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33, Sheppard Road,

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Dear Sirs,

I was interested to see the report in the "Expreese & Echo" of 23rd. April about the Newton Popleford Neighbourhood Plan. As is so often the case, the period for comments only came to my notice towards the end of the time allowed. A useful development recently has been the emergence of the Local Democracy Reporters. With the closure of the public libraries I cannot access the internet or photocopiers so I have had to resort to traditional methods.

Something I have a bee in my bonnet about is "Local Needs Housing on Exception Sites". This has been operating in the Peak District National Park for some years. Normal free-market housing is not allowed but small sites are developed for Local Needs. I think the period of residence to establish a Local Need is 10 years. Thus a middle-class commuter could move into the National Park and his children would acquire the residency qualification. It is not necessary to establish residence going back several generations. It does require some effort by the Parish Council to find prospective tenants. Presumably there is a special government subsidy in there somewhere. The National Park is the Planning Authority but the Housing Authority is the Derbyshire Dales District Council and its Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO), Dales Housing.

A curious situation developed in Crich, which is a large village outside the National Park, best known for the tramway Museum. Some years ago there was no Local Plan Allocation for new housing, so one of these "Local Needs" schemes was proposed. It appeared to be difficult to make it viable without some commercial housing as well. Along came Eric Pickles and a firm called Gladman. They were able to get Permission for three or four new estates in the village with the usual " % Affordable". Thus there was no longer a need for an "Exception Site" and the special "Local Needs" facility has yet to be built.

Continuing on housing, I notice a tendency to discourage parking on new estates in the hope of keeping car ownership down. This can lead to congestion as more cars emerge than hoped for. I think that this is happening in Cranbrook. There is a case for "no-car" development in Exeter City but I feel it is misguided elsewhere. A particular problem is that a garage usually counts as parking but these garages often fill up with assorted clutter. There is also the question of some garages being too small for current cars, especially those with wide doors.

A well-known problem is the difficulty of getting County Highways to do anything. Ordinary people can suggest Highways matters within Town Planning but there is no mechanism for passing this to "Highways". At one time there was something called "Accident Remedial Measures" which were worked out by experts at County Hall. These used to show a very high rate of return on capital invested. A study of the A 3052 through Newton Popleford would be useful. County Highways finances are even more desperate than usual

at the moment. The Council cannot put up the Council Tax by more than 4 % and the demands of Adult Social Care have become impossible to meet. In your case you are lucky to have an Independent County Councillor, Claire Wright, so it would be wise to get into communication with her.

I recently attended a Public Meeting held by the Derbyshire Police & Crime Commissioner. He said the Police get a lot of complaints about speeding. This issue has been passed around between Parish Councils, Police, County Highways and Town Planning Departments for many years without much progress. There is not much Town Planning can do as the Policy of County Highways is all that counts. They do not have the resources to put up a fight with a developer.

There are 20 mph Zones in Exeter City but all are on minor roads. It will be difficult to get a 20 Zone on the A 3052. A problem is that it is more difficult to prosecute speeding in a 20 Zone than in a 30 Zone. County Councillor Percy Prowse knows all about that ! This is an environmental matter and not an Accident Remedial Measure as such.

I have never understood how you get a Doctor's Surgery on a new estate or in a village. I think it has something to do with the CCG. Until recently I was a patient at the Crich Medical Practice. This has three surgeries - Crich, South Wingfield and Holloway - all in modern buildings. At South Wingfield and Holloway the Practice is also a Dispensary, so patients can get their prescriptions there as well. I think both villages are below 2,000 population but they do have surgeries open several days a week. This doesn't have a lot to do with Town Planning.

I hope these comments are helpful.

Yours Faithfully,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Paul Gibbons.

PAUL GIBBONS