

Mr Stephen Munday  
Head of Planning and Building  
Control  
South Hams District Council  
Follaton House  
Plymouth Road  
Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5NE

29 July 2009

Dear Stephen,

**Application No. 7/49/2426/06 – Sherford New Community, Land South/South West of A38 Deep Lane and Haye Road Elburton, Plymouth**

ATLAS (Advisory Team for Large Applications) has been involved in the Sherford New Community Project since January 2006. ATLAS has a substantial portfolio of large scale development projects in the South West and nationally. The Sherford New Community Planning application has been a priority area of work for ATLAS and justified our long term involvement, because of its strategic importance to the South West Region and the opportunity to assist in the delivery of an exemplar sustainable new settlement. ATLAS considers that the current application with its proposed S106 package would still deliver a development that, in our experience, is exemplary.

The current economic downturn has had a profound effect on the development industry. Residential and commercial values have collapsed with most major sites showing negative residual values. Across the board both locally and nationally schemes can no longer support the levels of planning obligations and affordable housing that was initially envisaged. As a consequence, the development industry in the South West has come under severe pressure.

Unlocking these schemes has become a priority for ATLAS and other national organisations involved in housing, economic development and regeneration. This is to ensure early delivery of the benefits that these developments can bring to families in need of affordable homes; to individuals in need of jobs; and to existing and new communities in need of new social and community facilities and a high quality environment in which to live and work. For these reasons, the Government expects the planning system to respond positively and flexibly to proposals in these difficult economic times.

It is important that the schemes that are unlocked are still capable of delivery of these sustainable outcomes in the long term. This requires a rigorous approach to the assessments of the impact of the economic downturn on scheme viability. It also requires flexibility and willingness of all parties involved to work

innovatively and in partnership to sustain the original vision. ATLAS considers that the current outline planning application and proposed S106 package is the product of a process that we would be happy to recommend to other parties engaged in unlocking similar schemes.

ATLAS acknowledges that there are alternative approaches to increasing the delivery of affordable housing over the lifetime of projects of this nature. ATLAS has looked at a number of these models and notes that a common characteristic is their relative simplicity and transparency. The approach that is proposed, in this instance, is similar to these other approaches in this respect. ATLAS is confident that the current application and flexible approach to delivery of the extensive S106 package is a good planning balance that will deliver a high quality sustainable outcome. For these reasons, we commend the current application and S106 package.

Yours sincerely,

Ian White

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