

From:
Subject:

Planning Policy
FW: A customer has submitted a general enquiry/appointment request through the
Contact us page

Customer enquiry: We missed the deadline for response to the local plan consultation - many apologies.
Please see our comments below:

To whom it may concern:

East Devon's communities are already being creative in many ways – such as the Thelma Hubert art gallery and all the festivals etc. so, this is an opportunity to really build on all of the above – in terms of the built and social/community environments. The council is too with its emphasis on sustainable buildings and the flood plain work carried out at Budleigh Salterton, for example.

Thus, we echo any and all of the comments that emphasize the need to increase action taken on social equality, access to support services, climate change, biodiversity and net zero targets within this Plan. East Devon has a real opportunity with this plan to press forward on the above – we must for the sake of future generations, as well as for the immediate future!

So, any opportunity to further develop these key aims within the plan are essential – such as adopting sustainable building practices (even in private developments), taking action on improving water quality, habitats, increasing biodiversity, increasing access to green spaces etc.

Private housing developers need to be targeted in terms of building much more attractive and sustainable developments – so many of the existing proposals and actual built areas are really poorly planned and built – ranging from hedgerows being ripped out to an absence of trees, too much tarmac and concrete, all the houses looking the same to the housing being lacking in terms of sustainability etc. and real green spaces and then of course, the lack of affordable housing. All of this could be delivered if the building companies reduced their profit margins. Such developments have already destroyed beautiful areas such as Cranbrook, for example. The development had such potential to lead the way and set an outstanding example, implementing what is already well known about town planning, sustainable building practices, environmental awareness...

An emphasis on using any existing brownfield land should be key - so as to reduce the use of greenfield land. East Devon - in fact the whole of Devon, is fast destroying its key selling point of being a green and sustainable county.

Increased work also needs to be done on increasing the biodiversity of existing agricultural areas and work with farmers and landlords re this. Estates such as the Clinton Estate appear to the public as being active on this front - it is hoped they are inspiring others and leading the way for others, working with environmental and wildlife charities.

The pandemic really highlighted the need for increasing access to green spaces for all – for mental health and wellbeing and this should be at the forefront of all planning.

In terms of building new houses etc. the traffic is already gridlocked! Especially when approaching Exeter. This really needs to be considered and prioritised within the plan. So improving bus and train services, access to public transport and cycle paths etc. all need to be at the forefront of any building proposals.

As does access to services – the existing main services such as RD&E, GP surgeries, dentists etc. all need to be improved with such increasing populations.

The same is true for reducing social and economic inequalities– there is so much more East Devon needs to be doing with its local communities – more affordable and sustainable housing etc. housing for young families, local people, homeless, increased substance misused and drugs and alcohol services etc.

East Devon, along with key partners, should continue to campaign loudly for increased funding for the above from central government – if we do not look after and support people when vulnerable then what kind of society are we? Humans are designed to live in communities with others and so we need to look after all members of the community – East Devon's local plan really needs to be bold and adventurous in these aspects. There are so many well-researched and documented ways out there of supporting people when vulnerable and living in rural areas.

Is the council working closely with other key stakeholders such as Exeter city council ? The proposed 3 sites for a new town are all very close to Exeter – all of which would greatly impact on Exeter!

Finally, the thought of another new town repeating the same mistakes as Cranbrook... option 3 in particular seems to be the most inappropriate and the one set out to impact the most on the environment and nature the most - as well as impacting the most on surrounding villages etc. At least in option 2, for example, existing brownfield sites are included and the land is fairly built up in parts anyway so it appears from the maps to be more a case of infilling fields - whereas option 3 appears to be almost all agricultural land and villages. Furthermore, option 2 is along a main road - which suffers from traffic issues already but hopefully bus services could more easily be improved and cycle paths added etc.

Solutions to many of the issues presented in the plan are well researched, evidenced and documented. Is East Devon looking to other cities and countries, for example, who are seeking to achieve similar objectives? Housing constructed off site vastly reduces construction waste, is just one example. East Devon has a chance to really take on board existing solutions and take action on all of the above!

Many thanks,
Regards,
Kate and Gavin

Please check for attachments