

# Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Review of Purbeck Local Plan Partial Review

## Project initiation document

### Introduction and background

PAS is part-funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to support local authorities in their planning functions. Some of this support focuses on plan making. We are also a part of the Local Government Association (LGA), meaning we have access to peers working in local authorities across the country. Finally, in order to provide us with the capacity necessary to deliver wide-ranging support and advice, we can use the LGA framework of suppliers, who can bring technical knowledge and expertise to ensure our advice is of the highest quality.

PAS is independent, working neither for a particular company, nor any individual political party. Over our 11 years, we have delivered support in some form to every local authority in England. Our support is flexible and we look to deliver it in the way which best suits the local authority.

We do not carry out work on behalf of councils, rather we work with them, offering advice and critical friend support. We do not get involved in any discussions about the merits of sites or individual applications. We will advise instead on whether the methodology for assessing sites appears robust.

PAS wrote to Purbeck as part of a programme of emailing all local authorities who have been directed to revise their local plan by an Inspector. Purbeck responded with a request for PAS to provide an independent review of the local plan review.

Adam Dodgshon from PAS met with officers and Members on 14<sup>th</sup> November to discuss the progress of the Purbeck Local Plan Review and consider how best to progress the PAS support

### Purbeck Local Plan Review

When the examination into the adopted Core Strategy finished, the Inspectors Report contained recommendations including one to review the local plan by 2017. Principally, this was to take account of housing need in the district as well as the scale and distribution of that housing need.

The council has decided to 'pause the process' of its local plan review. This follows the recent consultation into the options for the local plan review.

Purbeck council has invited PAS to come in at this point as a critical friend. At the meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> Members set out the key areas they wished to see PAS supporting the council on. These are:

- 1) A review of what has been said in the 'pause', to look at assessing the way forward, the work to be carried out and the timescales involved
- 2) A review of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) process. This will look at the methodology, at the way the report has been used, and at the issue of balancing the economic aspirations with housing need and with affordable housing need

- 3) A response to a query regarding the 'status' of the emerging plan, and analysis of the risk assessment into speculative development. How much weight does the Purbeck Local Plan Review have now? Can it be used in decision making? Is there a mechanism for formalising the status of the emerging Plan Review? What stages will it need to go through to gain more weight than it has now?
- 4) A critical friend review of officer recommendations into the findings of further evidence work, once completed and assessed by the council

### Work proposal and next steps

PAS will carry out this work as a critical friend. This means we will be challenging the authority in a way which helps them to reflect on how they have got to where they have got to with the review. The support will be provided in a combination of on-site meetings and presentations to Members, document review, and a report back to the council setting out recommendations, lessons learned and highlighting any useful resources.

PAS will work with a Member peer who will be able to engage with Purbeck Members at the presentations, and any other points as agreed. PAS will also consider an officer peer to provide additional capacity to the PAS review. PAS will also seek to appoint suppliers from their framework

Step one – Review the Inspectors Report to ensure a common understanding of the recommendations as far as they relate to the local plan review.

Step two – Look at the work being proposed during the 'pause' in order to assist the council in drawing up a realistic timetable to take the review to completion. This will involve assessing the proposed work to ensure it will cover all relevant areas, as well as providing the council with appropriate challenges so that the evidence can be critically assessed. This will ensure the plan is informed by robust evidence.

Step three – Look in more detail at the SHMA to determine the effectiveness of the methodology that has been used. Assess this against commonly used methodologies. Consider how the council has then used the SHMA to formulate the options into housing need. PAS will use questions that have been asked by members of the public in the consultation, thus providing a critique based on actual concerns.

Timescales – all dates refer to a Friday in the week they are expected to happen

25<sup>th</sup> Nov – PAS and Purbeck DC to agree the content of the brief

2<sup>nd</sup> Dec - PAS to appoint appropriate suppliers to be able to carry out specific technical elements

9<sup>th</sup> Dec – Purbeck to send work on assessing the programme, along with summary of work done to date, for PAS to review in advance of the 'timetabling meeting'

16<sup>th</sup> Dec – 'Timetabling meeting' between PAS and officers to reach agreement on scale of work for Purbeck review, and draw up timeline

23<sup>rd</sup> Dec – Initial feedback from PAS covering Inspectors Report and SHMA methodology

Jan 2017 – Initial feedback to Leader, Deputy Leader, Chair and Vice Chair of PRAG, and officers

Late Jan 2017 – Finalise review of SHMA

Feb 2017 – Finalised PAS report and presentation to wider Members

Late Feb/March 2017 – Ongoing support on officer recommendations as needed

All work is grant-funded by PAS and comes at no cost to the authority

Anticipated number of PAS days of support - 10