

# HOLCOMBE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

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Teignbridge District Council

15 November 2021

Dear Sir

## **Local Plan Review: Smaller Site Options (Land East and West off Holcombe Road)**

I am writing on behalf of the Holcombe Residents Association regarding the current consultation on possible smaller site options for inclusion in the Local Plan. We have around 400 members in the village.

We believe that the fields identified off Holcombe Road (pages 146 to 148 in the consultation document) for up to 47 new homes are not appropriate for development for the following reasons:

- 1) In the current Local Plan, this area is designated “Undeveloped Coast” and is also protected from development under Policy S17 which seeks a physical separation between Holcombe and Teignmouth. There was a good reason for such a classification and policy, as these green fields characterise the coastal area and prevents “urban sprawl” along the main coast road.
- 2) Any narrowing of the strategic green break between the settlements also goes against Policy EN1 in the current Local Plan which states that:

“Certain settlements are close together, and there is pressure to develop within the gaps. Where these gaps are important to their character or are themselves of high environmental quality, the policy indicates that this open character should be maintained.”

This is a key environmental policy and should not be changed. On the same theme, building in these fields would extend the Teignmouth settlement boundary. We note that the nascent Teignmouth Neighbourhood Plan seeks to maintain its settlement boundary to prevent coalescence between Teignmouth and Holcombe and to maintain a local green break.

- 3) The fields being considered are good-quality agricultural land and a haven for wildlife, including ciril buntings. If this area is developed, it will destroy the habitats of many animals and birds, some of which have protected status. We are particularly concerned that ancient hedgerows would have to be taken out in order to widen the access of the lane leading to these fields.
- 4) On the subject of access, we assume that primary access would be from the Minadab end of Holcombe Road, hence the need to widen the lane where the existing housing ends. However, vehicles accessing these fields are also likely to come from the other direction, via Holcombe Village (Hall Lane junction with Holcombe Road); this lane is very narrow and is not suitable for increased traffic.

- 5) Although the fields are relatively close to a bus stop, there is no other infrastructure around to support 47 new homes. The nearest shops, supermarkets, schools and GP surgeries are some distance away. Although new cycleways might be put in place, the topography of the land means that there are steep hills to climb going in both the Teignmouth and Dawlish directions, making it unattractive for the casual cyclist. As a result, any development here will significantly increase the number of car journeys, with resulting emissions which will be detrimental to the Council's climate change agenda.

We are somewhat surprised that these fields have been put forward for development given Teignbridge's recently published "Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment" which classified these fields as "Red" or unsuitable for development. The reasons given are similar to the points made above and the "landscape harm" that would result.

Yours faithfully

Andy Watson  
Secretary, Holcombe Residents Association