

EXETER BOARD

OPEN FORUM

28 APRIL 2015

QUESTION FROM JULIET MEADOWCROFT

QUESTION FROM THE ALPHINGTON VILLAGE FORUM FOR THE EXETER BOARD

The Alphington Village Forum would like to ask the Exeter Board why ECC and DCC are allowing such a huge urban sprawl to destroy the unique landscape around the edge of Exeter, in particular around the south-western and western sides. The attractive eastern approach has already been spoiled by unruly recent development and this makes retaining the relatively unspoilt western approach to Exeter all the more important. The south-west gateway is an asset to Exeter, a cultural city that used to have clear boundaries, set in rolling countryside, but soon to be surrounded by an ugly urban sprawl.

Yet Teignbridge District Council is ruining this naturally landscaped gateway by building at least 2,000 new homes between the ECC southern boundary and Exminster, approx half of which will be on picturesque green fields between the A379 and Alphington village, not even allowing a green wedge along the city boundary. This is despite numerous objections by the Alphington Village Forum representing many local residents, all of which have been ignored by the Government Inspector and Teignbridge planners.

'Plan Teignbridge' is the main part of this massive South West Exeter development that includes approx 400 houses in Alphington village in addition to the Teignbridge ones. The recently submitted developers' plans comprise 4-storey buildings on arable land south of the village, as well as houses of 2.5 storeys right next to the historic Markham Lane. The latter will destroy the ridgeline on the ECC/DCC boundary that can be seen from the centre of the city, which should be protected according to the Exeter Core Strategy (see 12.20). The Bovis plans even show a bus route crossing this green lane, despite the ECC Development Brief drawn up by ECC and AVF, stating that this will be kept as a high-quality pedestrian/cycle route (see 3.3)!

Bearing in mind that the South West Exeter Development Framework produced last July by Teignbridge District Council states that a new Park and Ride is ***'critical to removing existing trips from the local road network in order to accommodate new trips which will be generated from the development'*** (3.7), we think Teignbridge should create this facility within their own boundaries instead of imposing yet more huge disadvantages on our beautiful city by paying ECC/DCC to build one at the A30/Alphington intersection. Much more suitable sites for traffic from the south-west would be at the Peamore business centre (where there is going to be a new roundabout), and from the west, the already considered field off the Ide road.

We believe, together with CWEST, the Campaign for South West Smarter Travel, that the proposed new Park and Ride at the Oaklands Riding School, designated as a Valley Park Conservation area in the Local Plan, is totally pointless. It will also destroy not only one of our very few local areas of natural beauty enjoyed by many riders and walkers, but also a family's livelihood and a thriving business that employs a large staff, as well as helping 100s of disabled people, and giving many others volunteer opportunities.

Both AVF and CWEST would appreciate answers to the many questions already put to DCC concerning the money being offered to ECC/DCC for the proposed Alphington Park and Ride, as well as convincing proof that it would actually ease the awful congestion and pollution already happening on Alphington Road and would actually be worth the millions of pounds designated to this white elephant. CWEST wrote an open letter to DCC, ECC and Teignbridge councils asking for a review of the current transport proposals for SW Exeter and DCC have not yet acknowledged that letter, much less answered it.

Finally, I would like to summarise by asking this most urgent question: **Can the Board help to ensure that both ECC and DCC are working together effectively and transparently on the SW Exeter development and transport issues as we are not confident that this is happening, for instance where CIL is concerned? Where is the new infrastructure north of the A379? There is none! Are they willing to stop Teignbridge destroying our green city before it is too late by objecting to the Bovis Homes proposals recently submitted to TDC or have they just given in to them? If so, why? What is in it for them and for Exeter?**

Sadly we can only see huge disadvantages for the current and future residents of our already seriously congested city, with its over-full roads, hospital, surgeries, schools and other facilities.

ANSWER

The City Council has consistently supported development coming forward at South West Exeter, including in the form of formal comments during the various stages of Teignbridge's Local Plan preparation. Officers from the City Council, Devon County Council and Teignbridge District Council have been working together closely on bringing forward development and associated infrastructure at South West Exeter. The three authorities have collaborated on preparation of a joint masterplanning study for the area, and on identifying infrastructure needs, solutions and a programme for their delivery. The authorities are now working through the detailed mechanisms that will deliver the infrastructure needed to support the area's expansion. This includes mechanisms for the most effective use of CIL.

The City Council has also been working collaboratively and very openly with community representatives from across the city (including members of the Alphington Village Forum) on the prioritisation of CIL 'Neighbourhood Funding'. It also worked very closely with the Forum on the preparation of the South West Alphington Development Brief.

Having adopted a Local Plan, Teignbridge prepared a Development Framework for the area. During consultation the City Council raised significant concerns relating to the proposed distribution of community facilities at South West Exeter but, following consideration from Teignbridge District Council, the framework was not amended to address these matters. It is reasonable to expect that Teignbridge District Council will determine the proposals with regard to their recently adopted Framework.

The City Council will comment on the Bovis proposals and continues to work closely with Teignbridge District and Devon County councils, particularly on matters of infrastructure provision. Comments, however, will not take the form of an objection to the principle of development.

On the matter of the Park and Ride provision, the principle of delivering an 'Ide Interchange' facility at the A30 roundabout is supported through the City Council's adopted Core Strategy as part of a package of transport improvements for the area