**Teignbridge Local Plan 2020-2040 Examination**

**Hearing statement from Ide Parish Council**

23 August 2024

**1. Introduction**

**Policy EE1 – Markham Village**

We submitted representations at previous stages in the Plan’s evolution, reflecting the serious misgivings of Ide residents and Ide Parish Council about the impact of building a new 900 house village – Markham Village - in the eastern half of the defined, rural, village community of Ide: impacts on landscape, environment, community, traffic congestion and safety; and highway, sewage, flood and electricity infrastructure. These misgivings led us to object to the allocation EE1.

Since then, additional reports have been published on green infrastructure and traffic flows; and we have taken professional advice on the strengths and weaknesses of the Plan. We remain opposed to the Markham Village development: we believe it is not deliverable or affordable; and, in particular, that the proposed modifications to the Plan do not provide an acceptable solution to the traffic congestion and highway dangers that will result.

Nonetheless, should the Examiners determine that the Plan is to be adopted and the allocation in policy EE1 should go ahead, we have set out below some recommendations, in response to questions posed by the examiners, which we believe could reduce the problems and improve the scheme for all concerned.

**2. Matter 10, Issue 10b, Q10.3**

## **Are the sites allocated for housing and other development in Policies GC6 –GC11, GC13 – GC21, EE1 – EE4, CT1, RT2, RT3, and V1 – V18 soundly based? In particular:**

**[Policy EE1 – Markham Village]**

## **a) What is the likely effect of the development on the following factors:**

### **i) Landscape character and settlement separation/identity?**

Markham Village is a proposed development of 900 houses on the western edge of Exeter, west of Alphington and the A30, positioned between the villages of Ide and Shillingford Abbot. Ide, a historic village, possesses a unique rural character, valuable green spaces, and significant community assets: a village hall, a community shop, a community orchard, a village green, two churches, a recreation ground, and two pubs. The area between Ide and Markham Village currently consists of open farmers' fields with an attractive stream of high ecological value.

Our concern is that, without a formal designation, these fields could be sold for future development, leading to the coalescence of Ide and Markham Village. This would erode the rural landscape character and identity of Ide. Therefore, we propose the designation of a green space (**Green Wedge** see **Appendix I**) between Markham Village and Ide. The primary purpose of the **Green Wedge** is to prevent the coalescence of settlements and maintain a clear sense of place and identity for both Ide and Markham Village.

This approach is supported by policies within the proposed Teignbridge Local Plan 2020-2040, which emphasize the importance of green space infrastructure in new and existing settlements.

*Teignbridge Local Plan 2020-2040:*

* Emphasizes maintaining the natural environment's character by conserving landscapes and seascapes (Table 2.1, Page 10).
* The document highlights the high-quality environment of Teignbridge, characterized by fields, hedges, copses, woodland, and a settlement pattern of distinct smaller towns and villages. The rural setting and identity of some settlements are valued and protected. The plan emphasizes the importance of preserving this rural character amidst new developments (Section 5.2, Page 38).
* The plan proposes strategic and sustainable village development (Section 6.3.1, Page 51).

*National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*

In addition, the NPPF Dec 2023 says developments should be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

*Green Wedge - East Devon Local Plan*

The neighbouring East Devon authority have adopted the concept of **Green Wedges** in their local plan. One of the main purposes is that they form part of a strategic

approach to maintaining local identity and ensuring that the separation of nearby settlements is maintained.

Designating a **Green Wedge** offers multiple benefits. It ensures a distinct separation between Ide and Markham Village, preserving Ide’s unique character and preventing urban sprawl. It also protects the scenic quality of the landscape, retaining open fields and hedgerows that define the rural backdrop of Ide.

To implement this, we propose designating the **Green Wedge** as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) or Public Open Space (POS) to ensure long-term protection and appropriate management. We also recommend amending the proposed Teignbridge Local Plan to include this designation, ensuring it is protected from future development pressures.

### **ii) Biodiversity, green infrastructure, public rights of way, and agricultural land quality**.

It is important that safe, attractive pedestrian and cycle routes are provided to the nearby villages of Ide and Shillingford Abbot (see Local Plan EE1 4h) to enable travel between the local communities. The *Markham Village, Exeter, Green Infrastructure Strategy* document sets out a vision for the green infrastructure of Markham Village. The strategy includes linking green infrastructure and providing pedestrian and cycle routes between Ide and Markham Village.

We recommend that the old railway line route be utilised for walking and cycling to connect Ide and Markham Village, and promote non-vehicular access to local amenities. This G.W.R. Teign Valley Line was open to passenger services between 1882 and 1958 and is of historic/archaeological interest. See **Appendix I**.The *Markham Village, Exeter, Green Infrastructure Strategy* document does suggests using an existing footpath route; but it is poorly maintained and includes a tricky, long very steep section. See the contour map in **Appendix I**.

### **v) The strategic and local highway network and other infrastructure including health facilities, education, and open space.**

1. **Strategic Highway Network** We note that CSD-002 includes an attempt to mitigate the impact on the Strategic Highway Network (discussed under section GP7). While we welcome the safety improvements to provide a signalised crossing of the slip roads, we remain alarmed by the absence of a strategic plan. Dangerous queueing from Ide roundabout back along the westbound A30 already happens at the start and end of every day: we are not convinced that widening the A377 between Ide roundabout and the Sainsburys junction can mitigate this.

2. **Local Highway network** We note from TRA-004 that Ide Village Road (still labelled as Old Ide Lane on some maps) will have a significant increase in traffic flow and this will impact on the Pocombe Bridge junction, as shown in Appendix II. The junction has a poor layout and is already operating at capacity as shown below. To overcome the potential safety issues of frustrated drivers taking risks due to limited visibility and difficult topography, Pocombe Bridge junction needs to be signalised.

A screenshot of a graph

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The consequence of more traffic on Ide Village Road (60mph speed limit) will be the minor road accesses onto Ide Village Road from Ide Village (and Markham Village) will become congested and dangerous due to misjudgement of vehicle speeds, as drivers takes risks to get out of the side road. To improve road safety, both minor accesses need to include appropriate facilities such as a roundabout or signals.

1. **A local Transport Walk/Cycle network** is poorly defined in Sup-001 with a “Package of high-quality walking and cycling route” and “sustainable travel”. It needs to be specific and comply with Cycle Infrastructure Design Local Transport Note 1/20 Figure 4, see **Appendix III**.

* Ide – fully kerbed cycle track from Ide to the A30 Roundabout
* Shillingford Abbot - shared use path
* Shillingford Road - fully kerbed cycle track
* Crabb Lane – to make it safe and secure, and then maintain it in perpetuity, is challenging. The surface is in a dilapidated state, there is a very narrow footbridge, a ford, and it is steep in places. In terms of personal security there are sharp bends and a tunnel with limited visibility. There are no street lights and no properties overlooking it. But it is the most direct route to West Exe School.
* A377 to east of A30 roundabout - fully kerbed cycle track alongside the widened road

Additionally:

* It would be beneficial to make use of the disused railway corridor to make it a safe and secure off road route as shown in Appendix I.
* The connecting walk and cycle infrastructure, although identified in the Exeter LCWIP, is not funded. If the plans are serious about getting 50% non-car trips, then there is a need for additional financial contributions focused on improved cycle/walk facilities related to the development.

1. **The proposed mobility hub** is poorly defined and potentially aspirational. Currently described as 150 space Park and Change, with space for a bus to stop, cycle parking, car club space, e-bike and e-scooter hire, we wrote of our scepticism about this facility in our previous representation. There is no suggestion of who would operate the car club or scooter hire; or how its cleaning and maintenance would be provided. It is likely to attract outside commuter traffic to Ide Village Road. A previous planning application for a park & ride failed due to lack of support from stakeholders. The Exeter Transport Strategy identifies that *“significant changes to commuting patterns following the global pandemic has seen a significant reduction in passengers using these (park & ride) services”* -ref TRA-003 Para 2.3.3. It feels expensive, hopeful and likely to fall into disrepair.

Local Transport Bus facilities need to include pick up and drop off facilities for existing residents of Ide Village as they will also be subject to the aspiration for 50% non-car trips. To achieve all this and make the bus service and possible mobility hub attractive there will need to a be 20-minute bus frequency – similar to edge of city developments such as Pinhoe and Topsham. Due to the smaller population than other edge of city developments, the bus service is likely to require a longer-term funding plan.

1. **Electricity substation capacity** – The demand for electricity is increasing due to more dwellings, less reliance on gas and increased numbers of electric cars. The increased number dwellings in South West Exeter has generated a requirement for a new substation located adjacent to the power lines. See **Appendix IV**. This needs to be included in the Infrastructure Development Plan.
2. **Health and General Medical Services –**  Ide Parish Council understand from correspondence with Ide Lane Surgery that there is concern that Markam Village will overwhelm the existing GP team. They estimate that the 900 dwellings will require one additional doctor and expansion of facilities. The practice currently has a main surgery at Ide Lane, in Alphington, but it will soon have an additional branch surgery as part of the Matford development. The Ide Lane Surgery practice would favour the option of further extending the new Matford branch, using money (approx. £1.6 million) that would otherwise go on a smaller branch at Markham Village, to allow them to serve patients in Matford and Markham.
3. Recreation – Ide Village has a large recreation area which it is the process of developing.

### **v) Flood risk, air and water quality, noise, minerals, and land stability. [see also EN1-EN7]**

It is likely that the foul water system will need upgrading, judging by recent evidence that it is overwhelmed during periods of heavy rain. Ide is some distance from the main sewage works so any upgrade will be substantial.

Section 1.24 of the Local Plan states that the Infrastructure Delivery Plan provides details of what new infrastructure is being planned for, when it is required and how it will be delivered. Section 5 of the IDP describes that, in relation to Countess Wear Sewage treatment works, there is a critical need across the life of the Plan for a ‘catchment strategy to identify need to reinforce sewer network/investment plan’. We submit that a strategic sewage treatment and infrastructure plan should be agreed and in place before making an allocation for Markham Village on the Edge of Exeter, rather than during the life of the Plan.

## **c) Are the policy criteria and requirements clear, justified and consistent with national policy, and are any additional safeguards or mitigation measures necessary to achieve an acceptable form of development in planning terms?**

The plan puts a lot on emphasis on achieving 50% of trips on foot, cycle or public transport. This will be difficult to achieve without the appropriate high quality infrastructure complying with appropriate standards. Monitoring reports will be essential. In terms of additional safeguards and mitigation, it is not clear what will happen if the 50% is not achieved. We suggest the option of a trigger on the development that stops at, say, 300 houses if the 50% is not being achieved.

## **d) Is the site allocation consistent with the plan’s overarching strategy for the location of development and, where relevant, does it take account of a made Neighbourhood Plan?**

No, the Local Plan (LP) does not take account of **Ide Neighbourhood Plan**. There is no reference to the conflict between Ide NP and the ambition for Markham Village in the LP.

Policy IDE01  Residential Development in Ide of the NP says we would support small residential development that does not result in significant environmental encroachment into the countryside.

When we put out the two calls to local landowners to bring forward potential development sites in preparing the NP, they did not come back with the fields for Markham Village.

On pp159-163, EE1 Markham Village allocation, in the Local Plan, no mention is made of Ide NP; no mention that it does not contain proposals for developing Markham Farm; and no explanation as to how, why or when a new Local Plan might trump an existing NP.

On page 23 of Local Plan, there is a general description of the NP process, but no reference to any specific NPs.

The verbal explanation we were given by TDC officers at a site visit, and later at a public meeting, was that Ide NP is out of date and contains no strategic allocations. Yet it spans the period 2016 - 2033, and was made in Sep 2018, overlapping significantly with the Local Plan period of 2020-2040.

## **e) Is there evidence that the proposed development of the site allocation is viable and deliverable in the timescale indicated in the Housing Trajectory included as Appendix 3 of the plan?**

**1. Reliability of Cost Estimate**

A benchmarking process, using figures from recent Devon County Council Cabinet Reports, shows that the cost estimates in the IDP are subject to significant optimism bias. A common trait in planning, this is the tendency of individuals to expect better than average outcomes from their actions. In the context of infrastructure projects, optimism bias can lead to underestimation of project duration, overestimation of its benefits, underestimation of elements of infrastructure and consequently under estimating total cost. At this scheme concept stage, the Department of Transport estimate OB to be 48%. To try and provide better cost estimates, we have bench marked the elements identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) against cost estimates for other similar schemes. This has highlighted a significant cost underestimate, as shown in **Appendix V:**

**Walk and cycle infrastructure**. The benchmark cost estimates are taken from schemes recently delivered in Exeter, which are compliant with national guidance and consist of a segregated cycle route. We have assumed that the route to Shillingford Abbot will be a lower quality, so costs have been reduced.

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|  | Benchmark | IDP |
| Walk & Cycle - 5 routes | £7.3m | £2.2m |

An aerial view of a road

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**At the A30 Alphington Junction** (so called Ide roundabout), signalisation of north facing slip roads is very similar to a scheme recently delivered at Drumbridges junction on the A38/A382 junction. It can be seen that signalising of the on-slip is quite complicated. Benchmark costs have been taken from recent junctions.

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Benchmark | IDP |
| A30 Junction signalisation | £2.58m | £0.33m |

**The Mobility Hub** has been benchmarked against a Park and Change at the Science Park, M5 junction 29.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Benchmark | IDP |
| Mobility Hub | £0.83m | £0.5m |

Public transport by way of bus provision is similar to the IDP assuming that 25% of costs are recovered from patronage (which includes concessionary fares).

A377 widening has been benchmarked against a recent highway scheme.

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|  | Benchmark | IDP |
| A377 Widening | £2.4 | £1.5 |

**2. Inclusion of all the infrastructure considered necessary to mitigate the impact of the development**

Ide Parish Council considers further elements of infrastructure are necessary to mitigate the impact of the development. The objective is to ensure that key junctions, albeit probably over capacity, are safe. These infrastructure measures are missing from the IDP and are included in the table below:

The walk/cycle included two additions:

Funding for “green” link between Markham and Ide along the line of the disused railway.

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| --- | --- |
|  | Benchmark |
| Walk & Cycle Railway Link | £1.0m |

A financial contribution to the Exeter LCWIP.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Benchmark |
| Exeter LCWIP contribution | £2.0m |

Local road junction safety improvements are also required at key junctions on Ide Village Road.

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| Local Safety Measures | Benchmark |
| Pocombe Bridge | £1.4m |
| Ide Village | £1.4m |
| Markham | £1.4m |

**3. General Medical Practice (GP) Facilities**

As options are currently being evaluated the ask is similar to Devon County Council Education for a financial contribution to the cost of building the additional facilities.

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| --- | --- |
|  | Benchmark |
| GP Practice | £1.4m |

**4. Electricity & Foul Water**

These are substantial pieces of infrastructure that could well require developer funding. However, costs are currently unknown as the works have not been identified in the Local Plan and it is not certain if they will come forward. This could result in an embargo of further development in south west Exeter.

**5. Summary**

The IDP identifies most of the transport infrastructure measures aimed at trying to achieve a 50% target of non-car trips. We have identified additional items, including further measures to improve road safety at key local junctions; and a way of funding the necessary increase in GP services.

Ide Parish Council, without the resources of preliminary design and quantity surveyors, have tried to benchmark costs. Ignoring the cost of additional electricity and sewage infrastructure, these estimates increase the IDP estimate from £6m to £26m **[Appendix V]**. We submit that the funding estimates, plus other infrastructure measures, need to be reviewed as part of the Viability Appraisal.

Prepared by Ide Parish Council

23 August 2024

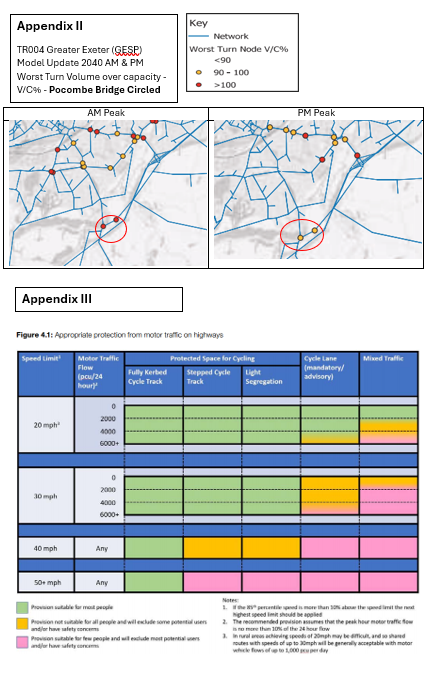
See below for Appendices I-V

**Appendix I**



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**Appendix IV**

A close-up of a letter

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A document with text and images

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A letter to a city council

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**Appendix V**

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