

COMBE ESTATE
REPRESENTATIONS ON THE EAST DEVON LOCAL PLAN (2020 – 2042) REGULATION 19
CONSULTATION DRAFT (MARCH 2025) BY BELL CORNWELL LLP

INTRODUCTION

Combe Estate are long standing generational owner of large areas of agricultural and forestry land within East Devon. Their land interests are primarily in Honiton and Gittisham. As part of its interests, the Estate undertakes residential and commercial development and are the owners of Combe Garden Centre. The Estate therefore has a wide range of land and business interests within the district.

The Estate has provided representations to the Council as part of previous consultations on the draft local plan and via the related call for sites process.

Given the nature of their long-standing presence in the district, The Estate is an important local stakeholder with allocation interests within the proposals in the East Devon Local Plan for future development in the district.

Against this background, Bell Cornwell LLP has reviewed the policies and information set out in the East Devon Local Plan (2020 -2042) Regulation 19 Consultation Draft and makes the following representations.

CHAPTER 3. THE SPATIAL STRATEGY

Strategic Policy SP01: Spatial Strategy

Combe Estate supports the overall approach of Strategic Policy SP01: Spatial Strategy and, in particular, the support for prioritising significant development at the Main Centres (including Honiton) that meets local needs and those in immediate surrounding areas.

The general strategy approach, which will see development allocations delivered at 5 different tiers of settlement in a dispersed approach to growth, is entirely appropriate and a sensible route to take.

As main centre, Honiton (with its existing services, facilities and public transport infrastructure) is well placed to take significant but proportionate much needed growth, and securing this growth across a wide spread of settlements is the most appropriate strategy for the district.

One of the failings of the current Local Plan (and part of the reason why the LPA have suffered from a lack of 5 year housing land supply in recent years) is due to the current strategy that sees the vast majority of delivery in a single location (e.g. Cranbrook) and in a new town which takes significant time to deliver.

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In our view, the current local plan did not focus sufficiently on existing towns and villages and an approach that looks to re-engage and deliver development at all tiers of settlement should be welcomed.

Honiton can make a meaningful contribution to the district's overall housing land supply and growth of this type would also have the advantage of diversifying supply, meeting local needs and supporting rural facilities.

Equally for employment development, sufficient provision must be made in the new local plan to support economic development right across the district so that growth is not stifled or lost to locations outside of East Devon.

It is important to ensure that the new local plan can deliver sufficient supply to allow for choice and flexibility in the local market. The ability to deliver employment and housing in main centre locations is a positive approach which will ensure the districts housing and employment needs are catered for.