

Monthly Report for West Hill Parish Council – 6th Sep 2022

Cllr Jess Bailey, East Devon District Council (West Hill and Aylesbeare) and Devon County Council (Otter Valley)

Local Plan

I attended Strategic Planning committee on 9th August. In the morning developers submitted presentations, which included Devon County Council's presentation for its site in Ottery St Mary (Ottery 09), land at Thorne Farm Way Ottery St Mary. The presenter advised that the site could deliver up to 150 houses. You will recall that East Devon District Council previously refused consent to 150 houses and a primary school on this site, primarily on the basis of landscape impact. My observation was that the presentation did not clearly identify ways in which the landscape impact could be addressed.

In the afternoon discussions started on the sites that had been put forward for the tier 1 and tier 2 towns in East Devon. Only Axminster was covered which means that the remaining towns and tier 3 and 4 villages remain to be discussed. There are further meetings scheduled for 6th, 9th and 14th September. I would anticipate that West Hill is likely to be discussed in the meeting on either 9th or 14th September. Developers are scheduled to speak at the meeting on 14th September, but I do not know yet whether there will be any relevant for West Hill. If there are then I will confirm to the parish council.

The sites that have been put forward for inclusion in the draft plan include 26 houses at West 04 (land adjoining Windmill Lane), and 25 houses at West 06 (Land to the north of Eastfield) with 6 houses at West 01 (land at Westhayes). Although this is below the horrifying 440 houses that has been at times suggested for West Hill, this level of housing still represents growth of 9.1% which is very much in the top range of growth with the East Devon villages. This is concerning particular in view of pressure on services and roads.

It is anticipated that there will be a consultation on the draft plan in October. East Devon District Council's meetings are livestreamed on youtube.

The agenda papers for the meeting on 9th September can be found here.

<https://democracy.eastdevon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=154&MId=2042&Ver=4>

Devon County Council Locality Budget

On 5th August we received notification that Devon County Councillors' locality budgets had been unexpectedly suspended by the Leader and his cabinet. We were advised that this was 'temporary' although I have no date when they will be reinstated. I will let you know when there is any update.

Threat to beavers

I have written to Simon Jupp MP urging him to press the government to change its newly published guidance which contains provisions allowing farmers to apply for licences to Natural England to kill beavers. This seems completely wrong and unjustified. Beavers having been hunted to extinction 400 years ago were re-introduced first on the River Otter. Here is my facebook post which includes a copy of my letter <https://www.facebook.com/JessBaileyOtterValleyDevonCountyCouncillor>.