

Letter of objection to Local Council



9th September 2018

Planning Policy,
East Devon District Council,
Knowle,
Sidmouth
EX10 8HL

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Baxter's Farm, Musbury Development Brief

I would like to provide the following comments to the Baxter's Farm Development Brief:

AA) Previous Baxter Farm development applications refused by EDDC

This Baxter's Farm Development Brief basically seeks to allow change of use of an established agricultural facility into a residential facility.

It should be noted that earlier applications for the conversion of Baxter's Farm into a residential area were refused by EDDC in 1993 and 1994 (ref 93/P0796 & 94/P1645). Many of the reasons for refusal of these two planning applications are still relevant today and are noted below for reference:

93/P0796

- 1) The proposed development, by reason of the modern form of estate type layout illustrated in the submitted plans is unsympathetic to the more established and traditional pattern of the settlement which, if permitted, would adversely affect the rural character and appearance of this village and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in which the site lies. Consequently, the proposed development is contrary to the provision of the approved Structure Plan, particularly policies SE7, CO7 and CO9 and Policy R1 of the Rural Areas Draft Local Plan.
- 2) The proposal represents an undesirable extension of the settlement beyond its existing built up part into an area of open countryside. If permitted, the development would detract from the rural character of the AONB in which the site lies. The proposal therefore is contrary to County Structure Plan Policies SE7, SE8, CO7 and CO9 and proposed Structure Plan Policies HSE5, CDE1 and CDE3.
- 3) The demolition of the farmhouse and its replacement by a modern estate road entrance, with associated visibility splays and pedestrian footways, would detract from the traditional village character of "The Street":

- 1) The proposal represents an undesirable extension of the village beyond its reasonable limit, contrary to Policies HSE5, CDE1 and CDE3 of the approved County Structure Plan and Policies H3 and EN5 of the Draft District Local Plan.
- 2) The site lies within an area designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the proposal would be contrary to the policy for such areas as defined by the County Structure Plan in Policy CDE3

BB) Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Baxter's Farm falls within an Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty which is an area designated by the appropriate government bodies as requiring protection to conserve and enhance its natural beauty.

Historically, EDDC has taken steps to ensure the integrity of the AONB is maintained when considering proposed building developments (e.g. EDDC refusals against previous Baxter's Farm planning applications 93/P0796 & 94/P1645). However the current Development Brief for Baxter's Farm make little reference to compliance with the philosophy of the AONB.

The Baxter's Farm Development Brief would appear to be at conflict with the Key Objectives contained in The 2019 Partnership Plan consultation draft:

Strategic aim 2: People and Prosperity - Encourage and support sustainable economic development, social engagement and recreational activity that conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB.

Note that conversion of Baxter's Farm to a residential development does not support sustainable economic development whereas an ongoing agricultural business development does.

Section 2.1 Farming, forestry and land management - A sustainable farming, forestry and land management sector that helps to conserve and enhance the character of the AONB

Retaining Baxter's Farm as an Agricultural facilities fulfils the above.

CC) Baxter's Farm as an ongoing farming concern

At the public consultation meeting held on Wednesday 15 August at 6pm in Musbury Village Hall a statement by EDDC representative was made that "It is considered uneconomic to maintain this section of Baxter's as a going farming concern".

It would set an interesting precedence if EDDC were to pursue a course of action based on the economics of maintaining a farm. No doubt several farms in the region would be keeping a close eye on developments.

Baxter's Farm should be maintained as an agricultural facility as there are many young farmers and craftsmen / women who would benefit from access to the established infrastructure in place at Baxter's Farm.

DD) Baxter's Farm as a Rural Skills Centre

If per chance the current owner of Baxter's Farm has already sold off the fields belonging to the farm leaving little prospects for its future use as a working farm, the remaining facilities should be developed into a rural skills centre. This would provide facilities and job opportunities to the local community and a skills centre to encourage the local community and future generations to learn new skills. A set-up such as this (ref Trill Farm and River Cottage as examples) would also become a tourist attraction with all of the benefits that this would bring to the local community. This approach would be in keeping with the philosophy of an AONB, would produce training facilities for future generations and would generate income for local businesses and ultimately the council for many years into the future.

EE) Residential Facilities

The Farm House would appear to be the only part of the facilities which could be converted into a residential building whilst preserving the integrity of the ANOB and maintaining the agricultural advantages benefits of the farm.

FF) East Devon Local Plan

The Baxter's Farm Development Brief would appear to be at conflict with the East Devon Local Plan. The sections shown below would suggest that Baxter's Farm Development Brief should be more inclined to an agricultural development to encouraging jobs and farming and rural practices.

Section 15:

Our vision for smaller towns, villages and the countryside is one of:

Seeking to accommodate modest development that supports and complements rural areas whilst helping to sustain their intrinsic qualities and appeal. This will need to be achieved in the context of planning for development in the highest quality of built and natural environmental settings whilst supporting communities social well being and respecting the intrinsic features that help define the character of rural East Devon. But all the time recognising that rural East Devon has been designed and shaped by farming and rural practices and these will need to remain an intrinsic part of the future.

Section 15.2 d

Key components of the rural strategy are:

Away from villages, farm and rural business diversification should take the form of small scale rural enterprises, re-use of existing buildings and for uses that add value to current farming enterprises. This would safeguard the food supply whilst providing financial support to farmers

Also section 15.9:

Many rural villages act, to some extent at least, as dormitory commuter villages with residents working in nearby towns and cities. Whilst this can be positive in terms of providing a high quality living environment for residents it may do little to support commercial viability and enterprise in villages. Also,

commuters will often drive longer distances to jobs and public transport in most villages is poor. In response to this, the Council is keen to promote employment opportunities in rural areas. This is seen as a way to help to maintain and enhance village vitality and meet local needs whilst also providing an alternative to a reliance on commuting out for work purposes. New employment should be provided in conjunction with new housing provision. We are keen to see skilled jobs, and higher paid jobs, particularly in areas such as technology and home-working

GG) Devon Partnership Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2015 Final Report

The Baxter's Farm Development Brief would appear to be at conflict with section 3.8 of the Devon Partnership Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2015 Final Report:

In particular section 3.8 states: ".....planning permission for a permanent or transit sites for gypsies and travellers will be granted if the proposal satisfies all of the following requirements:

1. It is not situated within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Additionally The Devon Partnership and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2015 Final Report is now based on an out of date document (The East Devon Local Plan 2006 – 2026 adopted November 2012) which is quoted in the body of the report and which would therefore throw into question the assumptions forming the basis of the statistical content of the report which is used by EDDC in their planning decisions.

Regards

