

Development and Planning Report to the PC December 2024

This report is based on recent conversations with Steve Keable, the Cabinet Planning Portfolio Holder for MDDC.

1. Before MDDC can proceed much further with their new Local Plan they are waiting for the outcome of the Government's consultation on the proposed changes to the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) and on increased housing development targets. The Govt is proposing a 70% increase in the target for Mid Devon.
2. MDDC are also waiting for news on whether the Govt will find the money to build an entirely new junction on the M5 at Cullompton and a new railway station there. On this news depends the build out of the main phase of the Culm Garden Village and the contribution of up to 4000 additional homes towards the Mid Devon housing target.
3. MDDC are still talking about consulting local Councils in the spring on proposed sites for inclusion in the new Local Plan. This follows the completion of the recent HELAA process. However MDDC are seriously considering a new "Call for Sites" as they may well need a significant number of new "contingency" sites to ensure they can meet the Government's new housing target. Even if MDDC do consult on site options next Spring, I doubt that this will be the last of it.
4. I have proposed to MDDC that they consult with Town and Parish Councils on any housing plans and other planning imperatives they, the local councils, might have. I hope this will bear fruit but I doubt it. Officers will probably say that they'd like to do this but they lack the time and person power.
5. If my proposal does happen the PC will need to organise consultation locally and will need to present some options which will in turn need to be based on the outcomes of the discussions that the NP Group had a year or two ago.
6. If it doesn't happen I think the PC should engage with MDDC proactively, once both their site options and targets are clearer, to influence the emerging LP. It'll be a matter of timing. It's likely that a local consultation exercise will be required, similar to that under 4 above.
7. Given the continuing uncertainties around the new Local Plan I suggest that it would be premature to consider re-starting work on our Neighbourhood Plan. I suggest I keep the PC updated on the MDDC site consultation process and other developments following Government decisions about changes to the Planning system,

Graeme Barnell
December 2024