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To: Planning Policy
Subject: East Devon District Council – Local Plan 2020 – 2040 Preferred Options Consultation

Categories: Reg.18 consultation

As residents of the west side of the East Devon District Council area, we all breathed a sigh of relief when EDDC withdrew from the "Greater Exeter Plan". Little did we know at the time that you were to come up with an equally bad plan along similar lines that just makes East Devon a dormitory for Exeter.

I have some sympathy for having to reach so called government targets for housing expansion when great areas of the land in the district are designated AONB. This gives you a much smaller footprint of land to squeeze your targets into. Do government targets take this into account?

I mention "targets" but according to one government minister, these are more advisory and NOT mandatory.

New towns in such a limited area to work with, is hardly ever going to be natural development. You would have thought that one New Town(Cranbrook) would have catered for a housing expansion for many years to come, let alone come up with plans for another in such a short timescale.

Either of the two sites remaining as options for a New Town will put thousands of extra cars per day in and out of Clyst St Mary/ Sandygate roundabouts. These as I'm sure you are aware are already at capacity during the commuter periods with traffic backed up well along the A3052 as well as the A376 often being queued halfway to both Woodbury and Exmouth.

You can talk all day about sustainable transport, access to public transport, many stations on the Avocet line etc etc. Fact is, neither site proposal is anywhere close enough to either rail line for them to be used practically. A car will be needed to get to what would be Topsham station, where parking is pretty non-existent, and while in the car, they would just carry on and drive in to the city. Cycling from these areas is also poor with all routes taking you through Clyst St Mary and then running the lottery of all the crossings at Sandygate and Sowton roundabouts. None of the routes or cycle tracks into Exeter give priority to pedestrians or cyclists, with many having to dismount and cross junctions in order to proceed. The very nature of human beings mean that they will take the easiest and most comfortable option and this will be the car. Your own sustainability report states that only 3% of people use a bus and only 2% use the train. As any New Town will be beyond most peoples comfortable walking distance, that puts 90% of people adding to traffic congestion.

The sustainability report also promotes the areas under consideration being of mainly rural lanes, which are quiet and eminently suitable for cycling. This will hardly be the case if you add 8000 new homes over the area. Lanes will just be a nightmare and clogged from one end to the other, yet the only road improvements mentioned are the A376 at Clyst St Mary.

The idea of a New Town minimising the carbon emissions is not applicable in this instance as both sites would just become suburbs of Exeter (just like Topsham) and the massive carbon footprint involved in the creation of a New Town as opposed to growing existing settlements would be detrimental.

Option 3 has many houses/local residents, farms and businesses contained within the footprint. There has been no mention of the impacts of building a new town on top of them, no consideration as to their rural way of life being totally obliterated and the businesses being driven out. Most of the local residents only discover the proposals by chance and at an extremely late date to respond by the deadline dates. Communication to the local community is appalling, leading me to believe that consultation with your local residents is the last thing on your mind. I am sure I am not alone as one of the local residents now left with the question of carry on improving my home, making it more energy efficient and comfortable to live in, when your plan has a New Town being built on top of it (presumably involving compulsory purchase and demolition).

Far from developing a local plan that represents the interests of the current residents of East Devon, it appears that EDDC has become subservient to the wishes of Exeter City Council in providing a solution for their obsession with the vast growth of their economy, now they are finding it more difficult to meet their targets economically as they are

running out of cheap land. Rather than finding a solution to their problems, you should concentrate more on serving your own constituents.

Geoff and Fiona Cox