

East Devon Local Plan

<https://eastdevonlocalplan.commonplace.is>

I am submitting additional comments to my earlier objection to the preferred choice of the Council for the building of a second new town to the east of Exeter. I have major concerns over the planning process that was adopted, the fact that, if it goes ahead, it will inevitably result in significant change to the character and ecology of the Farringdon and surrounding area and the general lack of consideration given to alternative proposals. The need for a second new town has not been sufficiently justified and the routing of a new A3052/A30/M5 link road has simply been copied from an earlier proposal submitted by interested land owners during the process for the development of the Farringdon Neighbourhood plan. This was a controversial proposal at the time and was firmly rejected by local residents and the EDDC. The adopted village plan recognises the unique character of this thriving local community with its award-winning local businesses, historic buildings and green open spaces that have become a haven for many species of plant and wildlife as well as its residents.

Objections to the development of a second new town are relatively easy to justify and there is no longer the need for the EDDC to hide behind the idea that it has been driven by centrally dictated targets. Michael Gove on the 7 December stated that targets are advisory only and that development will not be allowed if it is likely to involve a significant change to the character of the area. This announcement makes it clear that local opinion matters and that decisions will be carefully scrutinised to ensure that the process of planning has been properly conducted and that vested interests are not being unfairly pursued.

The unfinished and unsightly Cranbrook New Town is a clear example of what can and will go wrong through bad planning. The suggestion that a second new town should be built alongside the failed first is completely disingenuous. There is also the fact that, if built, it will sit alongside Hill Barton Industrial estate that already attracts complaints from surrounding areas over noise and pollution. Farringdon and surrounding villages already have to cope with surface water flooding and lack of public services, but that is our choice since we chose to move into the area. Another 24,000 homeowners might not be so sympathetic.

My recommendation: Incremental growth, to preserve the character of the villages that make East Devon an attractive place for people to live, is the only way to tackle the issue of additional housing needs. It would win the support of all but a handful of EDDC residents and rate payers and would relieve the financial, environmental and social pressures associated with having to develop green field sites and provide new and costly public services. The many tourists and visitors that flock to East Devon each year is a testament to its natural beauty, its pace of life and its community activities and spirit. Sacrificing this to further grand ideas and vested interests would be foolhardy.

My objections to a link road bisecting Farringdon and cutting cross land of natural beauty is not because I do not see the need for additional road capacity in the area. The A3052 is already heavily congested at key times of the day and with the opening of Hill Barton also suffers from the movement of heavy goods vehicles, tractors and trailers. Cranbrook New Town has not added directly to the problem but it has put significant additional pressure on junctions 29 and 30 of the M5, which in turn has led to feedbacks on the A376 at Clyst St Mary and the Sowton Industrial Estate. Residents of a second new town are likely to add to the movements around the Sandy Gate roundabout, so it is difficult to understand why the proposed route for the new link road should cut through Farringdon. Other than if it were destined to pass eventually through to Exmouth which was muted in that neighbourhood plan idea raised by local land owners. If that is the ultimate aim of

this East Devon plan then surely a shorter and less costly alternative would be to develop a roundabout at the Westpoint showground site. This would avoid destruction of natural habitats, grade 1 farmland and historical buildings and could be completed more quickly since the site has been the subject of sale interest for many years.