

**From:** Local Plan Review  
**Subject:** FW: Tiverton Civic Society Response to Local Plan Review  
**Attachments:** Letter to MDDC February 14th 2017 (2).docx

**From:** Jeremy Salter [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 14 February 2017 10:44  
**To:** Local Plan Review  
**Subject:** Tiverton Civic Society Response to Local Plan Review

Dear Forward Planning Team,

I attach the TCS response to the Local Plan Review which refers to the decision to include Junction 27.

With best wishes,

Jeremy Salter



Local Plan Review Consultation Winsfield  
Forward Planning 43 Post Hill  
Mid Devon District Council Tiverton  
Phoenix House EX16 4NG  
Tiverton  
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14<sup>th</sup> February 2017

#### MID DEVON LOCAL PLAN REVIEW CONSULTATION

Dear Forward Planning Team,

Tiverton Civic Society largely supported the original Draft Local Plan 2013-2033, which designated Cullompton as the focus for future development, but we are writing to object to the major change introduced after the Mid Devon Councillors voted on September 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016 to additionally allocate 71 hectares at Junction 27 of the M5 for a large retail and leisure development. Our main reasons for objecting to this change are as follows:

1. 'Mid Devon's town centres face a challenging future due to changing national retailer requirements, online shopping and reduced consumer spending.' Nationally, many market towns have suffered considerable problems of retail decline in recent years and the fabric of town centres has often declined. This is notable in Tiverton and Cullompton where the central Conservation Areas are classified by Historic England as 'Heritage at Risk', 'Very Bad' and 'Deteriorating'. Major efforts to arrest the present decline have had limited success, but the retail factor remains very fragile and we consider that major competition from the proposed major development at Junction 27 would have a very significant, even disastrous, negative effect, not only on local market towns and villages but also much further afield, where considerable misgivings have been expressed. We agree with Exeter MP Ben Bradshaw who has stated that "this development would in my view have a very negative impact on Exeter, Taunton and nearby market towns like Tiverton, Wellington and Honiton. It is exactly the kind of unsustainable out-of-town shopping development that has led to the decline of town and city centres in other parts of the country."

The size of the proposed retail provision is very considerable. The Agronomy centre will include up to 1,000 square metres of ancillary retail space and the Outlet Shopping Village will incorporate a shopping centre retailing controlled goods comprising discontinued/end-of-range lines, seconds and surplus/sample stock and it will include up to 14,000 square metres of controlled comparison goods and up to 2,000 square metres of A3 uses. The Draft Local Plan states that 'existing town centres will be safeguarded through planning controls',

but we have very considerable doubts as to how such controls can be effective in limiting the considerable potential damage to local settlements.

2. The 71 hectare site at Junction 27 is a mainly greenfield site consisting of good quality agricultural land and it includes part of the Culm Grasslands Special Area of Conservation. We consider that major commercial development should occur on allocated, ideally brownfield, land in or close to existing major settlements.
3. We consider that the proposed development is unsustainable as nearby settlements are small, with limited housing, a high proportion of the population being in the largely non-employed over 65 year groups. It is likely that the workforce necessary would be drawn from a wide area, resulting in unsatisfactory and potentially unsustainable journey-to-work patterns and we are not convinced that the development would bring sustainable benefits to the local economy.
4. Recent improvements to Junction 27 have alleviated the problems of congestion at peak periods and tailbacks on the M5. It is already considered that further enhancements will be needed as new developments occur at Tiverton and other towns on the A361. A major development at Junction 27 will increase the need for further major highway investment.

Tiverton Civic Society would appreciate the chance to appear before the Inspector carrying out the Examination.

Yours sincerely,

Jeremy Salter (Chairman), Dr Fern Clarke (Secretary).