

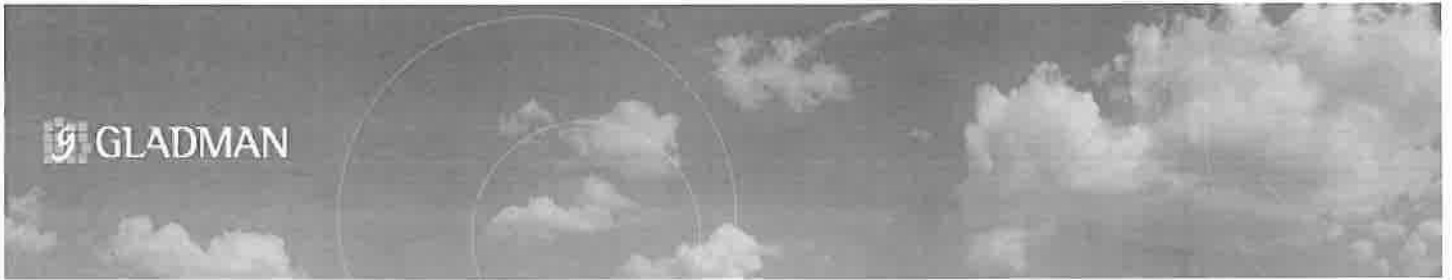
S040/S2
S040/S3
S040/S4

S040/S13
S040/S14
S040/RURAL

S040/DEVSTRA/mod

From: Local Plan Review
Subject: FW: Mid Devon District Council Local Plan Review
Attachments: Gladman Reps Mid Devon Proposed submission 2017.pdf

From: Richard House [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 February 2017 16:40
To: Local Plan Review
Subject: Mid Devon District Council Local Plan Review



Dear Sir/Madam

Please find attached representations from Gladman Developments in respect of the Mid Devon Local Plan Review 2013-2033 Proposed Submission Plan.

I would be grateful if you could acknowledge receipt of this submission.

Kind Regards

Richard House BA (Hons) MRTPI
Policy Planner
Gladman Developments

[REDACTED] (Direct Dial)
[REDACTED] (Mobile)
Email [REDACTED]

Gladman Developments | Gladman House | Alexandria Way | Congleton | Cheshire
T: [REDACTED] | F: [REDACTED]
www.gladman.co.uk

GLADMAN DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED

**REPRESENTATIONS ON MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL
PLAN REVIEW 2013-2033**

PROPOSED SUBMISSION PLAN

FEBRUARY 2017

 **GLADMAN**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Gladman Developments Limited (Gladman) specialises in the promotion of strategic land for residential development with associated community infrastructure.
- 1.2 This submission provides Gladman's representations on the Mid Devon Local Plan Proposed Submission document and follows our comments made in respect of the Council's previous Proposed Submission document in February –April 2015.
- 1.3 Through these representations Gladman has raised below a number of key issues with the soundness of the Mid Devon Local Plan in its current form. These issues relate to:
 - Policy S2 Amount and Distribution of Development
 - Policy S3 Meeting Housing Needs
 - Policy S4 Ensuring Housing Delivery
 - Policy S13 Rural Areas and Policy S14 Countryside
- 1.4 Substantial revision of these policies is required in order for the Plan to meet the tests of soundness as set out in Paragraph 182 of the Nation Planning Policy Framework.

2. POLICY S2: AMOUNT AND DISTRIBUTION OF DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 Gladman considers that Policy S2 is unsound as it is not positively prepared, effective or consistent with national policy.
- 2.2 This policy sets out that the plan will deliver approximately 7,860 dwellings over the plan period (393 dwellings per annum). This is based on the 2015 Exeter Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Final Report produced by DCA, which covers the local planning authority areas of East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon and Teignbridge. The SHMA gives a range of between 359 and 381 dwellings per annum and Gladman supports the slightly higher figure which the Plan is intended to deliver. The Policy should however be amended to state that it will deliver at least 7,860 dwellings in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the NPPF which makes it clear that *"local planning authorities should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits."*

- 2.3 The policy directs the majority of housing development to the towns of Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton with 786 dwellings allocated to the 'rural areas'. The rural allocation represents only 10% of the district's overall requirement. Gladman considers that the Council's aspiration to protect services and facilities in villages (set out in Policy S1) is unlikely to be achieved by such a strategy. Gladman considers that the best way to secure rural services and facilities is through that enshrined in paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states that "to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities." Locating new houses in villages is critical to the viability and vitality of services through the introduction of new customers and a wider mix of population. This is especially true where the population of villages is ageing and the number of people of working age is declining. The level of housing allocated to rural settlements should be of a scale that can actually make a difference; this critical mass will not be achieved by pepper-potting development across the rural area in a piecemeal fashion.
- 2.4 The strategy is also heavily reliant upon large scale urban extensions – namely 1350 dwellings at North West Cullompton, 1750 dwellings at East Cullompton and 1580 at the Tiverton East Urban Extension. These three sites are expected to accommodate 4,680 dwellings or about 60% of the district's total requirement. Gladman believes that such a significant reliance on large extensions is a major risk to the Plan achieving the delivery of housing required given the long lead in times and often complex infrastructure requirements that are associated with such large and complex sites. The Council also needs to be realistic about the likely delivery rates on these large sites.
- 2.5 Gladman is concerned that the Plan does not make sufficient provision for housing to maintain a five year supply of deliverable housing sites on adoption as required by the NPPF. The latest five year supply evidence is the Council's Housing Land Availability Summary 2016 covering the period from 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016. Unfortunately a more up to date position statement has not been produced with the Submission Local Plan document. The 2016 Summary indicates a housing supply of 2952 dwellings equivalent to 4.38 years against an annual requirement of 370 dwellings per annum. The supply calculation provides for a 20% buffer because of persistent previous under delivery and for the shortfall to be made up within the first 5 years of the Plan (the Sedgfield methodology). The supply calculation is, however, inconsistent with the housing requirement included in the Submission document which is 393 dwellings per annum. When this requirement is applied, the outcome is a housing supply of only 4.18 years.

- 2.6 Notwithstanding the absence of any more up to date information and a housing trajectory based on the allocations in the Submission Plan, it is difficult to see how the Plan is likely to result in a 5 year supply being in place on adoption, assuming this takes place in 2018. This is because of the over reliance on the three large strategic urban extensions as referred to above which are unlikely to deliver significant amounts of housing in the early years of the Plan following adoption. It is evident that there is a need therefore for additional housing allocations to be identified in the Plan which would maximise housing supply by providing the widest possible range of sites by size and market location so that housebuilders of all types and sizes had access to available and deliverable housing land in order to offer the widest range of products.

3. POLICY S3: MEETING HOUSING NEEDS

- 3.1 This policy is concerned with meeting housing needs within the District. Part (d) of the Policy deals with self-build and custom housing and requires that on sites of 20 dwellings or more developers must provide at least of serviced dwelling plots for sale to self-builders for a period of 12 months per plot. Gladman believes that such a blanket policy is too prescriptive in requiring self-build plots on all housing sites and that the policy should be reworded to ensure that the provision of self-build plots will only be required on a site if it is feasible, viable and there is proven demand. Gladman considers that this policy is unsound as it is not justified.

4. POLICY S4: ENSURING HOUSING DELIVERY

- 4.1 Gladman welcomes the inclusion of a policy which provides assurance of the Council's commitment to the monitoring and full delivery of the council's housing requirement. The inclusion of such a policy is particularly important given the significance reliance upon the delivery of large sustainable urban extensions in the Plan in order to meet the overall housing requirement. However, Gladman considers that as drafted; the Policy is unsound, being not positively prepared, not effective and inconsistent with national policy.
- 4.2 Gladman believes that there are two significant shortcomings with the Policy. Firstly, Gladman believes that the requirement for the Council to take action only after two years of cumulative undersupply is inflexible and potentially responds too late. Gladman believes that the Plan

should aim to rectify any undersupply without delay. Any permission granted to rectify the position after two years undersupply will not deliver housing for at least 18 months, thus exacerbating the undersupply position. Instead Gladman advocates that the Plan should increase the housing requirement in the first five years following adoption (the Sedgfield approach), and accordingly increase the number of allocated sites capable of being developed in that period. This would ensure that the Plan provides a significant boost to housing land supply now, as required by the NPPF, rather than deferring the problem to later in the Plan period.

- 4.3 Secondly, although Gladman has no objection in principle to the concept of contingency sites, as a mechanism it has potentially significant problems. The Plan identifies two contingency sites: Tidcombe Hall, Tiverton for 100 dwellings and Colebrook, Cullompton also for 100 dwellings. The Colebrook site is dealt with in Policy CU21 which states that the development of the site shall not commence until the North West Cullompton through route linking Tiverton Road to Willand Road has been completed. Policy CU6 allows for the completion of up to 500 dwellings on the North West Cullompton allocation prior to the opening of the said Willand Road to Tiverton Road through route. According to the Council's housing trajectory, the 500th dwelling on the North West Cullompton site is likely to be delivered during 2022/23. Effectively therefore, commencement of development on the Colebrook site would not be possible until 2022/23 and contingency provision until then would be restricted to the Tidcombe Hall site for 100 dwellings only.
- 4.4 Gladman considers this to be a completely unacceptable way of dealing with an undersupply of housing. If the undersupply occurs before 2023 and exceeds 100 dwellings, then there is no mechanism in place to fully address this. It is also the case that paragraph 49 of the NPPF makes it clear that should a local authority fail to demonstrate a five year housing land supply, relevant policies (such as Policy S4) should not be considered to be up to date. In that context, applications for housing development would fall to be considered in the light of the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in Paragraph 14 of the NPPF.

5. POLICY S13 : RURAL AREAS AND POLICY S14: COUNTRYSIDE

- 5.1 Gladman considers that Policies S13 and S14 are unsound as they are inconsistent with national policy. Policy S13 seeks to limit development in rural areas to a series of designated villages. Even within these villages development will only be allowed within the defined settlement limit and is restricted to small scale housing, employment, tourism and leisure;

services and facilities serving the locality; and other limited development which enhances community vitality or meets a local need.

- 5.2 Policy S14 begins by stating that development outside the settlements defined in Policies S10 and S13 will preserve and where possible enhance the character, appearance and biodiversity of the countryside while promoting sustainable development of the rural economy. However the second part goes on to place restrictions on the type of development that will be allowed in the countryside, this being limited to "agricultural and other appropriate rural uses", subject also to also meeting an array of other criteria.
- 5.3 Taken both individually and together, these policies in effect create a 'presumption against development' in the countryside which severely restricts development outside settlement boundaries. There is nothing in the NPPF which states that development in the open countryside should be restricted in the extensive manner which this policy suggests. Instead paragraph 55 of the NPPF is clear that in the rural areas "housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities". The sustainability of development proposals in the rural areas should be judged on a case-by-case basis through the planning balance exercise.
- 5.4 Gladman suggests that Policy S13 should be reworded as follows:

"The following rural settlements will be designated as villages suitable for limited development; Bampton, Bow, Bradninch, Chawleigh, Cheriton Bishop, Cheriton Fitzpaine, Copplestone, Culmstock, Halberton, Hemyock, Holcombe Rogus, Kentisbeare, Lapford, Morchard Bishop, Newton St Cyres, Sampford Peverell, Sandford, Silverton, Thorverton, Uffculme, Willand and Yeoford. Development will be limited to proposals within or immediately adjoining their defined settlement limits....."

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Gladman considers that the Plan does not provide for a five year supply of housing land upon adoption due to the over reliance on large strategic urban extensions which are unlikely to deliver significant amounts of new housing until later in the plan period. Also the amount of new housing expected to be delivered in the smaller rural settlements of the District is unlikely to be sufficient to enhance or maintain the vitality of these communities. There is, therefore,

a need for additional sustainable and immediately available housing allocations to be identified in the plan.

- 6.2 Gladman considers that self-build housing plots should only be required on a site if feasible, viable and if there is proven demand.
- 6.3 Whilst the Council's commitment to monitoring and full delivery of the housing requirement is to be welcome, Gladman considers that the approach suggested by the Council is unlikely to be effective. The Plan should be amended to increase the number of allocated sites capable of being developed in the first five years following adoption rather than deferring action on undersupply to later in the plan period. Furthermore in reality only one of the two contingency sites identified in the Plan is likely to be available for development prior to 2022/23.
- 6.4 Policies S13 and S14 create a presumption against development outside settlement boundaries which is contrary to the NPPF. The sustainability of housing proposals in the rural areas should be judged through the planning balance exercise and the policy should be reworded to allow for sustainable development to be allowed immediately adjoining defined settlement limits.
- 6.5 Gladman would wish to speak at the Examination and would ask to be notified when the Plan is submitted to the Inspectorate for examination. It would also wish to be notified when the plan is adopted.