

# Examination of the Purbeck Local Plan (Local Plan)

## Guidance Note from the Inspector

### Introduction

1. I am Ms Beverley Doward BSc BTP MRTPI, the Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State under Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) to carry out the Examination of the Purbeck Local Plan (Local Plan).
2. The Programme Officer for the Examination is Miss Helen Nolan. She is an impartial officer for the purpose of the Examination, working under my direction. Miss Nolan can be contacted by telephone on **07773 615820**, by email at [plp.programmeofficer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:plp.programmeofficer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk) or by post at **Purbeck Local Plan, Dorset Council, Westport House, Worgret Road, Wareham, BH20 4PP**.
3. The Programme Officer's main tasks are to liaise with all parties to ensure the smooth running of the Examination, to ensure that all documents received are recorded and distributed, to maintain the Examination library (mainly in electronic form) and to assist me with procedural matters. She is your first point of contact. During the progress of the Examination the Programme Officer will be in regular contact with participants and will provide updated versions of the Programme should circumstances change; these will also be published on the examination website. Participants are encouraged to maintain regular contact with the Programme Officer leading up to their appearance at a Hearings session and, where possible, to view the regularly updated programme on the Examination website: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/purbeck/local-plan-review-purbeck/local-plan-review-purbeck.aspx>.
4. Participants who have concerns about ease of access in attending the Examination venue due to mobility issues, or have other concerns, should contact the Programme Officer as soon as possible so that full information can be provided. A location map of the venue can be viewed at: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/contact/westport-house-wareham.aspx>.
5. Any procedural questions or other matters that anyone wishes to raise with me prior to the Hearings should be made through the Programme Officer.

### The Purpose and Scope of the Examination

6. The purpose of the Examination of the Local Plan is to determine whether it satisfies legal requirements under the 2004 Act and associated regulations, whether the Council has complied with the duty to co-operate and whether the Plan is sound. To be sound the Local Plan must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.
7. The submission version of the Local Plan, which is the version that was published for consultation in October 2018, is the basis for the Examination although I note that the Council made some minor changes to the pre-submission version of the Plan before submitting it for examination such as to update the text to reflect the current stage of the Plan and to make some factual clarifications.
8. There are three possible outcomes to the Examination:

- the Council has complied with the duty to co-operate, the Plan satisfies legal requirements and it is sound;
  - the Council has not complied with one or more of the above requirements; or
  - the Council has complied with the duty to co-operate, but the Plan does not satisfy legal requirements and/or is not sound but could be made to be so by changes.
9. Following the close of the Hearings I will prepare a report for the Council. The report will deal only with broad issues and the focus will be on the soundness and legal compliance of the Plan, not on individual representations. It will be for the Council to make any arrangements for the publication of the report.
  10. At this stage there are only two means by which changes can be made to the Plan submitted for Examination:
    - (1) Main Modifications recommended by the Inspector; and
    - (2) Additional Modifications made by the Council on adoption.
  11. I can only recommend Main Modifications to rectify issues of soundness/legal compliance. Main Modifications are changes which, either alone or in combination with others, would materially alter the Plan or its policies. Any potential Main Modifications must be subject to consultation and in some cases further Sustainability Appraisal might also be needed.
  12. Additional Modifications are those changes which do not materially affect the policies in the Plan. They are made by the Council on adoption. The Council is accountable for any such changes and they do not fall within the scope of the Examination.
  13. The Council has identified a number of possible changes to the Plan (Document No: SD14). It has indicated that it considers that all these possible changes would be Main Modifications should I be minded to recommend that they are made. These will be considered as part of the examination. I would only be able to recommend Main Modifications if they are necessary to make the Plan sound.
  14. It is possible that further changes may be proposed during the Hearing sessions and I will ask the Council to keep an up to date schedule of all Main Modifications during the Examination.

### **The Programme for the Hearings and the Matters for Examination**

15. The Hearings part of the Examination will open at **10.00am** on **Tuesday 2 July 2019**. The Hearing sessions will be held on 2-5 July 2019 and 5-9 August at **Dorset Council offices, Westport House, Worgret Road, Wareham, BH20 4PP**. The Hearing sessions will focus on the Matters, Issues and Questions which I have identified, assisting me to produce a short, focused report. The Council's consultation statement and all representations received are available on its website.
16. My initial thoughts as to the Matters, Issues and Questions for discussion are detailed in the accompanying document. However, the precise Issues and Questions which need to be discussed at the Hearings may change, in the light of the submitted statements and any other evidence. Any comments on either the scope of my Matters, Issues and Questions or the accompanying draft programme should be sent to the Programme Officer by **20 May 2019**.

17. It is the responsibility of individual participants to check the progress of the Hearings either on the Examination website or with the Programme Officer, and to ensure that they are present at the right time.

### **Further statements based on Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions**

18. Any representor may submit a further statement in support of their original representation in advance of the Hearings. However, if a further statement is submitted it should address only the Matters, Issues and Questions that I have identified and should be limited to those questions directly related to the scope of the original representation. There is no need to re-state points already made but neither should wholly new arguments or important information, which ought to have been provided during the consultation, be put forward. A separate statement should be provided for each Matter addressed.
19. Oral and written representations carry equal weight, therefore there is no requirement to submit a further statement and you may rely on your original representation if you wish to do so.
20. All statements, whether electronic and/or in paper form, should be sent to the Programme Officer by **5pm on Friday 7 June 2019**. No new evidence or documents should be submitted at the Hearings or afterwards unless specifically requested.
21. It would be helpful to me if statements focused on:
  - What part of the Plan is unsound?
  - Which soundness test of those set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (and detailed in paragraph 6 above) does it fail?
  - Why does it fail (probably summarising the key parts of your original representation)?
  - How can the Plan be made sound?
  - What is the precise change/wording that you are seeking?
22. Appendix A sets out the requirements for the presentation of all statements. Statements should be concise and focused. Any not conforming to the format and deadline will be returned. Please note the **3,000 word limit** and the requirement for **3 paper copies** of statements.
23. Statements are also required from the Council, setting out its responses to the Matters, Issues and Questions, explaining why it considers the Local Plan to be sound in these respects. Whilst there is no necessity to deal directly and in detail with all representations, the Council may wish to respond to any representations that it feels are of particular significance or concern. Because of this the Council's statements are not subject to the 3,000 word limit; nevertheless they should still be concise. In addition, its statements should be submitted within the same timescale as others.

If before the start of the Hearing sessions I raise any additional questions of the Council, these and any answers will be placed on the Examination website. If, as a result of these exchanges it becomes clear that certain matters are no longer in contention, the Hearings programme may be revised and participants advised accordingly.

## **Statements of Common Ground**

24. Statements of Common Ground, agreed between two or more Hearing participants, will be welcome where they would help to identify points not in (or remaining in) dispute, and so enable the Hearing sessions to concentrate on the key issues that need further discussion. At the very latest, Statements of Common Ground should be submitted by the published deadline together with the statements to which they are relevant.

## **The Hearing sessions**

25. The Hearing sessions will start at 10.00am on the first day and at 9.30am on subsequent days. The Hearing sessions will continue through the day with breaks as appropriate. Afternoon sessions will normally begin at 2.00pm and finish at about 5.00pm. Please inform the Programme Officer if you have any time constraints. The format will be that of a structured, focussed discussion which I will lead. Most Hearings will have a number of participants and will follow a round table format.
26. Representations received in writing carry equal weight to any oral contributions made during the Hearing Sessions. For representors who do not wish to attend the Hearings or submit further written material, I can confirm that your original written comments will be considered by me throughout the Examination process. For any representors who have requested to participate in the Hearings part of the examination but no longer intend to do so, I ask that you inform the Programme Officer **by 5pm on 24 May 2019**.
27. It is not necessary to attend the Hearings if you agree with the Council and support the Local Plan because the Council will effectively be representing your views. Only those who have made representations relevant to making the Plan sound or legally compliant have the right to participate and speak but the Hearings will be held in public and open to all those who wish to come and observe.
28. Before the Hearing sessions I will have read all the Statements submitted (by the deadline) in response to my questions. I will assume that all other participants will have read the relevant submissions. Those participating may bring professional advocates with them, although there will be no formal presentation of evidence or cross-examination. There will be opportunities for respondents to ask questions of the Council and other respondents, and vice versa. I will lead these discussions.
29. Please keep the Programme Officer informed about who will be speaking at the sessions. Agendas setting out the order of topics for discussion will be circulated in advance of the Hearing sessions. Generally, only one seat will be available at the table for each participant, but a hot-seating arrangement will be acceptable. Where a number of participants share similar viewpoints, it will be helpful if a spokesperson is appointed.
30. Only those seeking changes who have made representations relevant to the discussion of an issue at a Hearing session, and have indicated that they want to participate, will be allowed to speak.

## **Dealing with sites at the Hearing sessions**

31. Part of my task is to examine the soundness of the sites that are allocated for development in the Local Plan.

32. Those who have submitted representations to the effect that a site is unsound will be able to put their views to me at the Hearing session, if they have made a request to do so. The Council will have the opportunity to respond.
33. Sites that have been put forward for inclusion in the Local Plan, but not selected for allocation by the Council, are known informally as "omission sites". It is not part of my role to examine the soundness of omission sites, and, subject to the legal right to be heard, such sites will not normally be discussed in detail at the Hearing sessions.
34. Should the situation arise that additional site(s) are needed, for example because one or more of the allocated sites is found to be unsound, I will look to the Council in the first instance to decide which alternative site(s) should be brought forward for examination.

**Site visits and Close of the examination**

35. Insofar as I consider it necessary to my assessment of the soundness of the Plan I shall visit sites and areas referred to in the representations before, during or after the Hearing sessions. I will carry out site visits unaccompanied, except for any sites that can only be viewed adequately from private land, when I will need to be accompanied by representatives of the landowner and the Council. On any such accompanied site visits I will not hear additional evidence or arguments over the merits of the sites.
36. The Examination will remain open until my report has been submitted to the Council. However, once the Hearings are completed, no further information from any party can be given to me unless specifically requested.

*Beverley Doward*

INSPECTOR

10 May 2019

## Appendix A – Format for Statements

- A1. Statements should be no longer than is necessary to deal with the subject matter, and in any event must contain no more than **3,000 words** per matter. This limit will be strictly applied. Statements should address the issues and questions relevant to the content of your original representation. Any plans, diagrams or statistical tables should be attached as Appendices (see below).
- A2. All submissions should be succinct, whether main Statements or Appendices. They should avoid unnecessary detail and repetition of the original representation and should not duplicate or contain extracts from any publication already before the Examination, such as the evidence base and nationally available Government guidance, which may be among the Examination Documents on the Examination website – a paragraph or page reference will suffice. It is the quality of the reasoning that carries weight, not the bulk of the documents.
- A3. Electronic submission of statements is encouraged. This should be in Word or PDF format and should be emailed to the Programme Officer for the Examination website. In addition, **3 (three) paper copies** of statements are required.
- A4. Statements should be prepared on A4 sized paper, printed on both sides and **not bound** but just stapled. All written submissions should be **paginated** and have a **contents page**. Any photographs should be submitted in A4 format and should be clearly labelled and annotated.
- A5. Appendices should also have a contents page and be paginated throughout. Whilst the word limit does not include text in appendices, they should respect the aim of succinctness. Any supporting material should be limited to that which is essential and not contain lengthy extracts from any publication that is already before the Examination.
- A6. Separate statements should be provided for each Matter addressed, with the relevant Issue and Question numbers clearly identified.
- A7. All participants should adhere to the timetable for submitting Statements. Late submissions and additional material are unlikely to be accepted on the day of the relevant Hearing session since this can cause disruption and result in unfairness and might result in an adjournment of the Hearing. If material is not received by the deadlines detailed below, it will be assumed that you are relying on your original representations.
- A8. All Statements and any supporting material should be received by the Programme Officer by **5pm on Friday 7 June 2019**. This deadline refers to the receipt of both paper and electronic copies of statements. It is not sufficient to send an electronic copy by the deadline, to be followed by paper copies at a later time.