
From: Andy Elliott <>
Sent: 25 October 2023
To: SW-Neighbourhood Planning
Subject: 20231025 Feedback - Okehampton Town & Hamlets Neighbourhood Plan 2021 - 2034

Dear Sir

As requested, Feedback - Okehampton Town & Hamlets Neighbourhood Plan 2021 - 2034

I'd like first to thank the Committee for all their hard work since 2015 to produce the OTHNP, it is very much appreciated.

Please see below my feedback on the latest copy of the OTHNP:

1. I note the reduction in Policies from the 2022 Draft OTHNP from 23 policies to 15 policies, accepting that the National Planning Regulation & Guidance or the PSWDJLP & Dartmoor Local Plans address the elements which have been removed.

2022 Draft

Policy

PP1: Settlement boundary Policy

PP2: Provision of affordable housing Policy

PP3: Use of brownfield sites Policy

PP4: Green infrastructure Policy

PP5: Views and vistas Policy

PP6: Employment expansion Policy

PP7: Protecting existing employment land/buildings Policy

PP8: Small employment/starter units Policy

PP9: Tourism development Policy

PP10: Tourism strategy Policy

PP11: Out of town retail hub Policy

PP12: Pedestrianisation of the Town Centre Policy

PP13: Conservation Area Policy

PP14: Community facilities and community 'right to buy' Policy

PP15: Community centre in the new build developments Policy

PP16: Car parking capacity Policy

PP17: Parking in residential development Policy

PP18: Safe access to and within the Town and Hamlets Policy

PP19: Town Centre Access Road Policy

PP20: Cycle routes Policy **PP21: Community energy Policy**

PP22: Addressing fuel poverty Policy

PP23: Greener transport

2023 Current Draft

Policy

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PP2: Use of brownfield sites Policy

PP3: Green infrastructure Policy

PP4: Views and vistas Policy

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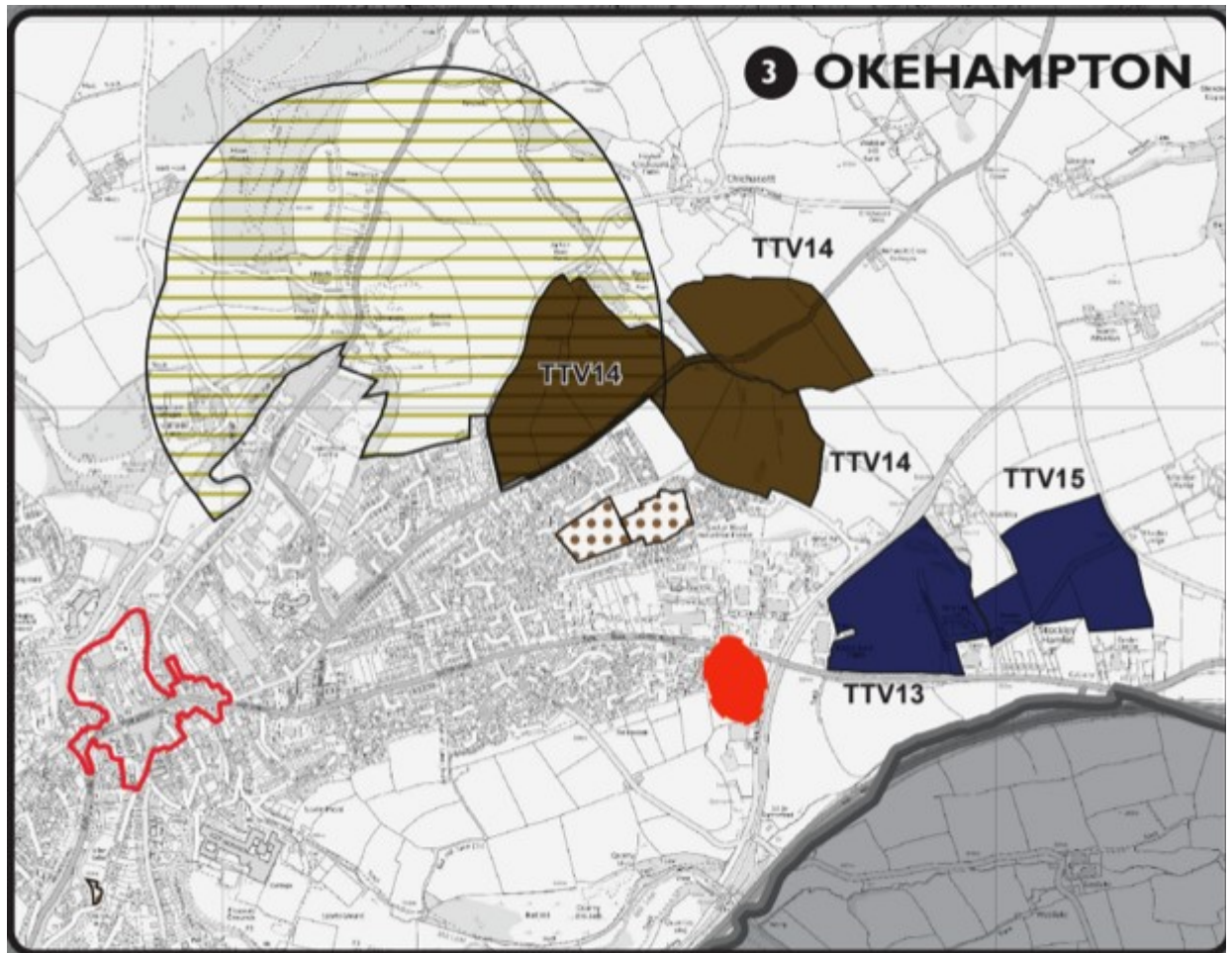
PP14: Town Centre Access Road Policy

PP15: Cycle routes

I have ongoing concerns as to whether when granting Planning Permission to Developers, the WDBC in Tavistock & SHDC in Totnes, will take into consideration the PSWDJLP, OTHNP advice and objections if raised of the Local Community.

The Persimmon "Fatherford Estate" being an example of a Developer building on Greenfield Agricultural land being approved by the Government Inspector and there by the WDBC & SHDC which had not been allocated in the Joint Local Plan adopted in 2019 and

opposed by residents, and the Okehampton Town and Hamlets Councils. I'm aware that this is far from being an isolated case in Devon and the UK. Developers. Fatherford Estate shown in red on the map below:



What if any recourse will local residents have if the same happens again on another Greenfield Site which has not been allocated for future housing?

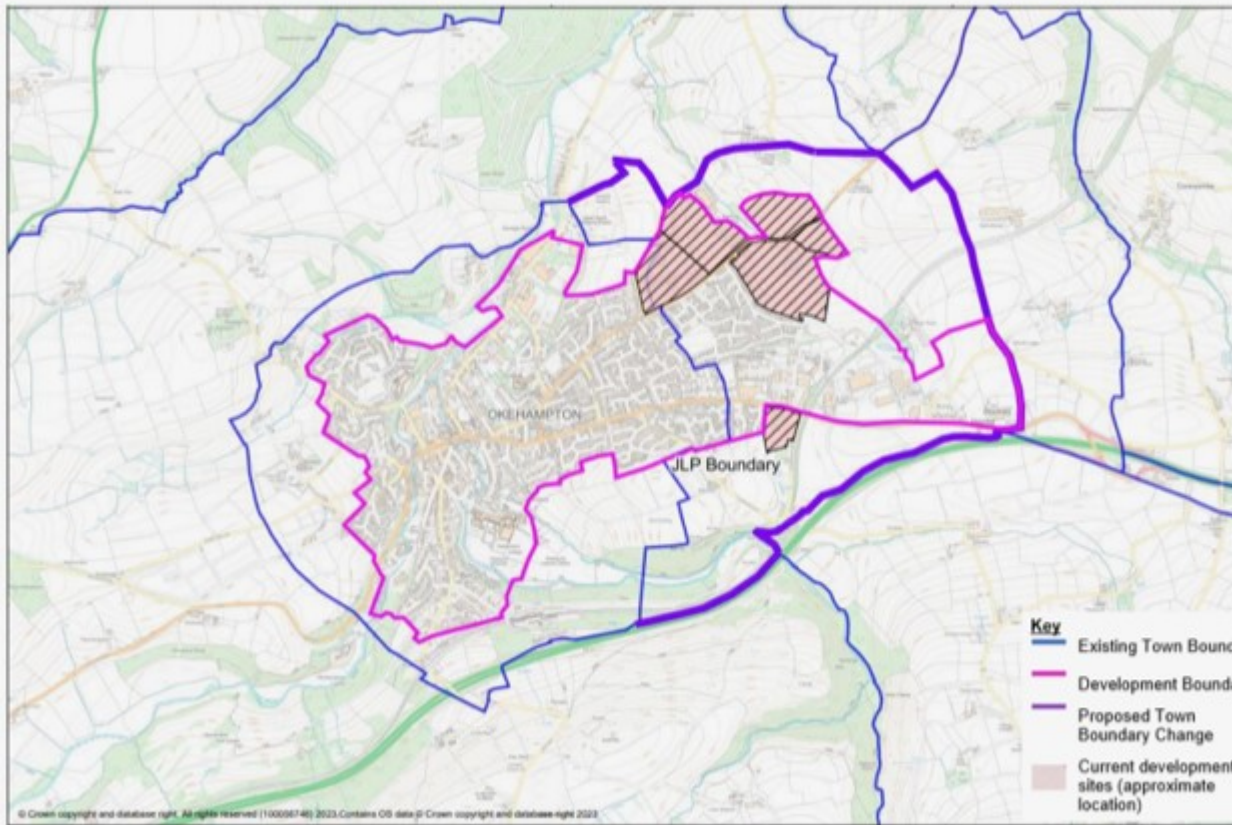
2. PP1 - Settlement Boundary:

a. The statement "Whilst offers of land to the west of Okehampton have been considered in the past, they were not deemed deliverable" is not supported by any evidence as to why the west of Okehampton was deemed not deliverable. With over 775 houses being built on to the east of Okehampton, it is difficult to understand why some of the new houses couldn't be built to the west and north of Okehampton. I'm not condoning building on Greenfield Sites but if it is to happen in the future, surely houses could be built to the west and north of the town which would ease the strain on the infrastructure to the east of the town.

b. Recently the WDBC sent a letter out to households regarding the Community Governance Review and a proposed change to the Town Boundary. The map attached to the letter showed a proposed increase in the Town Boundary to the east of Okehampton which is considerably larger than the existing Towns Area. The increase of the town boundary if it were to be approved could be seen by many as providing yet more Greenfield Sites for developers outside the OTHNP and JLP boundaries, a very very real concern to the Hamlets.

c. Personally and from the details provided by the Hamlets Council, I don't agree with the proposed changes to the Town Boundary.

Okehampton Boundary Review - Proposed Changes



3. PP3 - Use of Brownfield Sites:

a. I fully agree with the use of Brownfield Sites and sincerely hope the WDBC & SHDC Planning Dept prioritise the use of the brownfield sites over our valuable green spaces in accordance with the OTHNP & JLP. If the brownfield sites 1 & 4 are identified as being suitable for building perhaps they could be considered as for additional car parking or green spaces. I'm conscious the proposed pedestrianisation of the main road would require additional parking to be provided for the town.

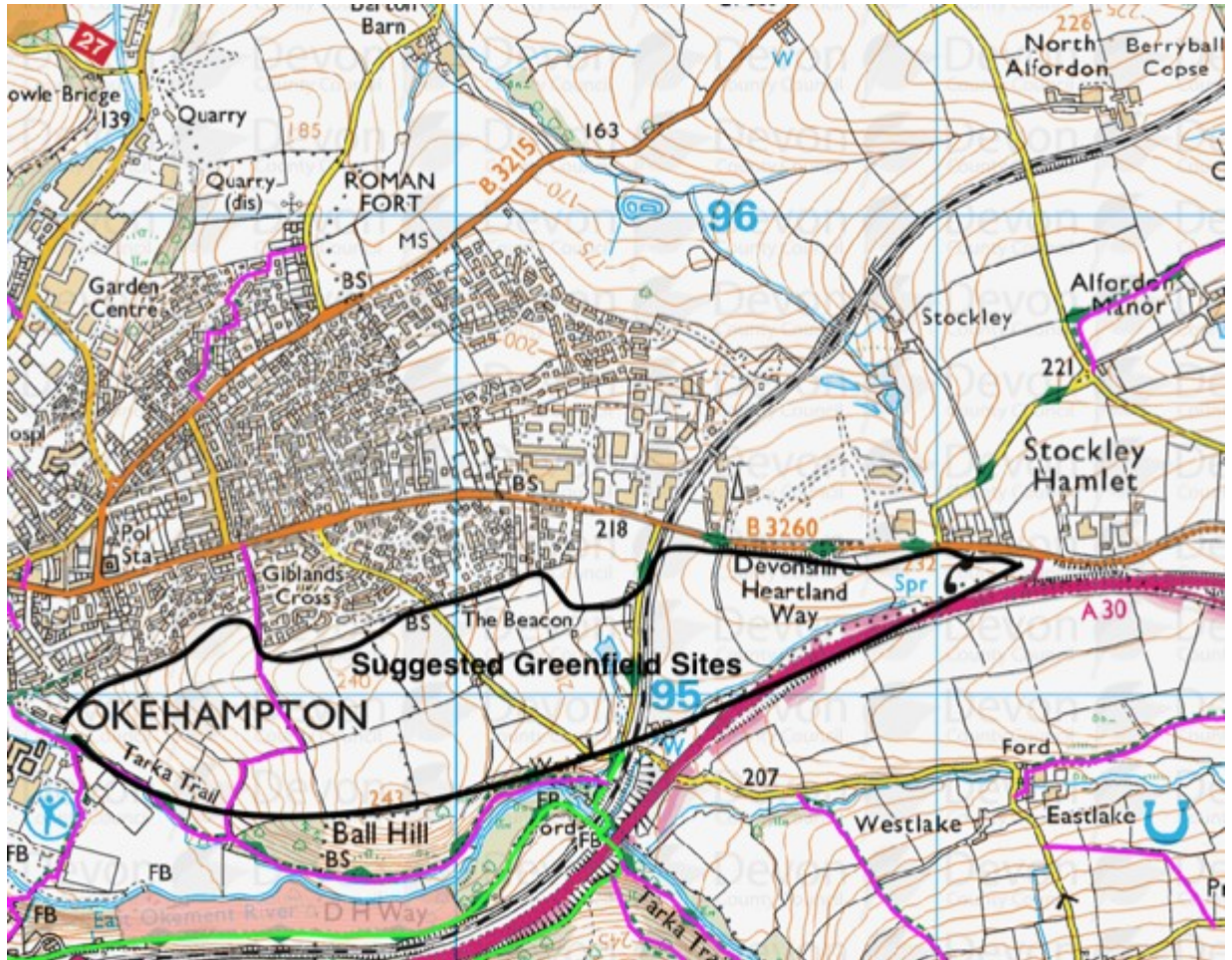
4. PP4 - Green spaces and green infrastructure

a. As I mentioned in my review of the previous OTHNP, the map provided doesn't show the whole of the JLP area.

b. I note that the land south of Giblands is missing as it was shown as a green space / infrastructure on page 17 of the [othnp-draft-plan-for-informalconsultation-september-2021.pdf](#). Please can the land south of Giblands be included again as a Green space / Green Infrastructure?

OTHNP definition on a Green Infrastructure: Green infrastructure assets include open spaces such as parks and gardens, allotments, woodlands, **fields, hedges**, lakes, ponds, playing fields, coastal habitats, as well as footpaths, cycleways or rivers.

This would help protect the Dartmoor NP Boundary from future developments on the edge of the very busy A30 dual carriageway. Map showing the suggested area below:



5. PP4 - Views and vistas

- a. Totally agree.
- b. Please see above for my suggestion on how to preserve some of the views from Dartmoor, not to Okehampton. Thankfully the Fatherford Estate and the unsightly Kellands site are mostly out of view from Dartmoor.

6. PP5 - Employment expansion

- a. A useful inclusion in the document would be the map on page 17 of the [othnp-draft-plan-for-informalconsultation-september-2021.pdf](#) shows the proposed settlement boundary at Sep 2021 which provides a very useful consolidated view of PP5, 6 & 7 proposed business locations.

7. PP6 - Protecting existing employment land/buildings

- a. As above in para 6a.

8. PP7 - Small employment/starter units

- a. As above in para 6a.

9. PP8 - Tourism development

- a. There doesn't appear to be any progress yet with dealing with the increase in traffic on the Exeter Road and Exeter Road Industrial Estate due the new Kellands Estate etc developments.
- b. There remains a desperate requirement for a new link/access road from Exeter Road to the Crediton Road for the new Housing Developments.
- c. The new Okehampton Parkway railway station will help with tourism and help limit the traffic into town and up Station Road.

10. PP9 - Out of town retail hub

- a. Agreed

11. PP10 - Pedestrianisation of the Town Centre

- a. The traffic is bad enough as it is. Blocking the High Street (Fore Street) off will exacerbate the traffic congestion even more. I don't believe a link road will do that much to help with the traffic as the School, Simmons Park, Railway and Dartmoor traffic will still have to get to Mill Road. The congestion on Market Street by the town hall is another bottle neck for traffic.
- b. I agree with the concept but don't believe it is practical, yet.

12. PP11 - Car parking capacity

- a. The Brownfield Mill Road sites could be utilised for additional car parking, if planning permission isn't granted for building on the sites.

13. PP12 - Parking in residential development

- a. An absolute responsibility of the WDBC & SHDC Planning Depts to ensure adequate parking is included in all developer designs submitted for approval.

14. PP13 - Safe access to and within the Town and Hamlets

- a. 13 years on from and still no action by the DCC on the new link road between Exeter and Crediton Road, frustrating for all concerned.
- b. A connection through the Kellands Estate to the Crediton Road would help with traffic flow through to the new houses.
- c. Can a developers not be made to contribute to the funding of the new roads in infrastructure via a Section 106 agreement?

15. PP14 - Town Centre Access Road

- a. There is no doubt a new Town Access Route would help with the traffic, again could Developers of the new houses helping to create more traffic, contribute via a Section 106 agreement. The large business i.e. Waitrose, Lidl and Coop could also be asked to assist with funding as they would likely see more business coming their way.

16. PP15 - Cycle routes

- a. There is a cycle route from the NCN27 by the Railway Station along Tramlines to the blue railway bridge on Exeter Road which isn't shown, see map below in green. A quiet and safe route for cyclists.
- b. The proposed route to join the main Crediton road via the traffic light junction would be safer for cyclists if it was to follow the Crediton Road turning by the Dartmoor Mural. The road isn't as steep and would avoid a busy traffic light junction. see map below in red.



17. General comments:

- a. Ensuring appropriate infrastructure is delivered alongside new development. The word “Infrastructure” is used many times but isn’t defined as to what essential services it encompasses. It would be useful to include a definition to show that building infrastructure covers, many services all of which could received funding assistance from Developers, sewers, highway and foul water drainage, power and communications cable ducts and cable pits etc.
 - i. The responsibility for the approval of the development plans falls to the WDBC & SHDC.
 - ii. The delivery of the services falls to the developer and the responsibility of the infrastructure installation falls to the Contractor Companies to install their services to the required industry standards.
 - iii. In my experience there is a gap, the Planning Dept approves and the developers designs then it is the responsibility of the DCC Buildings Inspector and DCC Highways Dept to ensure the works are carried out correctly. The Moorcroft Close estate is an example where it was there was a gap with planing permission granted but not properly managed by the DCC Depts. It left to the residents to resolve and fund the issue of an unadopted road, soakaway and pumping station...
- b. Who will check to ensure the WDBC & SHDC do check the OTHPN as stated “the OTHNP must be used in planning”?
- c. Funding has been allocated by the Government for the Okehampton Parkway to be built. 19 Jan 2023 the press published Following the success of the reopening of the Dartmoor Line in November 2021, more than £13 million has been granted for a new station, a West Devon Transport Hub at Okehampton in Devon
- d. Hospital. If in 2016 the Clinical Commissioning Group stated that the population of Okehampton was insufficient to maintain the hospital and second GP surgery, is it possible to call for a new review and what is the minimum number of residents required to fully reopen the Okehampton Hospital?

Summary

Excellent work. I believe the prioritise should be:

1. Funding and Building the Exeter Road to Crediton Link Road as soon as possible.
2. Funding and building the Town Access Road as soon as possible.
3. Ensure our Greenfield Sites and Countryside outside of the JLP boundary are protected for our future generations.

4. Brownfield Sites are prioritised over any Greenfield sites for development.

Yours faithfully

Andrew Elliott
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Okehampton