

EDDC Draft Local Plan

Honiton Full Council Meeting 9.1.23

22/262 East Devon District Council Draft Local Plan 2020-2040

Members RESOLVED unanimously to approve the attached comments/responses to be provided to EDDC in response to their consultation on the Draft Local Plan 2020-2040.

Proposed by Cllr Furneaux-Gotch and seconded by Cllr Fowles

Quick Survey:

1. Where should new homes and jobs go – the big picture

Dislike – 25%

Comment: The Government sets figures for houses by applying a standard methodology which is sent to EDDC who if they disregard this are at risk of planning consents being taken out of their control and could lead to unrestricted planning. However recently the housing targets set by national Government have changed from being mandatory to advisory – there has been no change in approach from EDDC who seem to be allocating housing according to availability of land and according to an arbitrary target rather than how many houses are needed. EDDC should first ensure that there are the jobs and the infrastructure required and then build the houses. Honiton currently has more people than jobs. The new industrial estate will not provide enough jobs to fill the gap.

2. Striking the right balance

The 3 options selected:

We need to build homes to accommodate all East Devon residents.

We want to see better paid jobs and a more skilled workforce in East Devon

We want to protect and enhance our natural environment.

3. Homes for all

- Providing homes that are affordable for all – 2
- Providing homes specifically for elderly people and the retired – 2
- Encouraging new self-build homes – 3
- Ensuring homes are built to the highest green standards – 2
- Building higher density new homes, especially in town centres – 5

- Building homes that are easy to live in for disabled people - 2
- Building homes that are close to schools, shops and other services – 2

4. The future of jobs and employment

Order of importance

1. A priority placed on encouraging jobs and business opportunities in town centres
2. An expansion of jobs in green and environmentally responsible sectors
3. Protecting traditional job sectors such as farming and tourism
4. Jobs that pay much higher wages
5. More opportunities for people to work from home
6. New jobs are not really important as there are lots of jobs elsewhere, such as Exeter
7. I would like to see more high-tech jobs close to Exeter
8. East Devon has lots of retired people so planning for more jobs is not really that important.

5. A changing climate and how East Devon may respond.

What is most important/relevant

- I believe a real priority should be attached to better insulation standards in new buildings
- I think we should build on-shore windfarms in East Devon
- I believe we should build more solar farms in East Devon

6. Protecting and enhancing our environment

- Protecting biodiversity and wildlife is a critical concern in East Devon – 1
- Protecting old historic buildings is extremely important – 1
- We put too much emphasis on protecting the environment and doing so harms securing better jobs and new homes for people to live in – 5
- Our landscapes and AONBs are critically important to protect – 1
- We can support much more development without harming the environment – 2.
- The impact of climate change is more important than other environmental concerns – 1.

Honiton Policy Maps

- [LP GH/ED/39a](#)

Satisfied

Brownfield site as there are existing buildings – so not greenfield. Agree suitable location for development.

- [LP GH/ED/39b](#)

Dissatisfied

Consider this a suitable location for development in line with 39a. Hale Farm land allocated for solar energy also suitable for development.

- [LP Gitti 05](#)

Dissatisfied

Boundary would be 400m from Gittisham. Productive farmland. Development has already been approved for the east of the site. Allocated site is too big and encroaches into the AONB and too far to the west. Would support a smaller site, restricted to the east and out of the AONB.

- [LP Gitti 06](#)

Satisfied

Brownfield site

- [LP Honi 01](#)

Unhappy

Honiton Town Council objects to the proposed development of this site for the following reasons:

Summary of objection: The main objection is that the proposed site is within the ANOB and development of the site would adversely affect the landscape and the site's ecology. Two previous planning applications for the site have been refused and the reasons for refusal are still valid.

Specific objections are as follows:

Environment - The site is farmland that forms a barrier between the existing Built-Up Area Boundary and the ancient woodland of Gobsore Wood, as designated on the Natural England website. This dark sky environment provides an essential feeding environment for the protected species that live in the area. There is an important wildlife corridor that runs along the stream bordering the site to the West. Development would destroy both of these and has a further likely impact on the woods and the wildlife. The proximity of the site to the woods and ancient woodland would be an attraction for children, who would cause damage as they have in the woods above just two houses the other side of Hayne Lane. Occupiers of the new properties are more than likely to keep pets, including cats that would decimate the mammals in the area.

Ecology - Nine protected species of bats have been previously recorded foraging in and commuting across the site. One local resident has a bat colony in his attic.

- Thirty-one species of birds have been recorded in the area, including seven RSPB priority species.

- The land falls within the Devon Great Crested Newt Consultation zone and the stream running along the border is an ideal location for them.

- Roe Deer have been seen on the site and dormice and hedgehogs found in gardens alongside the fields. It is also suitable foraging habitat for badgers.

Visual - Building on the site would have a significant impact on the sight lines around the site. The incline of the land South of Heathfield Estate rises sharply. Housing would be clearly visible from the Heathfield Estate and the Blackdowns AONB. This would detract from the open view of the AONB, making Honiton a less desirable place for visitors and tourists, thereby impacting upon the local economy. The site lies within an AONB area. We cannot allow this designation to be left to concrete, especially considering its closeness in value to that of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. There are other suitable areas abutting Honiton that lie outside of AONB designations that could be designated for development. In fact, linking to this, the HELAA process itself can be quoted as stating this site has a "medium-high visibility" impact on the surrounding areas - further impacting on noise and light pollution

Overbearing - Housing would overlook existing properties due to the increase in gradient of the site.

Flooding - Gardens of housing adjoining the site are currently subject to flooding due to water run-off. Land permeability and Flood Risk Assessment are both documented concerns and the risk is especially high for the properties directly downhill. Local residents have reported that water runoff from the above fields is already high, and that flooding is a persistent risk. Increasing the impermeability of the ground surface across such a large surface area, and right next to a recognised flood zone, will only serve to increase stress on the already struggling flood attenuation basin and increase flooding risk to existing properties in the Heathfield Estate area. Reference can be drawn from para 167 of the NPPF to support a need for true flooding assessments.

Infrastructure - The site access roads mentioned in the documents associated with the draft plan are unsuitable for the increase in traffic. Honeysuckle Drive is not wide enough to cope with increased traffic as witnessed by a recent petition signed by over 100 Heathfield residents. Hayne Land is collapsing under the weight of current traffic and is subject to regular substantial repairs due to water washing away the stones and ground from beneath the tarmac. Access to the Sidmouth Road is considered dangerous due to the heavy traffic, proximity to sharp bends and traffic speed.

- Additional housing would be an extra load on Honiton Surgery, where it typically takes weeks to get an appointment, also on schools.

Previous planning history - This site, as well as two adjacent fields, have had planning permission refused as recently as 2015 for development under the same contractor, and there is no valid reason why this should change based on the previous decision. The HELAA process for the emerging Local Plan states that a median yield of properties on this site would be 79 homes, with Gleeson promoting 150 possible dwellings. Both of these numbers are unsustainable considering infrastructure in the area, as well as the existence of a neighbouring floodplain.

Education - Devon County Council's education policy notes that a new primary school site may need to be allocated in Honiton based on the allocations given to the town. However, the Local Plan fails to take this into account or allow for sufficient schooling places. On top of this, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is quoted in para 95 that local planners should take into account school places and infrastructure delivery **before** applications for sites are submitted - this Local Plan is an opportunity to do this and falls upsettingly short.

GP Services - Pending the expansion of Heathpark Industrial Estate, as long as it stays on track for completion and plans remain the same, adequate GP services might be provided. However, a national lack of GPs, nurses and paramedics means it is unsustainable to rely on this as an infrastructural vision for this site.

Access - Access to the site would be required through Honeysuckle Drive, Sidmouth Road, and potentially Hayne Lane. This would increase the traffic burden on the arterial A373 route, as well as the connector routes of Old Elm Road and Honeysuckle Drive. Road visibility would be an issue especially on Sidmouth Road, with a need to minimise the amount of street lighting due to the AONB designation. As well as this, there are significant issues with bringing road access in through other greenfield sites - potentially leading to an adverse and avoidable knock-on effect meaning developers would find excuses to build on adjacent land to the site with little hassle.

Existing Planning Policy - This site is in contravention of existing Local Plan policies D1, S5, S7, S46 and S50. It is in contravention of emerging Local Plan policies S7, S35, S62, S74, S75, S77, S82, S83, S84, S85, S87, S90 and Chapter 17.1 Infrastructure.

- [LP Honi 02](#)

Happy

No comments

- [LP Honi 04](#)

Happy

- [LP Honi 05](#)

Satisfied – subject to appropriate flood mitigation

- [LP Honi 06](#)

Happy.

Surrounded by existing residential housing.

- [LP Honi 07](#)

Unhappy

Adverse impact on landscape, heritage and AONB

- [LP Honi 08](#)

Happy

- [LP Honi 09](#)

Happy

- [LP Honi 10](#)

Unhappy

Loss of green wedge between new estate and A30. Unsuitable location for housing due to proximity with A30.

- [LP Honi 12](#)

Happy

- [LP Honi 13](#)

Unhappy

- [LP Honi 14](#)

Happy

The site should however be a preferred site rather than a second-choice site as should LP GH/ED/39b