

Abbas and Templecombe Parish Council

Clerk: Mrs. T. J. Chapman, 7 Slades Hill, Templecombe, Somerset BA8 OHF
Telephone: 01963 370527

E-Mail: abbasandtemplecombecpc@hotmail.co.uk

www.abbasandtemplecombecpc.org.uk

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□ South Somerset Local Plan Review 2016 - 2036 - Public Consultation on Preferred Options

Abbas and Templecombe Parish Council would like to make the following observations relating to the above review:

Following the Public drop in Session at Milborne Port on 6th August the members that attended were extremely concerned to find that there was no mention of Templecombe or the implications of proposals to change its status to a village despite its close proximity to this drop in session.

Given the difficulty in accessing any document relating the consultation and understanding its relevance and weight to the overall consultation process this would appear to make any relevant contributions extremely difficult and weight comments in favour of developers who can afford to pay for expert contributions that skew in favour of profitable development and not necessarily to the benefit of the community.

It was in fact questioned at the drop in session as to if Templecombe was indeed part of South Somerset. This highlights the concern of the Parish Council members that the review is very much a paper exercise without real understanding or knowledge of communities that face profound change as a result of development.

The proposal is to move Templecombe from Rural Settlement to Village status. Although Rural Settlements where SS4 would apply development would be limited the proposal for SS1 would identify Templecombe as a village ' where provision will be made for limited development to meet local need, support local services and economic activity appropriate to the scale of the development'.

However even as a Rural Settlement Templecombe saw no evidence of any restriction in development indeed page 33 of the preferred options consultation clearly acknowledges that "new housing has been delivered in Rural Settlements far in excess of what the local plan anticipated". It would appear that the village status will allow those settlements identified to continue this excessive level of delivery based on "a methodology taking into account levels of community services, population mass".

On the same page when referring to rural settlements point 5.24 clearly states the importance of balancing "the sustainment of communities against the protection and enhancement of the rural environment". Even while Templecombe has had Rural Settlement Status because the presumption in favour of development exists there has been no evidence of any protection against development of any scale. Therefore the Parish Council perceives the risk of excessive development and damage of its rural environment only increases if Templecombe is assigned Village status. Indeed the PC has already seen the first significant planning application for 49 houses use the Local Plan review document -'The potential for Rural Settlements to be Designated as Villages' as justification for such a development despite it still being a consultation document.

Significantly there is no account taken of the cumulative effect of development when a number of applications are made within the same village. Development must be seen relative to the whole village

and neighbouring settlements in terms of pressures including local schools and health services particularly as these facilities are often shared across communities.

The Methodology referred to page 33 of the preferred options consultation is itself appears deeply flawed. Evidence of justification of changing the status of Templecombe from a Rural Settlement to a Village repeatedly uses the fact that Templecombe has a pub even though the last Pub in the village was closed 20 months before the production of the preferred options consultation.

This 'methodology' in the Local Plan review document - The potential for Rural Settlements to be designated as Villages point 4.6 (page 14) also mentions that an opportunity is being progressed by GWR to increase the car parking provision. However GWR is not the operator on this line and there is no known potential for increasing car parking which makes the Parish Council have serious concerns that the site referred to relates to Castle Cary Station some 10 miles away.

The railway station is frequently cited as a major factor in considering the village as able to sustain growth and yet the station does not serve Yeovil. The station closest to Yeovil is in fact 1.8 miles away with no integrated bus service between the station and the town centre. There is only a 2 hourly busservice to Yeovil from Templecombe. The last bus leaves Yeovil at 6.30pm in the evening and there is no service on a Sunday. These limited travel options in their own right should exclude Templecombe from being considered a village as development would increase car usage which we believe are contrary to some policies within the NPPF.

The same paragraph identifies 'the number of existing jobs relative to the size of the economically active population is high and a comparatively large amount of new employment floor space has been completed' This statement normally refers to the Thales site manufacturing sonar and sensors for the Royal Navy fleet as well as other international navies. The site is a specialist centre in anti-submarine warfare, mine warfare and submarine technology. As a result employment is extremely specialised with a very high level of graduate specialist skills which is rarely available locally.

The primary school is over capacity and while there is limited locals access to healthcare services the building is not DDA compliant which means many residents still need to access medical care in the main surgery in Milborne Port.

The council therefore wishes for Templecombe to remain as a rural settlement based on the fact that many of the assumptions do not reflect the current status of Templecombe.