

From: Charlotte Wheatley [REDACTED]
Sent: 05 January 2023 17:56
To: Cllr Paul Arnott; Cllr Ian Thomas; Planning Policy
Subject: Upottery Designated As Unsustainable

Categories: Reg.18 consultation

Hello

Concerning the designation by EDDC of the village of Upottery as 'Unsustainable', which means that in the draft Local Plan 2022 it is considered a 'Development beyond Settlement Boundaries'. We understand that this is based on the fairly limited criteria used, and in particular the absence of a shop in the village. Given the implications of this decision, we consider it to be completely unsuitable and inappropriate. We are very concerned that the designation of Upottery as 'Unsustainable' it is condemning the settlement to fail, i.e. it is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Table 1 of the Local Plan indicates that Objective 11 is to support 'sustainable and thriving villages' to 'protect and enhance facilities and services they offer'. The implication being that villages assessed as not being sustainable (or thriving?) will not be supported, and our concern is that other organisations will also consider the village not worthy of investment.

Whilst we would not like an inappropriate scale of development in the neighbourhood, we are concerned that this decision will lead to too great a constraint on the evolution of the village over the next eighteen years and frustrate investment. Having attended the consultation in Honiton on the 7th December and spoken to one of the planning team, we understand that the designation of Upottery as 'countryside' will still allow a limited amount of houses to be built, but this will only be with reference to 'exceptions' listed in the Local Plan, which are very restrictive and the only one which appears to be applicable to Upottery is 'Rural Exceptions'. We want to preserve the character of the village, and we believe that the fact it lies within the AONB already acts as suitable constraint on inappropriate development.

The reason there is not a shop in the village is because it is unlikely to be sustainable because we are so well served by a small shop in Churchinford, approximately 3 miles away, a shop in Dunkeswell 4 miles away, and Honiton 5 miles away. As well as the pub in the village which also provides a service which allows people to buy produce, and a mobile Post Office which visits the village once a week and is well attended. In addition, the village is connected to high speed internet and therefore there is good access to enable purchasing online. There is not a library in the village (which there is not in any other of the villages) but the internet access enables research and downloading books and films, which tends to be how people access the types of facilities used in a library.

The community of Upottery (and Rawridge) is varied and balanced in its demographic, active in terms of activities and community support, and there are plenty of facilities within the village to support this. Upottery is comparable with the other villages which you have designated as 'sustainable', indeed, in our opinion, it is better placed and more active than several of them.

The village is particularly well connected, adjacent to the A30, and within commuting distance of Honiton (with a railway station), Taunton (with a railway station), Chard, Axminster, Ottery St Mary and Exeter, and Exeter Airport. The only facility it lacks is a decent bus service which would enable people to commute without a car and thereby help to fulfil the Local Plans objective of reducing carbon emissions. But the designation of the village as 'unsustainable' is unlikely to encourage a bus service to be put in place.

At present, there is a dearth of housing available for first time buyers. Again, your decision will not assist in achieving this. This lack of suitable housing threatens to destabilise the balance of the demographics in the village which would be a great shame and will contribute to the overall decline of East Devon in terms of keeping a good mixed community, as has occurred in some parts of the South Hams and on the coast of East Devon.

The national procedure for compiling a Council Local Plan is fundamentally flawed. Instead of encouraging support for communities which need it, it encourages resources to be funnelled into places which are already strong. The large scale strategy in the EDDC Local Plan may be suitable i.e. the construction of a large 'new town' and the expansion of the already established towns, but it does not support the smaller local communities which include farmers, small rural businesses, local jobs, elderly people and young families. Therefore, it will not help to sustain the unique character of East Devon. In addition, it does not encourage the use of public transport in the rural areas and therefore does not contribute to the objective of reducing carbon emissions.

We would be grateful if you could acknowledge receipt of this message, and we hope that our opinions (and many others) will be reflected in the Local Plan.

Charlotte and Mike Drew

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