



To: Angela King,
Planning Policy Section,
East Devon District Council,
Blackdown House,
Border Road,
Honiton,
Devon,
EX14 1EJ

Dear Angela King,

Re: COLYTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Colyton Neighbourhood Plan. We are representatives of a group of local families from Colyton and Colyford – many have lived in the Parish for generations, and we share a love of our town and the surrounding countryside.

In general we are hugely supportive of the Neighbourhood Plan and we congratulate the team who have worked so hard to push this through. However we would like to raise a deep concern about a particular paragraph entitled **Policy No Coly8 Exception Site Housing Development** (in bold below) which seems to contradict the spirit of the entire document, which was created to ensure the *'unique and special attributes of the parish are protected and enhanced.'*

In the section titled Green Wedge and the Environment, the document states that *'development proposals in the designated Green Wedge areas will not be supported, unless it can be demonstrated that no harm to the character or purpose of this area will occur.'* This statement seems to perfectly reflect the feelings of our community and the Plan itself, which also states *'it is the opinion of many parishioners that the quality of much of the rest of the Parish's countryside merits inclusion in the AONB and warrants all the protection that can be given to it.'*

We were therefore alarmed to notice the following paragraph which seems to completely negate these statements –

Policy No Coly8 Exception Site Housing Development

Proposals for housing development outside the built-up area boundary will only be supported if it is demonstrated that:

- i. it is a small development of up to 15 dwellings, to provide affordable housing for local needs...**
- ii. it will not have a harmful visual impact on its setting or the landscape;**

We have no idea when this paragraph was added or by whom, but this appears to create a gaping loophole in the Neighbourhood Plan. For this reason, we respectfully ask you to scrutinise and delete this paragraph, which we feel allows a very real threat to our protected landscape.

We would like to point out that A) a 15 dwelling estate could not be considered small. B) An estate of this size would bring up to 30 additional vehicles onto tiny rural lanes. C) Whether or not a development has a 'harmful visual impact' is completely subjective, so this phrase seems worthless.

In the last two years many members of our community have become extremely anxious about a plan to erect an affordable housing estate on a field known as Lewis Haye, formerly Seller's Grave, on an elevated and environmentally sensitive area of the Green Wedge, off the Old Sidmouth Road. This proposal has been instigated by the Colyton and Colyford Community Land (CCCLT), under the guidance of a team of professional planning consultants who have a track record of pushing through affordable housing estates on Green Wedge land throughout the area.

There is not a single member of our community who does not wholeheartedly support the principle of affordable housing, but we believe this should be done in moderation and in the right place – that is small clusters of houses, preferably on Brown Field sites within the Built-Up Area Boundary. This 'pepper pot' solution to affordable housing protects the environment and allows young families to be properly assimilated into the community, rather than 'ghettoised' in the countryside away from all facilities. This approach to affordable housing is endorsed at every level of government and by many environmental groups such as the CPRE.

A cynic might believe that the paragraph we have highlighted has been inserted specifically to give the green light to a development of this kind, thereby rendering the spirit of the Neighbourhood Plan completely redundant.

The reason that we choose, as a group to write anonymously is because this development has already become a highly divisive issue within our parish. We are absolutely convinced that the proposed Lewis Hays development is driven by pecuniary interests, as much as any desire to alleviate the housing shortage for local families. To give just one example of the nefarious interests behind the proposal – the owner of the land was a founding member of the CCCLT who actually entered into a Heads of Terms agreement with the CCCLT, whilst still an active board member.

If a fifteen house estate were to be erected in this beautiful location, it would, when combined with the neighbouring Seaway Head affordable estate (also built as an exception on Green Wedge land, and sold by the same landowner) create a 35 house affordable estate on supposedly protected land, which would be visible for many miles around. This would in our opinion, make a travesty of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan and create irreparable damage to wildlife and the environment.

We urge you to properly protect our beautiful Green Wedge landscape for generations to come.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Concerned Members of Colyton Parish.