 2024 version of the NPPF relating to the preparation of local plans i.e. those that require the application of the standard method for calculating local housing need, will not apply if one or more of five criteria applies (a-e). The Council is claiming that criterion a applies, which reads as follows:

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“a. the plan has reached Regulation 19⁸² (pre-submission stage) on or before 12 March 2025, and its draft housing requirement meets at least 80% of local housing need.”

Footnote 82 reference in criterion a clarifies that:

“In this context “reached Regulation 19” refers to when Regulation 19 has been complied with (i.e. when the planning authority has made a copy of each of the proposed submission documents and a statement of the representations procedure available, and the statements required in Regulation 19(b) have been sent to consultation bodies).” [our underlining]

This means that each part of the Local Plan must have reached Regulation 19 (pre-submission stage) by 12th March 2025. The East Devon Local Plan is being prepared in two parts: full policy details on the new community, which forms a fundamental part of the East Devon Local Plan spatial strategy, and a masterplan for this area are still being worked up and Regulation 19 consultation on this part of the Local Plan is not scheduled to commence until May/June 2025.

In light of the above, it is entirely possible that the standard methodology for calculating housing need will, therefore, need to be applied, which would result in a higher overall housing figure for the Local Plan period.

In addition to concerns about housing numbers, there are also significant concerns about the Council’s site selection process. In our view, the process was rushed and not entirely objective and led to some arbitrary decisions on locations for development. For example, only 35 new dwellings are proposed to be allocated for Budleigh Salterton, a town, and the only town identified as a Local Centre (all others are villages) whereas a number of smaller settlements have allocations for hundreds of homes. This inconsistent approach was highlighted by the Council’s own planning committee and is a consequence of a rushed approach, presumably with the intention of being able to benefit from the NPPF transitional arrangement summarised above. The site selection process has not been properly considered and is not sound.