

9th February 2022

To

Ed Freeman Service Lead-Planning Strategy and Development

cc. Dan Ledger Chair, Strategic Planning Committee

Cc Paul Arnot, Leader of East Devon District Council

Dear Mr Freeman

This is a joint letter from Ottery St Mary Town Council and West Hill Parish Council, to express our serious concerns over important elements of the Working Draft Local Plan.

Green Wedge

We are fully supportive of the approach taken by the Strategic Planning Committee at the meeting on 11th January to have more extensive green wedges, following a landscape review. It is important that the land identified in the Ottery St Mary and West Hill Neighbourhood Plan Policy NP4 (Settlement Containment) is given the full protection of green wedge status in the new Local Plan.

Our concerns, however, are that one of the suggested allocations for Ottery St Mary (Otry_01) already encroaches significantly on the green wedge, which is unacceptable.

The possible allocations in the various scenarios to accommodate additional housing might see West Hill with up to an additional 470 houses, and Ottery St Mary with up to an additional 1,300 houses. This would totally obliterate the green wedge and would join Ottery St Mary and West Hill together, which is completely unacceptable.

Infrastructure

There are already serious deficiencies in infrastructure within our parishes, which must be addressed before further development can even be considered:

- The primary schools and secondary school are already oversubscribed.
- GP medical services are over-stretched.
- The road structure within Ottery St Mary, with its narrow medieval layout in the town centre, and West Hill with its narrow unlit rural lanes without footways, is totally unsuitable for high levels of further development.
- Transport links are limited.

Hierarchy of settlements

We support the hierarchy of settlements that focuses most development where there are most jobs services and facilities. However, this is not represented in the proposed allocations in the working draft local plan which imposes a hugely disproportionate burden on Ottery St Mary and West Hill. This is even more so in the scenarios a,b,d and e for providing additional housing development, particularly in view of the infrastructure limitations described above.

A majority of workers in West Hill, and a significant proportion on Ottery St Mary commute out to go to work. This is not consistent with sustainable development, and will only be aggravated by high levels of new development.

Both Ottery St Mary and West Hill have accepted high levels of development under the current Local Plan since 2013. It is unfair to impose even higher levels of development. We consider that greater efforts should be made to find suitable sites in Tier 1 Exmouth, other Tier 2 Main centres and Tier 3 Local centres. There should also be greater consideration to some suitable sites in other Tier 4 service villages even if they are in the AONBs. Although there is a presumption against major development in AONBs, there must be scope for smaller-scale sensitive development to meet local needs.

Whilst we note that there will be an opportunity to comment on the Draft Local Plan when it is published in the Spring, we felt it important to register our objection to our communities bearing the brunt of excessive and disproportionate development and the potential removal of the green wedge at this early stage.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Piper Vicky Johns

Cllr Margaret Piper, Chairman of West Hill Parish Council

Cllr Vicky Johns, The Mayor of Ottery St Mary Town Council

Contact Details

Anne Oliver, Parish Clerk

West Hill Parish Council

Tel 01404 232100

Email clerk@westhillparishcouncil.gov.uk

Mrs Christine McIntyre

Chief Executive Officer

Ottery St Mary Town Council

The Council Offices

8 Broad Street

OTTERY ST MARY

EX11 1BZ

Telephone 01404 812252

E-mail - ceo@otterystmary-tc.gov.uk