

**HONITON TOWN COUNCIL  
RESPONSE TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION JANUARY 2012**

Honiton Town Council made a full submission to East Devon District Council in September 2011 as part of the previous round of consultation and stands by the detail of that submission. However, in the light of subsequent changes, it wishes to make the following comments in this current round of consultation, which are further informed by a public meeting held on 9 January 2012 and by consultation with businesses on the Heathpark Industrial Estate during the month of January 2012.

**1. 15hectares employment land west of Hayne Lane**

The Town Council supports the District's Council's vision for Honiton of an economy-led agenda, improving the skills base and providing higher value jobs, particularly for our young people. This would then enable more residents to afford housing that is available in the town.

However the Town Council has concerns that the proposal for 15 hectares of employment land west of Hayne Lane in the parish of Gittisham is not evidence-based as is required by the plan-making process and asks why the District Council appears to have disregarded the evidence provided to them as itemised under the appendix to this document.

In addition the Town Council has raised in its submission to EDDC dated September 2011 its concerns that previous large scale development in the town has not been matched by investment in infrastructure and community facilities and that this must be addressed fully (i.e. not just in support of Turks Head junction improvements) before any significant further development takes place to ensure that mistakes resulting from previous local plans are not repeated. This is reinforced by consultation undertaken over the past two months by the Town Council with the majority of businesses on Heathpark Industrial Estate which indicates that although there would be some need for future expansion there were also concerns about infrastructure and increasing retail use.

The Town Council believes that Honiton's recent history means that a full master plan in the shape of a Neighbourhood Plan should be drawn up as a vision for this forward-looking community and notification has already been given to the District Council of the Town Council's wish to develop such a plan. This would ensure that a sustainable and sound way forward is identified to take account of all concerns before any development is commenced and ensure a planned approach.

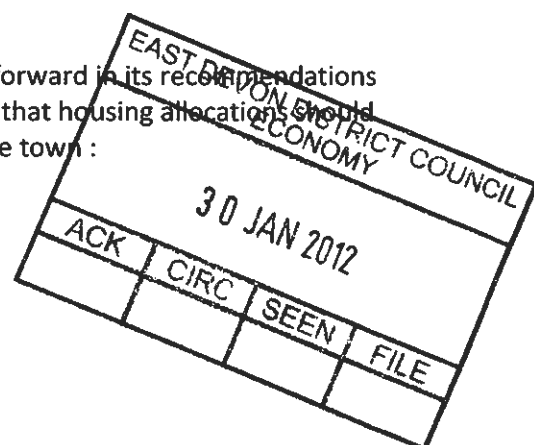
**2. Housing Allocation**

The Town Council welcomes the removal of the housing allocation west of Hayne Lane and recognises the need for 450 dwellings over the next fifteen years but is not in favour of any linear development divorced from Honiton and wishes again to reinforce its concerns regarding the current infrastructure problems in the town.

The Town Council does not support the proposed 150 houses in the Ottery Moor Lane area as it believes that this area should be prioritised as an employment allocation. In addition the Town Council would be totally opposed to any development on any of the green field sites in the vicinity of Ottery Moor Lane, in particular Mountbatten Park and St Ritas.

Although the Town Council appreciates that the following sites put forward in its recommendations are not considered by the District Council to be strategic, it believes that housing allocation should be distributed across these smaller sites within the boundaries of the town :

- As part of the Bradford's site development
- Current Halse's Yard
- Cattle Market



- Otter Valley Park
- Opposite Tesco foodstore
- Mill Water School current site
- Honiton Magistrates Court current site
- Royal British Legion Hall site which has now also become available since the Town Council's original submission

### **3. Town Centre**

The Town Council welcomes the inclusion of the District Council's intention to work with partners to focus on improvements to the town centre to help sustain a vibrant and economically active town, meeting its own needs and those of the other wider countryside. It is for this reason that the Town Council is opposed to any development which would have an adverse effect on the town centre.

In addition the Town Council wishes to reiterate its opinion outlined in its original submission that improvements to the A373 (Dowell Street) should be included in the plan by the inclusion of an aspiration to have a slip road from this road on to the bypass.

## **APPENDIX**

### **Evidence provided to East Devon District Council re 15 hectares of employment land at Honiton**

- Tym and Partners Housing and Employment Strategy Report 2011 (independent study commissioned by EDDC)
  - Section 4.24 outlining the national guidance for all strategic allocations for new offices to be within town centres
  - Section 7.55 regarding proposed allocations being excessive
  - Section 7.58 regarding 5 hectares being the maximum recommended and stating that designation for employment uses should not be given until the Turk's Head capacity has been identified
- Devon County Council's concerns in its letter of 30 November 2010 regarding the justification for the overall scale of employment land provision and its view that there may be a risk that the plan may not be considered sound
- East Devon District Council's own report dated March 2010 stating that if the intention is that the development itself will fund infrastructure, then evidence will have to show that it is realistic and reasonable; the Town Council has been informed that 15 hectares (and not less) have been allocated in order to finance the infrastructure costs.
- East Devon District Council's own report dated December 2011 estimating that 250 new homes could generate the need for around 1 hectare of employment land; however the proposals for Honiton far exceed this ratio

Lyn Hargood  
 Town Clerk  
 26 January 2012