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NORTH DORSET LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

Issues and Options Consultation

27 November 2017 to 22 January 2018

Response Form

As part of the Local Plan Review (LPR), North Dorset District Council has prepared an Issues and Options Document for consultation. The Issues and Options Document, the Sustainability Appraisal and associated documents can be viewed online via:

<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/planning/north-dorset/planning-policy>

Please return completed forms to:

Email: planningpolicy@north-dorset.gov.uk

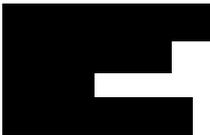
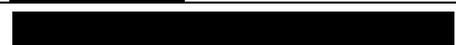
Post: Planning Policy (North Dorset), South Walks House, South Walks Road, Dorchester, DT1 1UZ

Deadline: 5pm on 22 January 2018. Representations received after this time may not be accepted.

Part A – Personal details

This part of the form must be completed by all people making representations as **anonymous comments cannot be accepted**. By submitting this response form you consent to your information being disclosed to third parties for this purpose. Personal details will not be visible on our website, although they will be shown on paper copies that will be available for inspection by members of the public and other interested parties.

*If an agent is appointed, please complete only the Title, Name, Job Title and Organisation boxes in the personal details but complete the full contact details of the agent including email address. All correspondence will be sent to the agent.

Personal Details*		Agent's Details (if applicable)*
Title	Mr	Mr
First Name	Fergus	James
Last Name	McLaren Webster	Podesta
Job Title(<i>where</i>)		Associate Director
Organisation (<i>where relevant</i>)		Rural Solutions
Address		
Postcode		
Tel. No.		
Email Address		

Part B – Representations

Please answer as many questions or as few questions as you wish. There is a box at the end of the form where you can provide any comments that you may have.

Housing

1. Do you consider that a housing need figure of 366 dwellings a year is an appropriate figure on which to plan for housing growth in North Dorset? If not, please set out what you consider to be an appropriate figure and provide reasons for this.

Yes

No

If you have answered 'No' please set out an alternative housing figure and provide reasoning to support your answer.

We welcome the increase and suggest this figure should not be a cap on sustainable development. Please see accompanying letter.

Employment

2. Do you consider that additional employment land should be allocated for development at Blandford as part of the Local Plan Review?

Yes

n/a

No

3. Do you consider that there is a need to allocate additional employment land in any other part(s) of the District?

Yes

n/a

No

Spatial Strategy

4. Do you consider that the existing spatial strategy, as set out in LPP1, should be amended to allow for some limited growth at Stalbridge, beyond just meeting local needs?

Yes

n/a

No

5. Do you think that the Council should consider implementing any other alternative spatial strategy through the LPR? If so, please explain your reasons why.

Yes

No

If you have answered 'Yes' please set out your alternative spatial strategy and provide reasoning to support it.

Please see accompanying letter.

Blandford (Forum and St Mary)

6. Do you agree with the conclusions regarding the areas of search identified at Blandford?
- Yes n/a
No
7. Are there any further issues relating to the areas of search that you think should have been considered as part of the assessment process?
- Yes n/a
No

If you have answered 'Yes' please set out what you see as the further issues.

8. What are the additional infrastructure requirements that are likely to result from potential future development at Blandford?

Please set out what you see as the additional infrastructure requirements.

Gillingham

9. Do you agree with the conclusions regarding the areas of search identified at Gillingham?
- Yes n/a
No
10. Are there any further issues relating to the areas of search that you think should have been considered as part of the assessment process?
- Yes n/a
No

If you have answered 'Yes' please set out what you see as the further issues.

11. What are the additional infrastructure requirements that are likely to result from potential future development at Gillingham?

Please set out what you see as the additional infrastructure requirements.

Shaftesbury

12. Do you agree with the conclusions regarding the areas of search identified at Shaftesbury?

Yes n/a
No

13. Are there any further issues relating to the areas of search that you think should have been considered as part of the assessment process?

Yes n/a
No

If you have answered 'Yes' please set out what you see as the further issues.

14. What are the additional infrastructure requirements that are likely to result from potential future development at Shaftesbury?

Please set out what you see as the additional infrastructure requirements.

Sturminster Newton

15. Do you agree with the conclusions regarding the areas of search identified at Sturminster Newton?

- Yes n/a
No

16. Are there any further issues relating to the areas of search that you think should have been considered as part of the assessment process?

- Yes n/a
No

If you have answered 'Yes' please set out what you see as the further issues.

17. What are the additional infrastructure requirements that are likely to result from potential future development at Sturminster Newton?

Please set out what you see as the additional infrastructure requirements.

Stalbridge

18. Do you agree with the conclusions regarding the areas of search identified at Stalbridge?

- Yes n/a
No

19. Are there any further issues relating to the areas of search that you think should have been considered as part of the assessment process?

- Yes n/a
No

If you have answered 'Yes' please set out what you see as the further issues.

20. What are the most important infrastructure requirements that are likely to result from potential future development at Stalbridge?

Please set out what you see as the additional infrastructure requirements.

The Villages

21. Do you agree with the Council's proposed approach in relation to future development at the eighteen larger villages within the District or do you think that the Council should consider an alternative approach?

Yes

No

If you have answered 'No' please set out your alternative approach and information/reasoning behind this.

Please see accompanying letter.

Affordable Housing

22. Do you consider that the existing reference to nine dwellings in Policy 9 of LPP1 should be removed from the policy to allow larger schemes to come forward where there is evidence of local need in excess of that which could be met by the provision of nine dwellings?

Yes

No

23. Do you consider that the existing policy approach, which seeks to prevent exception sites coming forward adjacent to the four main towns within the District, should be amended?

Yes n/a

No

24. Do you consider that the Council should continue with its existing policy approach, which allows for a small number of market homes on rural exception sites?

Yes n/a

No

Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing

25. Do you consider that the Council should facilitate the provision of self-build housing by any, some, or all of the following options?

Yes n/a

No

a. Allowing serviced plots to come forward under the current development plan policies.

Yes

No n/a

b. Updating Policy 7 (Delivering Homes) in the Local Plan Part 1 to promote the provision of serviced plots of land for self-build housing.

Yes

No

c. Requiring on sites above a certain size that serviced self-build plots should be made available as a proportion of the total number of dwellings permitted (with or without a minimum number being specified) on-site.

Yes

No n/a

d. Allowing a proportion (up to 100%) of self-build plots on exception sites (with controls over the resale value of the properties).

Yes

No

e. Identifying land in public ownership which would be sold only for self-build development.

Yes

No n/a

f. The use of Local Development Orders to facilitate self-build development.

Yes

No n/a

26. Are there any other approaches that could be used to meet the demand for self-build housing?

Yes n/a

No

If you have answered 'Yes' please outline the other approaches which the Council could pursue.

Ensuring the Vitality and Viability of Town Centres

27. Do you consider that the existing hierarchy and network of centres, as set out in LPP1, should be amended to include Stalbridge as a 'local centre'?

Yes n/a

No

Important Open or Wooded Areas (IOWAs)

28. Do you agree that those IOWAs, which are protected from development by other planning policies or legislation, should be deleted?

Yes

No n/a

The A350 Corridor

29. Do you consider that the land which is identified and safeguarded for the Shaftesbury Outer Bypass and the Charlton Marshall and Spetisbury Bypass should continue to be identified and safeguarded for such purposes?

Yes

No n/a

Comments

If you have any comments about the Issues and Options Document or the Sustainability Appraisal please set them out in the box below. If your comments are in relation to a specific question or chapter of the Issues and Options Document then please state which question or chapter your comments relate to.

Please see accompanying representation.

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary

Do you wish to be contacted about future consultations relating to the Local Plan Review?

Yes

No

Signature: James Podesta on behalf of Fergus McLaren Webster

Date: 22/01/2018

If submitting the form electronically, no signature is required.

When completed please send form to planningpolicy@north-dorset.gov.uk

22nd January 2018

Planning Policy (North Dorset)
North Dorset District Council
South Walks House
South Walks Road
Dorchester
DT1 1UZ

Dear Sir/Madam

NORTH DORSET LOCAL PLAN REVIEW: REPRESENTATION TO ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION

We write on behalf of our client, Fergus McLaren Webster, in respect of the current consultation on the North Dorset Local Plan Review. In this regard, we attach a completed response form and this letter as a response to the Issues and Options Consultation Document (CD) and Sustainability Appraisal.

Our representations can be summarised as follows:

- We support the proposals to increase the number of dwellings per annum from the figure set out in the adopted Local Plan (285dpa) to the figure proposed in the CD (366dpa) for the plan period.
- We consider that the larger villages should play a more important role in accommodating further development in the district where they are demonstrated to be sustainable.
- We broadly support the proposals to remove the nine-dwelling capacity for rural exception sites to allow for a greater contribution to housing supply, but strongly oppose any proposal to remove the opportunity for market housing to be included as part of a rural exception scheme for cross-subsidy purposes.

These comments are expanded in this letter.

PREVIOUS REPRESENTATIONS

Rural Solutions Ltd (RSL) made representations to North Dorset District Council's 'Call for Sites' consultation in October 2016, putting forward land to the east of Lower Common Road, Child Okeford, as potential housing allocations for two sites. To date, we understand that the council have still not assessed the sites in the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) process.

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

By way of context, it is important to note that the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1, which sets out the strategic planning policies for the district, was formally adopted in January 2016, although there are some 'saved' policies from the Local Plan (2003) that have not been replaced and are, therefore, still extant.

At the examination into the Local Plan on 17th December 2015¹, the inspector found it 'sound' on the basis that the council committed to an early review:

To ensure the plan remains relevant in the face of rapidly changing circumstances, the council will commence a review of the Plan by the end of March 2016 and intends to adopt the [new] Plan by the end of November 2018. The early review of the Plan will ensure that it remains appropriate for the district and continues to encourage and secure the development and infrastructure that the district requires. The review will be informed by an updated evidence base drawing on the strategic work underway for the Housing Market Area and Functional Economic Area and reflect the Duty to Cooperate. (Main Modification ref MM2 of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1).

Adopted Local Plan Policy 2 sets out that Stalbridge and eighteen larger villages have been identified as the focus for growth to meet local needs outside of the four main towns in the district. The Local Plan proposes to provide a minimum of 825 dwellings in the countryside (which includes Stalbridge and the villages) during the period 2011-2031.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was published in 2012, provides the overarching planning policies that guide development in England. The NPPF is confirmed as being a material consideration when determining applications for development.

At the heart of the NPPF is the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' which is seen as a golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking. This presumption in favour of sustainable development applies both to rural as well as urban areas. Paragraph 55 of the NPPF notes that housing in rural areas should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.

The Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides further guidance relating to the application of the NPPF, explaining that all settlements can play a role in supporting sustainable rural development and that blanket policies restricting housing in some settlements and preventing other settlements from expanding should be avoided unless they can be supported by robust evidence².

¹ https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/media/210831/North-Dorset-Local-Plan-Part-1---Inspectors-Final-Schedule-of-Main-Modifications-171215/pdf/FINAL_Schedule_of_Main_Modifications_following_Fact_Check.pdf

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rural-housing>

It also notes that 'a thriving rural community in a living, working countryside depends, in part, on retaining local services and community facilities such as schools, local shops, cultural venues, public houses and places of worship. Rural housing is essential to ensure viable use of these local facilities.'

It is clear, therefore, that the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development,' which applies to both to rural and urban areas, is an important consideration in the development of the new Local Plan.

REPRESENTATIONS TO ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

A number of questions are posed within the Issues and Options CD. This representation concentrates on those matters that are considered to be of direct relevance to the applicant and are set out below.

Do you consider that a housing need figure of 366 dwellings a year is an appropriate figure on which to plan for housing growth in North Dorset?

In this regard, the CD identifies that Policy 6 of the North Dorset Local Plan Part I (LPP1) seeks to deliver at least 5,700 net additional homes in North Dorset between 2011 and 2031 to deliver an average rate of about 285 dwellings a year, although the latest monitoring data confirms that there has been a shortfall of 424 dwellings over the first six years of the plan period and that the council are currently unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply (para.3.3).

The CD refers to the Eastern Dorset Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), published in 2015, identifies an objectively assessed need (OAN) for housing in North Dorset of 330 dwellings a year up to 2033. This was an increase on the current housing requirement of 285 dwellings a year as outlined in the adopted LPP1.

The CD also refers to the Government's '*planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals*' document, which was published in September 2017. That consultation document included proposals relating to the approach that local planning authorities should take to assessing housing need. Based upon a proposed standard methodology for assessing housing need for each local authority area, the housing need for North Dorset District would be 366 dwellings per year, which is in excess of the current requirements outlined in LPP1 and the OAN figure in the Eastern Dorset SHMA.

Against this planning policy background, the CD proposes a figure of providing 366 dwellings a year.

We strongly welcome this increase in the number of dwellings per year proposed for the district. Moreover, we consider that this figure should be a minimum target for the district over the plan period against the background of sustainable development.

Indeed, it is a well-established principle arising from the NPPF that there should be no cap on sustainable development. This principle is captured in an appeal decision by Inspector Peerless at Bishop's Itchington (appeal ref: APP/J3720/A/13/2202961 IR38), which notes:

In any event, sustainable development should not, I consider, be restricted solely because a projected allocation has been met if otherwise found acceptable.

Against the background of the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which applies to both to rural and urban areas, we therefore support an increase in the number of dwellings proposed in the CD.

The Villages:

Do you agree with the council's proposed approach in relation to future development at the eighteen larger villages within the district or do you think that the council should consider an alternative approach?

The CD identifies 'the larger villages' in the district as Bourton, Charlton Marshall, Child Okeford, East Stour, Fontmell Magna, Hazelbury Bryan, Iwerne Minster, Marnhull, Milborne St Andrew, Milton Abbas, Motcombe, Okeford Fitzpaine, Pimperne, Shillingstone, Stourpaine, Winterborne Kingston, Winterborne Stickland and Winterborne Whitechurch (our emphasis).

The current policy approach set out in the LPP1 states that Stalbridge and the eighteen larger villages have been identified as the focus for growth to meet local needs outside of the four main towns.

With regard to the countryside, Policy 2 details that outside the defined settlement boundaries of the four main towns, Stalbridge and the larger villages, the remainder of the district will be subject to countryside policies where development will be strictly controlled unless it is required to enable essential rural needs to be met. It also states that the focus at all the district's villages will be on meeting local (rather than strategic) needs.

With regard to development in the countryside (including Stalbridge and the villages), Policy 6 (Housing Distribution) in LPP1 states that at least 825 dwellings will be provided during the period 2011–2031 (our emphasis).

The approach proposed in the CD is currently not to change from the existing spatial strategy approach.

Given that the CD proposes a figure of 366 dwellings a year throughout the district, which is an increase of 81 dwellings per year (or an increase of 28%), we consider that at least a proportional increase in the number of dwellings within the villages and the countryside of 28% should be achieved. This would increase the previous figure

from at least 825 dwellings within the Stalbridge, the villages and the countryside to 1,059 dwellings over the plan period.

It has been noted above that the Government's PPG explains that all settlements can play a role in supporting sustainable rural development and 'a thriving rural community in a living, working countryside depends, in part, on retaining local services and community facilities such as schools, local shops, cultural venues, public houses and places of worship. Rural housing is essential to ensure viable use of these local facilities.'

In this context, we consider that the villages should play a more important role in accommodating further development in the district where they are demonstrated to be in sustainable locations.

Do you consider that the existing reference to nine dwellings in Policy 9 of the LPP1 should be removed from the policy to allow larger schemes to come forward where there is evidence of local need in excess of that which could be met by the provision of nine dwellings?

Policy 9 of the LPP1 sets out that rural exception affordable housing schemes will only be permitted within or adjoining the built-up area of the district's smaller villages and adjoining the settlement boundaries of the larger villages. It also states that rural exception affordable housing sites should be sought, in the first instance, on a site with a capacity for no more than nine dwellings in total, and allows for a small number of market homes which should not exceed one third of the total number of homes being proposed.

The CD proposes a more flexible approach by considering changes to:

- Remove the requirement that the capacity of rural exception sites should allow for no more than nine dwellings in total;
- Allow exception sites to come forward adjacent to the four main towns within the district; and
- Remove the potential for a small number of market homes on a rural exception site.

We broadly support the proposals to remove the nine-dwelling capacity for rural exception sites to allow for a greater contribution to housing supply.

However, we would strongly oppose the proposed change to remove the opportunity for an element of market housing to be included as part of a rural exception scheme, as this is likely to result in fewer proposals being brought forward due to viability concerns. An element of market housing within rural exception schemes should be retained in relevant policy, ensuring there is a cross-subsidy opportunity to enable affordable housing to be brought forward.

It is noted that the Sustainability Appraisal considers that, whilst the current approach of allowing cross subsidy of affordable housing sites would continue to produce affordable housing, the approach of preventing the cross subsidy of market housing is likely to produce more 100% affordable housing sites. It goes on to state that the approach of preventing the market housing on sites is therefore likely to deliver more affordable housing, and that it is considered unlikely that preventing cross subsidy would result in affordable housing sites not coming forward.

We would disagree with this approach, as we consider that developers are significantly more likely to provide affordable housing when it is viable to do so; increasing the viability of a scheme through the provision of market housing will increase the attractiveness of bringing such schemes forward.

CONCLUSIONS

These representations are made by Rural Solutions Ltd (RSL) on behalf of Fergus McLaren Webster. They are made in respect of the matters considered relevant to the applicant, supporting the proposed increase in the provision of dwellings over the plan period, supporting an increased role of the larger villages in accommodating further development and recommending that the cap on rural exception sites is removed, while retaining the opportunity to provide an element of market housing to encourage viable schemes being brought forward.

We trust that the foregoing representation is clear and would be very grateful for confirmation of receipt of this document.

Yours faithfully



James Podesta
Associate Director

