

Introduction

Clinton Devon Estates are the owners of a very large area of land within East Devon. As part of its interests, the Estate undertakes residential and commercial development and manages substantial farming and forestry operations. It is also an important custodian of the area's environment, notably the Pebblebed Heaths National Nature Reserve. The Estate therefore has considerable interest in the future form of development in East Devon.

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. They therefore have considerable interest in the policies and objectives as now set out in the current draft of the plan. On behalf of Clinton Devon Estates, we have therefore reviewed the plan and a number of observations on the policies are set out below.

Strategic Policy SD23: Development allocations at Otterton

Strategic Policy SD23 identifies the Land North of Behind Hayes (Otto 01) for the development of 10 homes. The draft policy stipulates that any development of the site should be carefully designed to take account of the site's location within the National Landscape and proximity to various heritage assets. The draft policy notes that vehicular access needs to be from the direction of Orchard Drive, to the east.

Response

Commensurate with its proposed designation as a Service Village, Otterton benefits from a range of services and facilities. It is therefore appropriate that some growth be identified at the village.

The Land North of Behind Hayes has previously been subject to initial design work to consider potential site constraints, access and so on and to develop a layout which confirm that this site is capable of delivering the level of growth identified and in manner which is compatible with the National Landscape. The layout has been shared with the Council as part of earlier work on the draft plan's preparation. As a result, there is already considerable certainty that development of this site in the manner envisaged in the policy is credible and deliverable.

Whilst the Estate supports the overall objective of allocating the land for 10 dwellings, they OBJECT to the stipulation that vehicular access "must" come from the east. In practice, it is likely that any access is likely to be from this direction. However, the policy should include some flexibility to allow access to the part of the site to come from the land to the east, provided this can satisfactorily address the

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relevant constraints. Analysis by the Estate's highways consultants suggest that an access to serve part of the land may be possible from the south and this arrangement has been shown in the layout previously provided to the Council. Flexibility on this matter should therefore be provided to ensure that the allocation is fully deliverable. Given this point, the Estate therefore OBJECT to Policy SD23 as currently worded. The lack of flexibility has the potential to mean that the policy will not be effective in allowing all or part of the proposed development from coming forward. As such, the policy is therefore unsound. We would therefore suggest amending this part of the policy wording to read:

"Vehicular access should provided to the east/Orchard Drive if possible. Access from the lane to the south may be acceptable where this is needed and can be delivered in an acceptable manner."