

Examination of the Purbeck Local Plan (2018-2034)

With reference to previous correspondence with the Council regarding the information that would need to be provided to enable consideration of the further revisions necessary to address the issues raised in representations submitted on the proposed Main Modifications to policies V2 and I5.

We have now had the opportunity to consider the draft information prepared by the Council to support further Main Modifications (FMMs) to the Purbeck Local Plan and the approach being suggested to mitigate the impacts of residential development on the Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Dorset Heathland Special Protection Area and Ramsar and Dorset Heaths (Purbeck and Wareham) and Studland Dunes SAC (collectively referred to as Dorset Heaths habitat sites).

In summary the Council is suggesting FMMs to the Plan to delete all references to the release of Green Belt land for holiday homes at Morden Park and the delivery of a holiday park at Morden Park as enabling development for a strategic SANG whilst retaining the allocation of the strategic SANG. In so doing the Council accepts that there is no certainty of the strategic SANG being delivered without the enabling development but indicates that it intends to continue to investigate opportunities to deliver the SANG.

In the light of this the Council is therefore proposing to adopt an interim approach to habitat site mitigation for the period to 2023/2024 in the form of an Interim Mitigation Strategy (IMS) supported by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Council and Natural England and several other MoUs between the Council and various landowners.

Whilst there remain some uncertainties in the approach to habitat site mitigation being proposed by the Council the approach would appear to be a pragmatic one, particularly given where we are in the examination process and in the light of the timescale for the adoption of the new Local Plan for the Dorset Council area.

The interim period being suggested by the Council would overlap the date when the Council plans to adopt the Dorset Council Local Plan (2023) and would therefore provide some contingency in the event of delay on the new Plan. I am also mindful that, as part of the Dorset Council Local Plan, the Council indicates that it will be reviewing its approach to mitigating the effects of development on Dorset Heaths habitat sites across the whole of the new Council area.

To attempt to resolve the issue of habitat site mitigation beyond the interim period being suggested by the Council would be likely to cause considerable delay to this Plan and to the objective of getting an up-to-date Local Plan in

place. Therefore, in the light of this and having regard to the above we are satisfied, at this stage, that with FMMs the Purbeck Local Plan is likely to be capable of being found legally compliant and sound. However, any representations made as a result of the consultation on the FMMs will be considered in coming to our final conclusions on the Plan. The advice and the comments in this note are without prejudice to those final conclusions.

The proposed FMMs and changes to the policies map together with an updated Habitats Regulations Assessment, addendum to the Sustainability Appraisal and all the supporting information including the IMS and MoUs should be subject to at least a six-week period of public consultation undertaken in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and reflect that undertaken on the Plan at Regulation 19 stage. The consultation will not consider other aspects of the Plan.

Beverley Doward and Susan Heywood

JOINT INSPECTORS

24 November 2021