

Hatherleigh Town Council response to WDBC Joint Local Plan

Our comments refer to the *Thriving Towns and Villages Appendix 1* and the *Supporting Document Site Information Pack for Hatherleigh Parish*.

The two documents raise questions as they appear to have the following inconsistencies and contradictions:

1. The colour key on the front page bears no relation to the map and the text in the information grid, eg Runnon Moor (WD_06_13_16) is coloured pink, this therefore (according to your key) makes it “*an accepted site, deliverable within the next 5 years*”?! Yet the accompanying internal text is red and states “*constraints identified limit potential for development at this time*”?! The confusion continues with this same site as it is shown in the map in “Appendix 1: Committed and Potential sites”, yet the other 3 sites identified are not. Why is this?
2. The time-line given for these 3 green-labelled sites states within 6 – 15 years, with a site potential figure of 115 homes. Why? This is in direct opposition to years worth of work, evidence, discussions and promises over our Community Plan 2013 – 2026, why are you not listening to us? If this potential housing forecast is only a matter for beyond 2026 then the wording is not clear enough and needs to state so or wrong?!
3. The Supporting Document map also shows that the Moor View housing estate (marked green) could be subject to a ‘squeezing in’ of more houses? Is this correct, and if so why? Where? and how many sites have been identified?
4. Given that the Runnon Moor site is shown in the main document Appendix 1, does this mean that this site supercedes the 3 sites opposite it? This is unclear, why aren’t all identified sites contained in one document?

Regardless of the above, below we set out the context for our views to justify our objection to another influx of housing development within the next 15 years:

- WDBC encouraged us to be trailblazers and take part in a new consultative strategy to help them understand and guide Hatherleigh’s future development. WDBC said this will help them make the right planning decisions for the town. We complied and put in 100s of volunteer hours to produce Hatherleigh’s Community Plan 2013 - 2026.
- The purpose of the Plan was to “give local people more of a say about the future of the town”, and in particular “find out what local housing and development needs there are”. The Plan delivered a vision and aims up to 2026.
- Considering that the town has had more than a fair share of housing development equating to a 26% increase in homes in the 4 years up to 2013. **The community stressed that over the lifetime of our Community Plan (up to 2026) only a 13% increase was considered sustainable to give the town time to absorb its recent and forthcoming growth** (i.e. the market development).
- Hatherleigh Market was given outline planning permission for 106 homes, this figure on this single site exceeds far beyond what the community consider to be sustainable, yet we have had to accept this. As this development is yet to be delivered there would be an unacceptable impact for our town if the market site and these other suggested sites were to proceed within a close proximity time frame.
- With only 3 years after completing our Community Plan WDBC are suggesting a further minimum of 50 homes for Hatherleigh. It makes our Community Plan out of date already and with the market site still potentially years away we could see another development boom happening again in this small town if all these sites are realised.

- We say this is unacceptable. We are being led to believe our Community Plan was a waste of time. We believe WDBC are not listening to us. We also believe that Hatherleigh Town Council and West Devon Borough Council will lose all credibility from its residents for any future consultations.
- We strongly object to this level of development and would like to point out that although Hatherleigh is classed as a Local Centre, we question how further development can be considered sustainable here when:-

a) the town has key natural factors that restricts its development due to the floodplain, proximity of Hatherleigh Moor and that its small town centre is within a conservation area. This means that future development areas will be beyond the edges of town and therefore new residents will likely be dependent on car use due to the distance from the town centre and accessing its services and facilities. **This car dependency would contribute to the parking problems we are already experiencing within the small town centre.**

b) Employment opportunities are lacking enough, building housing with no prospect of local employment further exacerbates a commuter culture. This type of demograph is shown to put pressure on community services (school, GPs) without benefiting local shops.

c) On the Primary School, in 2013 Devon County Council stated that additional provision will likely be needed beyond 2017. You also state that the “current site is not capable of expansion unless land adjacent to the school site was secured”. The adjacent land is its playing field. Government policy has a “presumption AGAINST the disposal or change of use of school playing field land”. These factors also contribute to why Hatherleigh has its limits for housing growth.

Hatherleigh Town Council therefore strongly objects to WDBC proposal for a further number of a minimum of 50 houses during the lifetime of the Hatherleigh Community Plan 2013 – 2026, and without guarantees of investment and planning for all community services, employment and car parking provision this town can simply not support further large scale housing stock within the time line of the Joint Local Plan.