

DARTS FARM LIMITED
RESPONSE TO CLYST ST MARY AND SOWTON (BISHOPS CLYST) NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
(SUBMISSION VERSION) CONSULTATION (FEBRUARY 2025) BY BELL CORNWELL LLP

Introduction

Darts Farm Ltd (Darts) is the owner of a number of areas of land in and around Clyst St Mary and they are therefore an important stakeholder in the area, not only in terms of their land interests but also through their role as a major local employer through, example, their business operations at the nearby Darts Farm complex. In particular, Darts are the owners of part of the area which is proposed to be allocated, under policies within the draft neighbourhood plan, for housing development.

Darts have been in discussion with the parish council in connection with its proposed residential allocation on their land and have also submitted supportive representations as part of the previous consultation on the draft neighbourhood plan (*draft NP*). Within this context, we have therefore reviewed the current version and our comments are set out below.

Built Environment Overview (Paragraph 8.5)

The Built Environment section of the draft neighbourhood plan sets out some preamble regarding the context within which the draft NP is set. It describes the pattern of existing built development in the area. In relation to expected growth requirements, paragraph 8.5 notes that the East Devon Local Plan establishes a requirement that the parish council area provide for a minimum of 72 more dwellings.

Response

It is useful to the note that in relation to the future housing growth requirements referred to in paragraph 8.5, these arise from Strategic Policy SP03 of the draft East Devon Local Plan and which refers to the amount of housing to be provided for each neighbourhood area, including Clyst St Mary. Policy SP03 states that:

“These figures [the housing provision] represent the minimum housing development in each of the Designated Neighbourhood Areas over the plan period. Proposals for additional housing, including through allocations in neighbourhood plans to meet a specific local need, will be supported...” [our emphasis]

This makes it clear that the amount of housing to be provided within the area, can exceed the 72 dwellings identified in the neighbourhood plan, where necessary and to assist in addressing local needs. This is relevant to the proposed allocation of the Land to East of Clyst St Mary (Policy Bis C12) where some additional housing, in excess of 72 dwellings, is needed to ensure delivery of a link road between the A3025 and Bishops Court Lane. Delivery of this link road is a key objective of the neighbourhood plan, required to alleviate acute traffic congestion issues affecting the centre of Clyst

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St Mary. Notwithstanding this issue, the provision of some additional housing will also provide assist the district council with its wider housing supply objectives in a sustainable location which is well connected to local services, to the highways network and to Exeter.

Given the reference to the 72 dwellings, we would suggest that the supporting text to this part of the neighbourhood plan be expanded to make it clear that additional housing may be provided where this is needed to fulfil wider neighbourhood plan objectives.

Policy BisC11 – Clyst St Mary Settlement Boundary

Policy BisC11 establishes the settlement boundary for Clyst St Mary and indicates that development at locations within the boundary will be supported subject to it meeting a number of parameters. We note that the settlement boundary proposes to include the land which is to be allocated for housing (see Policy BisC12).

We SUPPORT the wording of Policy BisC11 as worded and the alignment of the settlement boundary shown on the accompanying map.

Policy BisC12 and Paragraphs 9.16 to 9.25 – Land East of Clyst St Mary

Policy BisC12 and the accompanying text proposes the allocation of land for residential development, to provide at least 72 dwellings. As part of the allocation, the policy requires the provision of an estate road link across the land to provide a connection between the A3052 and Bishops Court Lane, the inclusion of the Clyst Valley Trail cycle route across the land and the provision of a crossing to allow a connection to Church Lane. The policy also requires that development of the land protect the character of the area and that of the adjacent Clyst Valley.

As the supporting text to the policy makes clear, a fundamental purpose of the allocation is to enable the delivery of a road link across the land in order to remove the traffic congestion which currently affects the centre of the village.

We strongly SUPPORT this policy and the proposed allocation of land for housing in the manner set out in the policy. Delivery of the land in an appropriate manner is achievable.

In relation to the southern area of the Policy BisC12 land, the Council will be aware of the intentions of Core Strategic Land (CSL) to bring forward an early planning application on the land and that this will include details of an appropriate access onto the A3052, an estate road link across the land which

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is able to connect to the Darts land and arrangements for a new cycle/pedestrian crossing. It will therefore seek to address the key requirements set out in the draft policy.

In respect of the Dart land, an illustrative masterplan has previously been circulated and this provides an indication of how that land, along with the CSL Land, can be developed in a manner which addresses the various requirements for the area. A copy of this enclosed with these representations. This shows that development of the Dart land can be undertaken in a manner which addresses all of the draft policy requirements highlighted above as well as other policy requirements such as the provision of tree and landscape planting and the inclusion of a 10m woodland buffer alongside the Bishops Clyst Lane boundary to protect the character of the nearby Clyst Valley. Further work to develop this comprehensive masterplan further has been agreed and is ongoing.

As part of the wider masterplanning exercise, technical work has been undertaken by Darts' highways consultants, Stantec, to confirm that the highways arrangements are acceptable. This analysis has included traffic flow and road capacity analysis, a review of opportunities for the scheme to help deliver the Clyst Valley Trail and the identification of various traffic calming measures (such as weight restrictions, signage and localised narrowing and closure of through access to Clyst St Mary) to ensure that Bishops Clyst Lane is not used as a rat run.

Collectively, this material demonstrates that development of the BisC12 allocation land is capable of being delivered in the manner required by the policy and also able to deliver the wider objectives in relation to the Clyst Valley Trail and the wider benefits and connectivity which that would be bring. The policy and its objectives are therefore credible and the policy is supported.