

Representation at Inglewood Inquiry

I am a resident of Galmpton, a contributor to the Brixham Peninsula and Paignton Neighbourhood Plans, and writer of the Galmpton Village Design Statement.

I challenge the application on a number of levels. I believe that the outcome of this Inquiry will denote a relative commitment to local democracy in so far as it respects the specific needs and wishes of the community as defined in the Neighbourhood Plans drawn up over years through extensive consultation and commitment. Claims made here are supported by evidence supplied in those plans, or as regards housing num.

The Neighbourhood Plans specified the conditions which should justify residential development in the Bay.

- A primary condition was that housing development should be jobs-led, a view endorsed by Planning Inspector Keith Holland in 2015 with reference to Torbay. It should also be precisely adapted to *proven* local need and income levels. The proposed development is not adapted to existing employment levels, with net job creation having declined in recent years despite continued housing expansion. Neither is the scale or type of housing adapted to minimal population increase or to Torbay residents' nationally low average full-time wage, estimated in the Office of National Statistics' 2020 assessment, at £470 per week. The 373 houses proposed will simply add to the thousands of unsold properties in the Bay, to the 1,300 + homes which remain vacant for over 6 months of the year, and, at the last count in 2018, an additional 1,500 *second* homes. These are figures supplied by Admiral Insurance in response to a freedom of information request.
- While all accept the need for greater housing provision, especially for those struggling financially, the figures cited for housing requirements across the country, and particularly in the South-West, have been shown, in analysis conducted by the ONS and Opinion Research Services (ORS) often to be arbitrary and insecurely grounded in statistical evidence. Their assessments have been publicised in an extended analysis by the CPRE, the first in 2018, the latest last year. This important analytical challenge to statistical claims and assumptions has thus far been largely ignored by relevant Ministers.
- The Neighbourhood Plans emphasised the importance of avoiding an urban sprawl which serves to close remaining gaps of green open space between settlements. The 'Inglewood' development would do just that by further extending the existing Whiterock development and eroding the independent identity of settlements, negatively impinging on the historic hamlet of Waddeton and village of Galmpton with their narrow rural roads.
- The Plans specify that any development should be appropriately sited and *brownfield* urban sites developed in preference to - for developers - cheaper greenfield alternatives. This is a prospective development on an environmentally and ecologically sensitive site which, as demonstrated diagrammatically by the South Hams AONB Manager, would also have an adverse visual impact on the AONB of the Dart Valley area of Special Conservation. It consumes valuable Grade 2 agricultural land at a time when agrarian self-sufficiency will be increasingly important. It inflicts irreparable damage on an area which supports endangered wildlife, supplying crucial foraging area for the endangered Greater Horseshoe Bat and site-faithful Cirl Bunting whose habitat has already been seriously eroded and breeding pairs displaced by the neighbouring development (Whiterock 1) without compensatory provision.

- *Topographically* (an aspect habitually ignored), the location of the proposed development is ill-judged and potentially very damaging. It is situated at the narrowing end of the Peninsula where the large amount of additional traffic that will be generated will impose unsustainable pressure on the one main road into Brixham, even with proposed highway adjustment. The pollution which will be emitted by the additional traffic, already receiving negative readings and media attention, will adversely affect health and fly in the face of local and central government's declared commitment to addressing the climate emergency.
- The increased urbanisation of this holiday area will undoubtedly inflict longer term economic damage on an area reliant on preserving and working to *enhance*, rather than *degrade* or sell off, for short term gain, the environmental assets which distinguish it from anywhere else, and have traditionally attracted holiday visitors. The existing congestion and over-development is already deterring people from making their way here from the Midlands and North, as I can testify from conversations with people across the country.
- This development, with its inevitable adverse environmental and health impact would be both destructive and *culturally* regressive at this time of heightened awareness of the environmental and health implications of our actions. It serves unsustainable, short term material gain and corporate interest - financial opportunism masquerading as social benevolence - and as far as Torbay and its tourist-based *economy* is concerned, will kill 'the goose that laid the golden egg.' A decision to pass this application would violate the democratic principle represented by the Neighbourhood Plans. It would show a contempt for the community voice at a time when community vision, wisdom and action has been valued as never before. The implications of this violation, of this *betrayal*, would be grave indeed.

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