

Planning Application 1885/17/OPA

Hatherleigh Town Council object to Planning Application 1885/17/OPA for reasons stated below.

The Hatherleigh Community Plan is considered a material consideration, of which an integral part is based on the knowledge that an Outline Planning Application 00760/2013 for 105 homes has already received Conditional Approval. We feel another large scale development is unsuitable for our town.

1. The site is in the open countryside, it is not included in the draft local joint plan. It will have an adverse impact on the entrance to the town by its visibility and removal of Devon hedge banks and it will affect the setting of a listed building.
2. We have concerns that as the site is sloped towards the town, current dwellings and a main road there will be future flooding problems from excess run-off. There is already a ditch on the adjacent Moor View estate that blocks up in winter and has flooded properties. Also the road drains on the A3072 cannot cope sometimes in heavy rain leading to the road becoming flooded and impassable closer to town.
3. There are repeated points in the LVA Planning Statement (5.2.3, 5.2.4, 6.2.1, 6.2.3) concerning the Local Development Plan and Core Strategy leading to the point that as Hatherleigh is considered one of the local centres it can take its share of the then required quota of 430 dwellings. This has already been achieved. Historically, Hatherleigh has experienced a steady rate of growth appropriate to its size and role as a small rural market town. Between 2001 and 2007, it grew steadily at an average rate of seven homes per year (approximately 1% per year). Then, following the adoption of the West Devon Borough Local Plan in 2005, three allocated sites were developed plus a couple of additional sites (i.e. sites not allocated in a plan). This led to a sharp rise in the number of homes being built and over a short period of time (2007-2011) a total of 172 new homes were developed. This equates to about a 26% rise in the number of houses built over recent four year period.
4. There are not sufficient local employment opportunities to support this extra population. Creating homes without enough employment allocation further exacerbates a commuter culture and will make Hatherleigh an un-sustainable settlement. The token addition of including employment units within a housing estate does not guarantee their suitability of location or ensure these premises will be taken up by businesses.
5. There will be insufficient primary school places in the town of Hatherleigh to accommodate further large developments beyond September 2017. The current capacity is at 178 (March 2017) and is expected to rise to 188 pupils in September 2017. That equates to class sizes of between 22 and 30 in each of the 7 classes (one for every year group).

The primary school have no additional classrooms and some rooms are relatively small meaning there is extremely limited capacity to cope once the number of children rises beyond an additional 10 after September 2017.

According to Devon County Council calculations in *Education Section 106 Infrastructure Approach document 2013* they establish that, “on average, each family dwelling (i.e. dwellings with 2 bedrooms or more) generates approximately 0.25 primary aged pupils (ages 5 to 11)”.
**Please note that we dispute this calculation as being too inaccurate in the same way that similar calculations base requirements for car park spaces for dwelling units at 1.5 space for each unit. It is an undisputed fact that car park allocation is usually inadequate on account that most families now own at least 2 cars!

This proposal has 80 properties of which the majority are 2+ bedrooms, the extra children this will generate will quickly bring the school over-capacity. If Hatherleigh cannot accommodate its own primary school pupils it can no longer be termed a Sustainable Settlement.

If you visit the current site you can see that any expansion would be limited unless the schools playing field came into the equation. However building on school playing fields goes against Govt standards for school premises and the need to provide outdoor space for physical education.

6. Runnon Moor is on the periphery of what is considered a walking distance to school (according to *WDBC Measures of Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Communities*) and we believe this will create further traffic congestion as parents will drive rather than walk children to school, particularly in colder months. For the same reasons we can question the claim in 2.2.1 of the site being a “sustainable location within easy reach of the town centre”.
7. Runnon Moor is also beyond the boundary of the above measures (600m) for walking distances to bus stops. The bus stop at Moor View should not be counted as it is not served by the main service and only offers a very limited service.
8. The linear nature of the new boundary. The extension to the settlement boundary projects beyond a natural development line thereby increasing the need for new inhabitants to drive into our small town centre with already overcrowding of street car parking spaces. This linear positioning also conflicts with WDBC’s need to avoid “*developments that appear to be an unrelated addition to the rest of the town*”.
9. Increasing housing stock without the support of infrastructure, employment and services will negatively impact on the current residents and will not be able to meet the needs of an incoming population. The perceived well-being of current inhabitants is already stated in our Community Plan that housing growth has happened ‘*too much too soon*’.
10. We have not seen the evidence to support the perception that increases in population will support local businesses. In the last couple of years since the influx of new people we have lost a bakery, a pub, a bank, a cafe and a restaurant.
11. Growing expanses of housing estates on the edges of towns exacerbates car usage and our small Town centre is unable to accommodate increases in traffic due to its narrow streets and we have limited space to develop facilities as we are bound by river floodplain, its moor and its bypass.
12. We are classed as a Local Centre, a town which already serves to provide facilities and services for satellite villages. How much consideration has been factored in for the expanding populations of these villages and the extra resources that will be needed for them in Hatherleigh.
13. 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 has 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.**