



Westcountry Land

Inquiry Speech

Re: Proposed Development of Area B of TIV 1 EUE in the Mid Devon Local Plan and Waddeton Park Appeal Reference App/Y1138/W/22/3313401

Good morning, my name is Justin Dodge. I am a Director of Westcountry Land (Tiverton) Ltd, which is an Special purpose vehicle limited company, set up specifically for the development of the Area B Allocated site in Tiverton. This company sits under the umbrella of the Westcountry Land and Homes Group, a specialist land and development company, which undertakes planning promotion and development for primarily residential development across Devon and Cornwall.

Westcountry Land Tiverton Ltd controls the majority of the Tiverton Area B Allocation site. We have acquired both freehold land and secured contractual option agreements on the majority of the allocated land, making up the Area B allocation. This land holding extends to 34.6 Ha (85.6 Acres).

Area A is being developed by Redrow Homes and planning permission has been granted for the first phases of development, which are currently under construction. Area B is currently dependent on the delivery of the Area A link road to provide access, which may take some time before it connects to the balance of the allocation, but the link road from Area A already allows for a connection, without need for the appeal scheme.

Mid Devon District Council has allocated a significant area of land for residential development together with an indicative masterplan to accompany the allocation within the Local Plan, identified as TIV1.

To expedite the delivery of Area B, we have acquired the freehold of sufficient land and properties to successfully deliver a suitable alternative access to Area B, with direct frontage onto Post Hill. This alternative access is contained entirely within the existing settlement boundary without the need for any land outside of that or the Local Plan. Importantly, we have entered into a Statement of Common Ground with Mid Devon Council and Devon County Council which agrees the principle of our proposed access design and layout.

We note that a neighbour, Dean Edwards, with whom we previously had an option agreement, has submitted late representation regarding our mutual boundary. For the inquiry, I can confirm that this is now with solicitors, as this now forms the basis of a boundary dispute. The title plan alignment is consistent with our submitted plans, but

in any event, it is apparent that the land in dispute is not critical to the delivery of our access proposal. Whilst we maintain that we own it, and our solicitors have written to Mr Edwards confirming this, the access can be implemented without any land forming part of this dispute, and a revised plan has been produced that demonstrates this, which has been presented to the council as a matter of clarification.

Westcountry Land submitted a letter to the Council, which was put before the planning inspector last year, when this appeal was last considered and subsequently dismissed. As we are actively working on this project, I wanted to attend the inquiry today to provide an up-to-date position in respect of the work that has now been undertaken by WCL (Tiverton) Ltd and our team, as well as the ongoing work for Area B of the Tiverton urban expansion area. This has moved on significantly since the last representation in September 2023.

The work that we have undertaken will accelerate the delivery of the Area B allocation, without waiting for the Redrow link, or any other alternative access, such as that proposed by the appeal scheme, to the east.

We have employed a team of specialist consultants to work with us on this project. This includes specialist highways consultants, who have worked in conjunction with Devon County Highways to produce a new junction and link road design.

As specialist land developers, we are very familiar with the key principles of the planning process. We endorse the plan-led approach and have focused all of our efforts on allocated land. We have and continue to work closely with the Local Planning Authority to evolve our masterplan. This includes a formal pre-application process and PPA which is ongoing, until submission of our planning application.

We are working collaboratively with Mid Devon District Council and have now completed the preliminary masterplanning process for the Area B Allocation. This includes a consultation process, with the intention to formally adopt the new masterplan as supplementary planning guidance.

Mid Devon Council's cabinet met on the 12th November and resolved that they were supportive of the draft proposals and content for the public consultation to commence.

The public consultation process formally commenced last week, with a public exhibition at Tiverton Golf Club and we have two further events and the information is also all available online, which will run until January.

It is anticipated that the Formal adoption of the Area B masterplan will take place next Summer.

The consultation masterplan for Area B has been prepared by urban designers in conjunction with landscape architects, in collaboration with Mid Devon District Council's planning officers and consultees. The masterplan is now publicly available.

The masterplan has been produced with a sufficient level of underlying detail to ensure it is commercially viable and robust. Accordingly, we can confirm that, in accordance with the Local Plan for the Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension (EUE) allocation, the Area B masterplan will deliver:

- More than 600 new family homes across a range of tenures based on the Devon Home Choice data. All new homes will be to the north of West Manley Lane and includes the policy requirement of 28% affordable housing.
- There will also be an age restricted / care home facility of approximately 50 units.
- 2,050 sqm of employment space, provided as smaller units aimed at fostering the growth of local businesses.
- 30 hectares of public open space to include a new country park to serve the entire community, maintained through an agreed management plan.
- A large equipped play area in the heart of the site.
- 2 hectares of formal sports provision to include one multi-use 4g full-sized football pitch (which will also be configured to be used as 2 x Junior pitches or 4 x mini pitches) and a second grass full size football pitch, alongside a Multi-Use Games Area for older children.
- Gypsy and traveller pitches.
- Two areas of allotments situated in the western and eastern parts of the site.
- The proposed internal road network will provide pedestrian, cycle and vehicle access to Area A and the main street will connect all phases of the development, and enable a serviced bus route.
- A Sustainable Urban Drainage scheme integrated within the landscaping proposals and throughout our development to ensure that the green field run-off rate is maintained.
- And the retention of existing mature landscaping, combined with new native planting to ensure the development sensitively blends into the local landscape from the outset.

The public consultation process will culminate in the adoption of the masterplan as supplementary planning guidance.

In accordance with the PPA that we have agreed with Mid Devon Council, we will submit our planning application in accordance with the adopted masterplan, in Spring 2025.

Mid Devon District Council have processed our Environmental screening request. This was determined on the 13th November and confirms that an Environmental Impact

Assessment is required. This is an important part of our pre-application process and we are now undertaking the scoping to define the content of our application which will enable us to submit the application in line with our programme.

I support and endorse the council's reasons for refusal for the appeal scheme. At this time, as the Local Plan has 9 years left to run, I don't believe there is any justification to depart from the council's plan-led approach and use any greenfield land outside of the allocation.

Furthermore, I consider that should the appeal scheme be permitted, it could jeopardise the delivery of Area B, rather than facilitate it, given uncertainty over the delivery timescales for the link road and stringent planning obligations that would be required to see the timely adoption of a road taken to the boundary with the allocation. The appeal scheme is an outline application and there is no certainty over the timeframes for delivery. As such, irrespective of the outcome of this appeal, we will still pursue our own independent access to the Area B allocation, through the land that we own and control.

The housing numbers associated with our masterplan demonstrates that the housing need for the local plan will be met. Therefore, there is no need for additional housing on greenfield land outside of the development boundary/allocation.

In light of all of the points that I have raised, and the land that my company owns/controls, I can confidently state that the implementation of the Mid Devon Local Plan and development of Area B of the TIV1 allocation can be secured within the plan period, without need for development of additional land, outside of the allocation. Accordingly, we would respectfully request that this appeal is dismissed.

Thank you.