

Councillor Dan Ledger

EDDC

Dear Cllr. Ledger,

Re: East Devon Local Plan

In the Residents Update Newsletter of 16 December 2022 you are quoted as saying

“the new Local Plan is a rare opportunity to reset our requirements for new homes in the district and ensure that they meet the needs of residents now and in the future.”

On reading this I was pleased to see a mention of “residents now” and decided to contact you. Unfortunately, the Flu virus hit me and as a consequence I have been unwell and my recovery is slow. However, mindful of the deadline for comments, I now write to raise two points arising from the Consultation draft and the process of getting responses.

The first relates to Chapter 18 of the Plan “Have we missed anything?”

Yes, I submit that you have. The draft plan sets out policies covering a wide range of topics and these cover almost everything that must be considered when planning to build new houses and other premises required for the population. A glaring omission is a policy which sets out how existing residents should be considered when selecting and building new housing.

This policy needs to acknowledge that existing residents have a right to continue to live their lives as they have chosen. Their health, mental and physical, should be protected, their homes should not be devalued, their rights as Council tax payers respected. Disruption to peoples lives is as important as disruption to nature and landscape. The latter two are covered by excellent wide ranging policies which I commend.

My second point relates to the Consultation process.

All residents in EDDC should be able to access the local plan. All residents must be able to respond no matter what their age, level of education or financial means. The Key Facts in the draft shows that 30% of the population is aged 65+ and there is a lower proportion of residents with higher level qualifications (33%) than in other areas. It is therefore possible that a large number of residents within our population may not have access to computers and even if they do, they may not be able to respond using your preferred method i.e. Commonplace. I consider myself to be reasonably computer literate but I have found it frustrating and difficult to use the Commonplace response system.

I submit to you that the responses EDDC do receive may not be fully representative of the views of the majority of residents.

I must also mention the event held at the Beehive which was also meant to provide another way of consulting residents. This was not widely publicised other than via Commonplace. However, by word of mouth many residents became aware of it and did attend. The display boards could not be seen or interpreted easily and the people from the Policy and Planning department could not answer the questions put to them. Attending was a complete waste of time for many who attended.

Please could I ask that, for future Consultations, more thought be given to the methods used.

Finally, I invite you and other members of the planning team to visit me at my home at the address below.

Olive Deaville

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