

PS/62 Bampton Town Council (Matter 1 and Matter 8) AE/O
62/BA2/1132/1/2/3 and 62/NAS/1133 Distribution of Development
62/BA1 62/BA2 62/BA3 62/NS5

Response to Consultation.

- The adopted Core Strategy includes Bampton as no response to the Inspectorate was received from the then Town Council.
- However and in spite of the difficulty in the layman's understanding of the response forms many individual, anxious responses were made on a consistent basis to subsequent documents. It would have been a benefit had feed-back of these views been made to the Town Council.
- The current Town Council submitted a response in December 2008 bearing in mind that one of the **Key objectives of the Core Strategy was that development proposed is planned to bring benefits.**
- The Core and subsequent documents variously describe Bampton as a market town, a small town, a village and a local centre indicating that those making the decisions are not sufficiently familiar with the place. *Bampton is a town by name but a village by nature.* It has not been a market town for over 40 years. It has a population of fewer than 2000 and in **Topic Paper 3** (November 2006, Examination of the Core Strategy) is described as a '*Local Centre in the Adopted Plan*'
- **This Council takes issue with the Allocations and Infrastructure DPD COR 16 Policy Statement 8.1** The description is just not true.
- The current Council were seriously concerned having found out by chance that at a Development Control meeting in Tiverton on 19th August 2009 the Bouchier site was being mooted as the preferred option for mixed development.
- A **letter of complaint** was immediately filed and a request made for that letter to be included in the examination by the Inspectorate.
- In Appendix A, Section M, Consultation and Deprivation it is stated that 'there has been **moderate** objection to the allocation of preferred options consultation. The Town Council oppose the allocation.'
- **This is an understatement.** Local people vociferously oppose development of this site not only in their written responses. These views were expressed angrily and confirmed clearly at a Public Meeting held in Bampton on September 7th 2009 and reflected in the BTC submission of November 2009.
- **Windfall housing has already exceeded a reasonable quota.**
- **Bampton Town Council seeks an urgent dialogue with MDDC to address this situation.**

The Preferred site: Bouchier Site B

- Bouchier's geographical and topographical position makes it the most unsuitable site possible and it is outside the existing settlement.
- One of the original questions in the consultation on the Core Strategy was '*has the town the physical capacity/lack of constraints to achieve the proportion of development?*' The simple answer from the people of Bampton is 'no' because the infrastructure is totally inadequate and the risk of flooding is already exacerbated by any development on the steep hillsides enveloping the town.
- In the intervening years since the Core Strategy acknowledged a 49% recent increase in traffic, already too much, the volume of cars, the size and weight of service vehicles and farm machinery has grown incrementally to the detriment of air quality and the road infrastructure. The main shopping street is a bridge for the whole of its length. The Shuttern

Brook runs from a gullet in Frog Street through a Victorian tunnel and flows into the River Bathern at the bridge. Run-off water from the Old Tiverton Road has a significant effect.

- In 2000, following prolonged, heavy rain in the autumn, people were rescued by boat from homes in Brook Street. Many people have great difficulty in obtaining flood insurance for their property.
- This event gave rise this year to the creation of an active *Bampton Flood Plan*, the first in Mid Devon.
- In the site-identification criteria, **Appendix 1**, it is inferred that run-off water from the Bouchier site could enter the Shuttern Brook. As the culvert has a narrow throat in Frog Street an increased, severe risk of flooding to the town is inevitable.
- In this location we are not persuaded that SUDs will cope effectively with the large amount of run-off from the high ground. We can only see the risk of flooding increased.
- Frog Street is a narrow street lined by quaint cottages. It leads uphill to the Morebath Road where the Bouchier site has been identified.
- In the strategy Frog Street is designated a ‘quiet lane’ to be used as a walk to school route; most commendable but hardly realistic. An adult, walking briskly, takes 23 minutes to walk from the Morebath Road junction to the primary school entrance steps. This, without small children or pushing a buggy or carrying school ‘gear’ early in the morning.
- Families with small children will therefore necessarily use a car to transport the family to school or to nearby Tiverton where the ‘Tesco’ effect is important economically and socially.
- Vehicles leaving the Bouchier site would have to navigate the only access road into the town centre, Castle Street. This is narrow with parking on one side and a cause of considerable traffic problems. *Photographs have been submitted as evidence.*
- In **Appendix 1** the only reference to this bottleneck is in Section J, Healthy and Safe Living Environments. It says ‘*Existing links to the town centre require improvements!*’ Any significant increase in traffic will necessarily increase the carbon footprint and air quality.
- At the bottom of Castle Street traffic moves five ways. Cycling to school even from Frog Street for a primary-aged child would be hazardous.
- **The Sedley requirement 4** requires that the product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising any proposals. Bampton Town Council feels that this aspect of the consultation process has not been honoured and that the preferred choice of Bouchier Close is entirely damaging to the future wellbeing of Bampton and contrary to the wishes of its people.

Sustainable Employment.

- Bampton Town Council understands the need for sustainable development but we challenge the notion that this small ‘town’, situated geographically and topographically as it is, can sustain any more light industry than already exists.
- Many units on the West Street Industrial Estate lie vacant. Some are being rented out at two thirds of the normal rate, some have relocated to take advantage of this. We estimate that at least two thirds of the space lies empty.
- The employment afforded by Origin Clothing factory, Global Chemicals and Rotolok engineering ceased several years ago. There are also empty units at Brushford and Exebridge nearby. The Rotolok building has been divided into four.
- An additional three industrial units are planned for the brownfield site on the Tiverton Road as part of Phase 2 of Devonshire Home’s development of Scott’s quarry, though we understand that one of existing three units lies empty on that site and that Devonshire Homes are to apply for a change of use!
- Other employment, apart from a few small businesses and shops in the centre is at Lords Meadow Lane where Hookins Oil, a flower market garden, and a private car engineering

works operate. Outside catering, the local pubs and bed and breakfast bring much needed economic benefits to this region of Mid Devon with its links to the Exe Valley Way.

- The more successful large towns offer greater and more varied employment opportunities for local people. Rotolok engineering re-located for this reason. This is simply because Bampton lies up a winding, narrow river valley road with the consequent additional business costs of time and fuel.
- This historic 'town' has a town trail for tourists to follow within an interesting Conservation Area but it is also a working town unlike the 'chocolate box' settlements of Exmoor National Park
- There is an increasing trend for people, using technology, to work from home and in the past couple of years there has been a determined effort to set up craft shops and a business advice bureau.
- Newly refurbished shops await letting.
- A new census will show that more than 50% of the residents are retired. But these incomers do bring employment to the town in terms of building works associated with their properties. Estate agent work is sustainable.

Other sites.

School Close, Site A

In June 2009 Bampton Town Council unanimously opposed the original proposals for this site on grounds of access, sewage infrastructure and run-off risk.

Development on the brownfield site of the old school is supported provided

- that there are safety modifications to the access in West Street allowing some additional hill-side housing for viability and
- that appropriate assurances are given to overcome the concerns regarding run-off and sewerage infrastructure.
- that Condition 8 remains on the old school gate apart from pedestrian and emergency service access owing to the danger to **young** children when they exit school together at **the end** of the school day.

Ashleigh Park Site C

We have no objections to this site as it is an extension of an existing small development as long as there is an appropriate independent means of access.

Newton Court, Site D

However we have concerns about the proposed small development at Newton Court

- on the grounds of access and the effect, already felt, of the traffic movement of enormous delivery lorries to the Spar shop immediately in front of the front doors of family homes.
- there is also the risk of interference with the flow of ground water feeding the Shuttern Brook in nearby Frog Street.

Proposed Alternative site: South Molton Road Site Site NS5

Whilst strongly opposing the Bouchier site, Bampton Town Council, recognising that some development may be inevitable are reluctantly prepared to support an alternative.

In a submission to Mid Devon in November 2009 we suggested an alternative non-allocated site for development at **South Molton Road** which would have **direct benefits for the town**

- by resolving the dangerous 'bottleneck' of High Street.
- the site would enable children to walk to school, especially if some zig-zag steps were provided down through the Millennium Green hillside.
- alternative routes for traffic could relieve the town centre.
- there is an opportunity for the potential for the carbon footprint to be less.

- Responding to Bampton Town Council's request, this site has been consulted upon and the Planning Committee made a site visit. The outcome was considerable interest in the site and a request for some modifications.

Current conditions.

The present Town Council, elected in 2007, has taken time to assimilate the effect of the lack of earlier response, particularly to the Core Strategy and to understand the process.

We are now at a stage where we feel an urgent dialogue is needed with MDDC so that the current circumstances of the town are rooted in reality. Bampton cannot offer the economic viability expected in the vision of 2006. Its geography and topography and the national economy militate against this. To build housing which is unsustainable would be to evoke a destructive force to this lovely part of Mid Devon where, at the gateway to Exmoor, the effect would be to deter tourists and have wider implications for the whole area.