**Teignbridge Local Plan 2020-2040 - Examination**

**An explanation of the Inspectors’ Initial Advice letter, December 2024**

Catherine Jack and Malcolm Rivett, the two independent inspectors who examined the Teignbridge Local Plan last autumn, wrote a ‘post hearings’ letter to Teignbridge District Council on 18 December 2024, setting out their findings and their Initial Advice. Their letter hit our inboxes on 14 January 2025.

The inspectors qualify their conclusions with a number of riders. There’s a list of main modifications to the Plan which they are recommending - amendments which need to go to public consultation first. All appear to be uncontested details or minor textual changes which won’t affect the overall result. The inspectors emphasise that the examination is not complete until they receive a further ‘sustainability appraisal’\* and a ‘habitats regulations assessment’\*\*. And they offer their initial advice “without prejudice to their final conclusions”, leaving themselves wiggle room if something unexpected crops up.

But, those caveats aside, the message is clear enough. The inspectors’ advice is, if their amendments and requests for assessments are met, they think the Plan “is likely to be capable of being found legally compliant and sound”. We understand that to mean that they intend to approve the Plan, and along with it the allocation of 900 houses on Markham Farm.

Their letter is document ID22 on the schedule that comes up using the link Inspectors’ Documents – Teignbridge District Council. Document ID19 is a task list from week 4, when we submitted our arguments to the hearing, and refers to site EE1, Markham Village. In particular, they have accepted the Plan's landscape proposals, and put aside the objections raised by us and Exeter City Council about the contour (skyline), the traffic congestion around Alphington Junction, the agricultural character and value of the land, and the provisions of our Neighbourhood Plan.

The single comment made about EE1 refers to a recommendation to consider a link or access to the old railway line, a detail which may serve us well one day, but does not help at this stage.

This is very disappointing for Ide, though not entirely unexpected. Much effort and money has gone into opposing the Markham Village allocation. Thank you to everyone who made representations about the Plan; and also to those who donated to the appeal to pay for professional advice in making our case.

The next step will be for TDC to produce a final version of the Plan, incorporating the inspectors’ amendments. If the inspectors approve it, TDC will adopt it.

We then watch and wait while the landowners put together their planning applications for houses on the land, in accordance with the stipulations of the Local Plan; and we’ll respond when the time comes.

\* A tool used to determine the potential social, economic and environmental impact of a development.

\*\* A tool used to determine the impact of a development on protected plant and animal species.