

Broadhembury Parish Council, c/o The Clerk, 1, Brockfield Cottage, Chardstock, EX13 7DD

20th January 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

Response from Broadhembury Parish Council to EDDC Local Plan 20-40/ Draft: Autumn '22

This letter constitutes the formal response from Broadhembury Parish Council to EDDC's invitation to respond to the draft Local Plan. It is based on a public consultation and a formal vote at a public meeting. This meeting was informed by an exchange of E mails between the Chairman and EDDC Planning team (16th Nov and 6th Dec 2021) to seek clarification, and discussions with Cllr Skinner, Ward Member.

Thank you for agreeing a short extension to the deadline to enable the PC to respond after public consultation.

Spatial Strategy/Development in 'Service Villages'

We do not support the designation of site BRHE 09 as a HEELAS site, nor do we support the new development boundary drawn to include it. The reasons for this decision are:

1. The site will impact the setting and view of the AONB to which it is adjacent because it is on a slope which rises to the AONB boundary. The 'natural beauty' of the AONB will be compromised.
2. The site visually impacts local heritage assets, the curtilage of adjacent Listed Buildings and the Conservation area. Protecting and enhancing the historic environment is one of the 'three overarching objectives' in the Local Plan.
3. The new Development boundary follows no natural topographic feature and arbitrarily dissects an open field which is a unique feature of the 'sense of view' on approach to the village. Arbitrarily redrawing the boundary to include the site before you have conducted a full assessment of the site questions the integrity of the whole process. In fact we do not understand why the whole boundary needs to be reinstated at all except to legitimise this site.

4. There is no certainty of 'affordable housing' on this site due to the scale proposed. Whilst a financial contribution will be required in lieu we do not support a payment in mitigation for the impact caused by development on this site.
5. Whilst we recognise that infrastructure considerations normally follow Planning strategy determination, in this instance we already know that the waste water infrastructure cannot cope, and that there is little prospect of improvement during the life of this Plan (see below for more information). This information is therefore a material consideration at this stage.
6. We believe access to the site would be difficult without the cooperation of adjacent landowners. We believe this because the site fronts the main road on a bend .We do not believe cooperation will be forthcoming.

Notwithstanding these points the Parish Council is not opposed to the development of 'affordable housing' on appropriate sites in the Parish particularly if it is developed in conjunction with Broadhembury Community Land Trust. In fact we believe that some development of appropriate housing is healthy for the community, potentially provides skills the community may need and supports services.

Alternatives

Broadhembury Community Land Trust, set up by the Parish Council, but now independent, is currently in discussion with landowners about sites. We believe that pre-identification of a site in the LP before BCLT has completed this work compromises the CLT's ability to reach a settlement with potential landowners. Since this is a process driven by local membership of the Trust we believe it will be the best indication of community support for a site once identified. The Trustees have submitted separate comments to you.

The Service Village concept and 'sustainability'

We support the concept of a 'service village' as defined in the Local Plan. However the legal basis for this policy is that: 'development in one village may support services in a village nearby...' (NPPF para 79/ 2021 doc). The NPPF elsewhere states: 'decisions should play an active role in guiding developments towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account.....' (para 9/ NPPF)

There seems little point to us of defining the 'service village' concept if the services are prevented from being supported by development in 'nearby villages' as envisaged in NPPF. You have excluded any discussion about alternative sites in the hinterland hamlets 'served' by Broadhembury village on the basis that it would be unsustainable and prevented in law. You must therefore believe that they are not 'nearby' as defined in NPPF. We are advised that this interpretation is outside the intention of NPPF nor does it reflect the 'local circumstances' in the Parish for which specific provision is made in National guidance.

These 'local circumstances' are as follows;

1. The hamlets which are part of our parish are within 0.25 kms to 1.75 kms from the village of Broadhembury. This is a reasonable cycling or walking distance and we would submit that this constitutes 'nearby'.
2. The village of Broadhembury has a publicly available electric vehicle charge point and a large car park. During the life of the Local Plan, EV's will become the dominant mode of sustainable transport. In fact we believe that the provision of a public EV charge point should be one of the criteria which defines the service village concept.
3. The 'service village' concept is constructed on the basis of various 'services' provided in the village. One of these is the school. Children are 'bussed' from Dunkeswell to Broadhembury (a distance of six miles) to 'sustain' this service. If DCC LEA considers this 'sustainable' then it must be consistent for the school to enrol pupils from potential new developments in the nearby hamlets which you currently deem 'unsustainable'.

When the Local Plan is reviewed by the Planning Inspector we shall make separate representations to him/her to this effect because we believe that the 'service village' concept is improperly construed and as applied to us does not take proper account of local circumstances.

Furthermore, when the CLT comes forward with potential sites for affordable housing in 'nearby villages' we will look favourably on the application. We are currently minded to support any such application if we consider the site or sites have community support, provide sufficient affordable housing ,are supported by neighbours and there is the prospect of long term management by the community.

Infrastructure

Notwithstanding the points made above we cannot support any new development which is served by the Broadhembury sewage pumping station. If developments propose a stand-alone package sewage treatment plant which meets current regulations then we would waive this objection.

A Freedom of Information request made by Broadhembury PC to SW Water has revealed that for 25 days in every month on average over the last two years there has been discharge of untreated sewage into the River Tale. Although this is termed 'storm discharge' it bears little correlation to 'storms' and we believe it is driven by the lack of capacity at Honiton treatment plant and the bore of the connecting sewer. On some occasions this discharge has been for a few minutes but usually it is for hours or days continuously.

Until this is resolved we cannot support any development at all if it served by this this sewage system. Since one of your overarching objectives refers to 'identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure' we would urge you to develop a plan to address this issue in villages across East Devon to protect water quality and coastal discharge before

proceeding with development plans in rural settings. We assert that this is a threat to public health, river diversity and ecosystems.

Conclusion

The Local Plan proposal for the village of Broadhembury, particularly the proposal under the category of spatial policies is in our view:

- Inconsistent with policies expressed in the Plan or elsewhere (eg: on built heritage, the natural environment etc)
- Non-compliant with the guidance in NPPF if it is interpreted in a way which recognises the dispersed nature of communities in rural East Devon. We believe It is within your discretion as a LPA to do this.
- Inconsistent with two of your three 'overarching objectives' which should drive all sustainable development in the Local plan. We do not believe the proposals for our Parish sit comfortably within these objectives.
- Fails to consider known infrastructure constraints.

The 'sense of place' of Broadhembury village is defined in part by its historic built environment and its setting in open countryside. It is quintessentially a Devon 'wide street' village with mainly thatched cottages and historic buildings surrounded by open countryside. The proposal as described here fails to meet Local Plan objectives 7, 8 and 9 , as well as two of your 'overarching' policies for development and the provisions in National Planning Policy Framework. Nor does it have community support.

As a consequence, this element of the Local Plan does not have our support.

Yours faithfully

Bob Nelson , Chairman Broadhembury Parish Council

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