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Our Ref: BL

26 March 2025

East Devon District Council

By Email Only



Dear Sir / Madam,

East Devon Local Plan Regulation 19 Consultation –Land west of Musbury Road (Axmi_01a)

We write on behalf of the Landowners in relation to the East Devon Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation, specifically regarding Land west of Musbury Road (Axmi_01a).

The Landowners have appointed Stags to prepare and lodge this response to the Regulation 19 Consultation. The Landowners support the inclusion of Land west of Musbury Road (Axmi_01a) in the emerging spatial strategy as an allocation to meet the identified employment need in East Devon, and it is the Landowners intention to bring forward the land for its proposed purpose in the near future. This correspondence is intended to confirm that Axmi_01a available and deliverable, and that it should continue to be allocated for employment use. The Landowners support the proposed settlement boundary as set out under Policy SP05.

On behalf of the Landowners, we make the following comments in response to the Regulation 19 Consultation.

Our Outstanding Biodiversity and Geodiversity - Strategic Policy PB05

This states that:

“Major development proposals will need to deliver biodiversity net gain (BNG) of at least 20% to be calculated using the most up-to-date statutory metric. Where there is a demonstrable viability problem to achieve this target, it will be expected that all measures to exceed the national minimum requirements are made, and evidence for not achieving the 20% target is provided in full.”

The Council will recognise that the national policy requirement is 10%.

Whilst exceeding the national minimum requirement and achieving biodiversity enhancements as far as possible is commended, the draft requirement of 20% on all major development sites represents a doubling of the national requirement and will be enormously challenging for many developers to

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achieve. Should this proposal be taken forward, the stark reality is that a significant number of development proposals will become unviable and therefore may not be delivered. Whilst it is acknowledged there is provision for delivery of less than 20%, developers and their appointed planners will have to undertake a significant amount of additional assessment and testing in order to arrive at the conclusion that 20% is not achievable, or demonstrate that a viable proposal is not achievable. If this does reflect what happens, this will inevitably make it increasingly more difficult for the Council to achieve the delivery of their mandated housing numbers, particularly when it is borne in mind that the Council are likely to be asked to immediately update the adopted Local Plan in order to reflect the revised housing delivery metric.

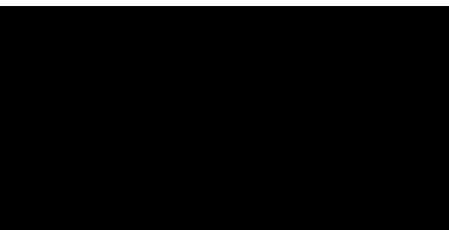
We would therefore respectfully ask the Council to consider and obtain evidence and justification for a requirement of 20%. If they conclude that the viability of major development schemes is likely to be impacted as a result of this policy, then we would ask the Council to consider whether a lower requirement might ensure that all anticipated development schemes are delivered, whilst also ensuring that they continue to meet or exceed the national requirement as regard BNG.

Conclusion

We support the emerging Spatial Strategy and welcome the inclusion of Axmi_01a as a draft allocation to help meet the identified employment need. The Site remains available and deliverable.

Should you wish to discuss this further, or have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



Alister Smith, BA (Hons) PGDip MRICS
Professional Partner – Head of Planning Services
[Stags Professional Services](#)

