

Planning

County Hall, Colliton Park, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

📞 01305 221000

🌐 www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Susan Heywood and Gareth
Wildgoose
Inspectors
The Planning Inspectorate
By e-mail only

Date: 25 October 2022
Ref: Purbeck Local Plan
Officer: Mike Garrity
📞 01305 221000
✉ planningpolicy@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Dear Ms Heywood and Mr Wildgoose,

The Purbeck Local Plan

We are writing regarding the examination of the Purbeck Local Plan, following publication of our technical paper on nutrient neutrality (2 September 2022) and the update which we provided in respect to housing land supply for the Purbeck area (7 October 2022).

Local Development Scheme

You have previously asked for an update on our Local Development Scheme (LDS) for the Purbeck and Dorset Council Local Plans. The council's Cabinet (4 October 2022: [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 4th October, 2022, 10.00 am - Dorset Council](#)) considered and agreed revisions to the LDS. We hope that the Purbeck Local Plan would be capable of being adopted in Spring 2023. The Dorset Council Local Plan is now expected to be submitted for examination in April 2025 with its examination anticipated in Autumn 2025

The evidence that we have recently shared indicates a five-year supply position equivalent to 3.49 years of deliverable sites against Purbeck's housing needs. This position assumes that it would be possible to deliver new homes inside the Poole Harbour catchment. Inspector Heywood has previously advised the council (19 April 2022) that '...this issue [in reference 5-year housing land supply] need not preclude me from finding the Plan sound, particularly taking into account the circumstances of this Plan and the Government's aim for Councils to have adopted plans in place.' Her guidance at this time was based on the council's estimate of 4.3 years' worth of deliverable sites against Purbeck's housing needs.

Nutrient pollution in Poole Harbour

We are working on a response to your questions (7 September 2022) relating to:

- our position on the short-term effects of phosphorus discharge in wastewater on Poole Harbour habitat site pending enactment of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (LURB);
- our position in the event of delays to the enactment of LURB and Wastewater Treatment Work upgrades; and

- a statement of common ground between the council and Natural England which clarifies the parties' position on this issue.

As I have indicated above, we are yet to complete our responses to your questions, but we thought it might be useful if we used this letter to broadly outline how we intend to respond.

The policy paper accompanying LURB issued by government on 11 May 2022 ('Levelling Up and Regeneration: further information') states that '...changes to planning procedures will begin to take place from 2024, once the Bill has Royal Assent and associated regulations and changes to national policy are in place.' Our expectation is that LURB will receive Royal Assent in spring/summer 2023.

As previously agreed, there is a need for some consultation to take place to address some inconsistencies in the policies map that supports the plan (see below). Subject to receiving your report on the examination of the local plan, the earliest date for the adoption of the plan would be in early May 2023. This broadly corresponds with the date when we expect that the LURB would receive Royal Assent.

The housing trajectory in our latest 5-year housing land supply report (Table 13 of the report appended to the technical note on nutrient pollution of 2 September 2022) anticipates delivery of homes on those sites allocated in the catchment through the local plan in the monitoring year 2023/24. The numbers of homes that we expect to be completed will increase in the monitoring years thereafter. In accordance with the Natural England position statement of 26 August 2022, the programming for enactment of LURB when considered against the anticipated earliest adoption date for the Purbeck local plan mean that it is unlikely there will be a need for sites within the Purbeck area to deliver phosphorus mitigation.

In the event of delays to the enactment of LURB, Dorset Council is working towards a number of safeguards. In brief, these safeguards are:

- maintaining a detailed record of all development caught by the nutrient neutrality requirement within Poole Harbour catchment so that Dorset Council can deliver phosphorus mitigation should the LURB not be enacted and the upgrade to wastewater treatment works not be secured through legislation;
- the use of conditions on planning permissions which restrict occupation of new homes until the upgrade to wastewater treatment works is secured through legislation;
- targeted short term, and temporary, mitigation measures at wastewater treatment works (we are working with the local water company on this approach); and
- the delivery of mitigation measures through Natural England's 'National Mitigation Scheme'.

The detail of these measures are being considered with Natural England and will form part of the statement of common ground. However, the list of 'safeguarding'

measures is not closed; we are exploring opportunities for further measures that would enable development to take place. We will be sharing further details of these measures, and our approach to the nutrient pollution more generally.

Consultation on issues/errors relating to local plan policies maps

We have also been working on finalising material and preparing for a consultation on issues and errors relating to local plan policies maps as previously discussed with Inspector Heywood, and changes to Policy I6: Wareham integrated health and social care.

The consultation will specifically relate to:

- inconsistency between the settlement boundaries shown on the local plan policies map and the policies map in the made Bere Regis Neighbourhood Plan;
- inconsistency between the Green Belt boundary and town centre shopping area shown on the local plan policies map and the policies map in the made Wareham Neighbourhood Plan;
- an update to the Poole Harbour catchment area following Natural England's announcement and guidance on nutrient pollution issued in March 2022; and
- a revision to the Main Modification relating to Policy I6, and the local plan policies map, in reflection of the latest position on land supply for housing sites in Wareham.

We are preparing a consultation on these issues which could start later this year. Subject to clarification on the scope of the consultation, we anticipate that the consultation period would run to early January 2023. We will finalise and share a summary of the issues raised through the consultation with you as quickly as possible thereafter.

Please advise if you have any comments or suggestions on our planned consultation or the programming for this consultation.

Next steps

You indicated in your note of 7 September 2022 that you intended to: '...reflect upon the evidence with a view to providing a more detailed response in due course.' Taking account of the timetable outlined in this letter, we would be grateful if you could provide some initial guidance on our intended approach to the short term nutrient pollution issues as outlined above?

We would also be grateful if you could confirm whether the advice that Inspector Heywood has previously provided in respect to housing land supply still stands following your consideration of the latest 5-year housing land supply report prepared by the council?

Yours sincerely,
Mike Garrity
Head of Planning

