



30 May 2022

Todd Baker, Esq.,  
Planning Casework Unit | Planning Directorate,  
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities,  
Third Floor, Fry Building,  
2 Marsham Street,  
London,  
SW1P 4DF

Dear Mr Baker,

Thank you for your email of the 27th May in response to the request from the South Hams Society to the Secretary of State to call in planning application no: 3335/21/FUL.

On the 25th May the Development Management Committee of South Hams District Council voted to approve the application to construct '*125 homes, commercial business units, landscaped parkland, community boat storage/parking, allotments, improvements to existing permissive pathway and public footway, enhancement of vehicular access and associated infrastructure and landscaping*,' subject to the Secretary of State deciding whether or not to call in the application.

The primary reason for their decision was that the need for affordable housing outweighed the need for the application to meet the policy tests for major developments within the AONB set out in either DEV25 of the adopted local plan or paragraph 177 of the NPPF.

The applicants had argued "It has been demonstrated that the local need must be addressed within the defined local area (i.e. Newton Ferrers/Noss Mayo, Yealmpton, Holbeton and Mothecombe) and that there are no alternative sites that could address this need" (<https://portal.southhams.gov.uk/CivicaTownLive/civica/Resource/Civica/Handler.ashx/doc/pagestream?DocNo=8768751&pdf=true>).

However there is no evidence of the need having to be addressed within the area defined by the applicants by anybody other than the applicants. As Lichfields stated on page 24 of their Assessment of Local Housing Need on behalf of the applicants:

3.2 The site is located on the edge of Newton and Noss Parish and is approximately equidistant between Newton Ferrers and Yealmpton. For the purposes of our assessment of local housing need, we have defined 'local' as being the area within a 2-3 mile radius, which covers the villages of Newton Ferrers and Yealmpton and the smaller villages/hamlets of Battisborough Cross, Holbeton and Mothecombe. We have excluded areas west of the River Yealm on the basis that these areas are closer (geographically) to Plymouth and its suburbs (Plymstock and Plympton).

Significantly the applicants omitted to mention that there is an alternative site within Newton Ferrers on land opposite Butts Park (2982/21/FUL), where an application to construct 20 residential units (17 social rent and 3 open market) was submitted on behalf of the Newton and Noss Community Land Trust on 13 October 2021, and which should have been determined by 03 March this year. Development Management Committee Members were not made aware of the existence of this application.

In supporting this application Newton & Noss Parish Council noted the site offered "easy access to the school, has been widely consulted on as a location for affordable homes since 2009 and has the full support

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of the majority of the community.” The Parish Council went on to add: “Although the site is now just within the boundary of the Undeveloped and Heritage Coast, there are no Sea Views and long views of the site are really only visible from a few lightly walked footpaths; NNPC does not believe that development here would cause significant harm on natural or historic assets, important views or skylines.” (<https://portal.southhams.gov.uk/CivicaTownLive/civica/Resource/Civica/Handler.ashx/doc/pagestream?DocNo=8586934&pdf=true>).

Arguably, given the limited employment opportunities available with Newton Ferrers and Noss Mayo, Butts Park might well be sufficient to satisfy the immediate local need. Significantly, when residents were recently sought for the six affordable dwellings at Parsonage Farm, Newton Ferrers (3139/16/OPA), only two were local. As a consequence, the other four had to go to people from outside the area.

By limiting the defined local area in which the affordable housing had to be located and omitting to mention the Butts Park application, no consideration was given to whether, in combination, Butts Park and the new town at Sherford would offer a more sustainable alternative to the development at Collaton.

It is worth comparing the relative proximity of Sherford and Collaton to Holbeton, Yealmpton, Mothercombe and Battsborough Cross. Taking data from Google, the distance from Collaton to Holbeton is 3.5miles, driving time 9minutes; from Sherford to Holbeton 7.3miles, driving time 17minutes. From Collaton to Mothercombe 3.9miles, driving time 11minutes; from Sherford to Mothercombe 8.5miles, driving time 21minutes. From Collaton to Battsborough Cross 2.8miles, driving time 8minutes; from Sherford to Battsborough Cross 7.4miles, driving time 18minutes. From Collaton to Yealmpton 2miles, driving time 4minutes; from Sherford to Yealmpton 3.9miles, driving time 10minutes.

Although the development at Collaton would be closer to all four locations than Sherford, the differences in both distance and journey times are not significant. More pertinently, the majority of employment opportunities are more likely to be found at the freeport zone sites in Sherford Business Park and at Langage Energy Zone, 2.8miles from Sherford but 6.7miles from Collaton. Sherford can also offer far superior public transport and other necessary infrastructure than will be available at Collaton. For example the nearest supermarkets to Collaton Park are Sainsbury’s at Marsh Mills 7.6miles away and Tesco at Lee Mill 5.9miles.

Suffice to say, such considerations were not discussed by the Development Management Committee.

Of equal relevance is the point made by the Joint Local Planning Team at the top of page of their submission, namely that the South Hams is ahead of target in terms of meeting its housing requirement needs, including that for affordable housing. And, to quote the JLP Team, “as such, in housing delivery terms, there is nothing exceptional about the prevailing circumstances within which the application is considered.” (<https://portal.southhams.gov.uk/CivicaTownLive/civica/Resource/Civica/Handler.ashx/doc/pagestream?DocNo=8761349&pdf=true>)

Another factor that was not taken in to consideration is the proximity of Collaton Park to a designated site, namely the Plymouth Sound and Estuaries EMS, when approving the proposed community boat storage/parking facilities. The extracts that follow are from the attached assessment:

*Habitats Regulations 2017*

*Stage 1: Habitats Regulations Assessment - Screening of likely significant effect on a European site*

*Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC*

- Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time
- Estuaries
- Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide
- Large shallow inlets and bays
- Reefs

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- Atlantic salt meadows
- Shore dock
- Allis shad

*Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA*

- Internationally important populations of Avocet and Little Egret

Conservation objectives common to each site with regard to the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated ("the Qualifying Features") are listed below;

*Avoid the deterioration of the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species, and the significant disturbance of those qualifying species, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status of each of the qualifying features.*

The proposed development site within this ZOI, and accordingly the recreational pressure of new residents associated with the development will require mitigating to ensure they do not have a significant effect on the Plymouth Sound and Estuaries EMS (as without mitigation the new residents in combination with other development could have a significant effect).

This is considered in more detail in the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Joint Local Plan (July 2017) which notes that:

*In order to address the impacts arising from the increased recreational pressure, a single mitigation strategy will be agreed with Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council and also with Cornwall Council and a mechanism for securing the funding through planning obligations will be set out and agreed in a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Using evidence from the Plymouth Sound and Tamar Estuaries Recreation Study (Marine Biological Association, 2017), a single mitigation strategy will identify the interventions required and the SPD will then set out the charge that will be applied to all new dwellings and tourist developments within a 'Zone of Charging' as set out in Policy SPT13 'European Protected Sites - mitigation of recreational impacts from development.*

If there is any further information that you require, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Richard Howell

Chair - for and on behalf of The South Hams Society

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