IZATT P & T : Item 3

**Re: Proposed Development of Shudrick Valley**

Identification numbers 6813409/0297. 6813409/0298.

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In response to your invitation to submit a further objection to the South Somerset District Council regarding the local plan for Ilminster, our comments are as follows.

It would appear that the Plan was based on a report that Shudrick Valley had inferior agricultural land values. I am appalled that the council has only just discovered that these values were incorrect. We now know the area consists of Grade 3 agricultural land with some Grade 2, whilst the land at Canal Way (on the original plan) is of much inferior and lower value. Also, Canal Way is a more level terrain and thus easier to develop.

During the winter we have watched the fields on the Shudrick Valley slopes running with water. Much of the Shudrick Valley proposed site is on these steeply sloping fields, and the area has always been prone to flooding as it was fed by the Chink Spring. The report refers to the soils on the site having poor infiltration properties and this leads to surface water going down to the Shudrick Stream to cause flooding lower down. This is especially so in Shudrick Lane and Ditton Street, where there have been a number of instances of recent flooding.

We understand the council have proposed a new concept plan for the Shudrick Valley. This does not follow the Council’s approved Direction of Growth as agreed in January 2013. The amended plan took development off the southern slopes to protect the fields, and yet the new concept plan shows development going almost up to Baker’s Copse.

There is also a proposal for a new link road going half way up the slope for part of its length; this road would require a good deal of excavation and would scar the southern slopes forever. As a result of this development, the impact on wildlife and landscape would be devastating. Also, a working farm at Townsends would be demolished.

The new project makes no reference to the Swanmead School playing field which was shown as hatched for development in the council’s original plan, but does not appear to be included in the latest plan. Why has this been omitted?

The District Council used a new Sustainability Appraisal for the Shudrick Valley . It is surprising that equally a similar appraisal has not been carried out for Canal Way, which is a much more sensible option being closer to the proposed employment land at Hort Bridge.

It is frustrating that the council seems set on destroying the beautiful Shudrick Valley, when I believe that the evidence from the Concept Plan and the council’s own submissions point to the fact that Canal Way is the best option for development in Ilminster.

It is very suspect that the council has now submitted a different draft Concept Plan to the original shown in its submission to the Inspector.