INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE STURMINSTER MARSHALL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

EXAMINER: Andrew Mead BSc (Hons) MRTPI MIQ

Alison Clothier
Clerk to Sturminster Marshall Parish Council

Philip Reese
Senior Planning Policy Officer
Dorset Council

<u>Via email</u>

Examination Ref:02/AM/SMNP

18 March 2024

Dear Ms Clothier and Mr Reese

STURMINSTER MARSHALL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN EXAMINATION

Having now reviewed all the documentation submitted with the Sturminster Marshall
Neighbourhood Plan (SMNP) and conducted the site visit, I have a number of questions for
Sturminster Marshall Council (SMPC) and Dorset Council (DC) which seek clarification on some of the
matters within the SMNP.

In order to progress the examination, I would be grateful for responses to my questions to be
provided by **Wednesday 3 April 2024**, if possible. All the points set out below flow from the
requirement to satisfy the Basic Conditions.

1. Date of submission to DC.

    Q to SMPC. Please could the date of the submission of the Sturminster Marshal
    Neighbourhood Plan to DC be confirmed?

2. The Sturminster Marshall Design Guidance and Codes

    Q to SMPC and DC. In the Regulation 16 representations, DC comments about the reference
    in the SMNP to the Design guidance at paragraph 2.3.2 and in Appendix 2 (List of Supporting
    Evidence). Whereas I agree that more liberal links to the Code within the policies could
    reduce duplication, my function is to assess the Plan against the Basic Conditions rather than
    seek for ways to improve it. Nevertheless, a link to the Design guidance could assist the
    development management of design issues and perhaps Policy SMNP9 could be rephrased by
    the addition of "… and the Sturminster Marshall Design Guidance and Codes (April 2023)" at
    the end of the first sentence. Do the Councils have any comments?

3. Policy SMNP3 Sewage Treatment Works

    Q to SMPC and DC. The Basic Conditions Statement comments that there are no relevant
    strategic policies with which this policy should generally conform. One of the conclusions of
    the adopted Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan – Part 1 Core Strategy is to ensure that
    adequate services and infrastructure are provided (paragraph 5.64).   Therefore, it seems to
    me that Policy SMNP3 would generally conform with the strategy of the Local Plan and
    therefore meet that element of the Basic Conditions. Do the Councils have any comments?

4. **Policy SMNP4 Maintaining Local Character**

   Q to SMPC. Policy SMNP4 aims to protect the rural character of the area and includes four bullet points which are elements of the countryside. I do not disagree with what the policy seeks to achieve, but following the Regulation 16 comments of DC, it seems to me that the character of the village is safeguarded by subsequent policies of the Plan and Policy SMNP4 is geared to proposed development outside the area of Sturminster Marshall village. Therefore, the suggestions of DC in the second paragraph of the comments on Policy SMNP4 appear pertinent. Does SMPC have any comments?

5. **Policy SMNP4 Protecting and enhancing our local wildlife and habitats.**

   Q to SMPC. Does SMPC have any comments about the DC Regulation 16 response?

6. **Policy SMNP14**

   Q to SMPC. The DC Regulation 16 response identifies a possible error in phraseology. After reading the Pre-Submission version of the Plan (June 2023), I can see what the policy is aimed at. Would the SMPC care to redraft the Policy and copy in DC so that they may comment on the new phrasing? Perhaps a new bullet point is needed to deal with affordable housing thresholds.

7. **Policy SMNP18**

    Q to SMPC. Does SMPC have any comments about the Regulation 16 responses from DC and from Wyatt Homes which seek to delete the policy?

8. **Other Comments**

   Q to SMPC. I would be happy to have comments from SMPC on any of the other points raised by DC in its Regulation 16 response.

In the interests of transparency, may I prevail upon you to ensure that a copy of this letter is placed on both the Parish Council and Dorset Council websites.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Andy Mead

Examiner