

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

15th January 2023

BY EMAIL: PlanningPolicy@eastdevon.gov.uk

Dear Sirs,

Consultation Response:

East Devon Local Plan 2020-2040 Preferred Options consultation draft (November 2022)

East Devon Local Plan 2020-2040 – Preferred Options consultation draft Sustainability Appraisal report (November 2022)

As residents of East Devon, and more specifically, the Bishop’s Clyst Parish, we write in order to record our objections to the current proposals. We have attempted to use your portal, but as this only allows for positive scores, it seems totally biased and valueless as a tool to gauge local opinion in this important matter.

We consider both options 1 and 3 to be totally inappropriate and ill-considered, as well as harmful to the environment and local residents alike, but we restrict our comments here specifically to Option 3 as this is more closely related to us, geographically and we are therefore in a stronger position to comment.

Leaving aside the obvious questions regarding the need for such an enormous new town (little more than another suburb of Exeter), built entirely on greenfield sites, the impacts on the local area and unsustainable nature of such a development, for residents both old and new, seem obvious to anyone who has spent more than a few hours in the locality.

The road network around the villages of Clyst St Mary, Clyst St George and Woodbury Salterton is incapable of coping adequately with current levels of traffic and the emissions created as a result of the daily traffic queues can only be harmful to current residents. Adding to this traffic in the orders of magnitude contemplated by these proposals is woefully short-sighted and suggests a wilful disregard for the health and wellbeing of East Devon’s population. The lack of any apparent plan to deal with the infrastructure issues is laughable, given the level of additional road traffic inevitably generated by such a massive development, and any suggestion that public transport would be used by residents in anything other than tiny percentages is naive in the extreme. The lamentable lack of reliability and accessibility of local public transport networks speaks for itself and has been the subject of much local press coverage in recent months.

As business owners with premises in Exeter, we are already painfully aware of the lost productivity related to overpopulation and woefully unreliable public transport and road links into the city from this side of Exeter, and several of our staff have reverted to car use as it is sometimes the only way of reaching the office at all, as painfully slow as that option is. Reference in the documentation to

the proximity of rail links is ill-informed. All local stations require a car to reach them from the area of the proposed development, with inadequate and prohibitively costly parking arrangements.

One is also led to question the advisability of embarking on yet another new town/suburb project when Cranbrook has still not been successfully completed and congestion in and around that development continues to worsen.

It is also, frankly, shocking to contemplate the vast swathes of green space that would be lost forever under such plans and the impact this has on young people in particular with green space becoming harder and harder to access from the city the more its boundaries are pushed out.

As ever, the environmental impacts are given lip-service at best in the reports and the true impact on wildlife, flora and fauna, glossed over.

Drainage issues seem poorly understood and with so much land going under concrete, the potential for flooding is immense. Local roads are frequently almost impassable even now, after any spell of heavy rain, and with even the smallest loss of soakaway availability having potentially massive consequences for both commerce and damage to existing properties.

The inevitable disruption that will be caused by decades of construction activity with heavy plant and machinery having to be transported on wholly inadequate roads will blight the lives of thousands of people living around the proposed new suburb for years to come.

Finally, the constant drive to build vast, closely packed, characterless and cheaply built housing estates around the city is totally destroying the character of one of the most significant and oldest cities in the country. This is turning Exeter from a beautiful county town, from which the countryside was visible from almost any part, into little more than a massive and poorly planned housing estate, with creaking infrastructure which feels almost designed to stifle productivity, individual well-being and the tourism trade, upon which it has previously thrived. As residents of rural East Devon, we have come to expect that politicians will inevitably ignore the issues that actually matter to us and our neighbours, but these plans also harm those living in the city itself and the business upon which the locally economy depends.

Yours faithfully

Claire and Stephen Forsey