

Purbeck District Council Core Strategy Examination in Public
Hearing statement on behalf of Andrew Baggs - Respondent Reference no – 6404

Matter 14: Central Purbeck (Policy CEN)

Issue 14.4

The Core Strategy does not provide evidence that the proposed SANG land for the Worgret Road Development under Policy CEN is sufficient in size as no boundaries are specified, only a map showing the broad locations is provided. The actual size of the two sites is not given therefore it is not known if they will be large enough to attract visitors in their own right and prevent them moving on to other nearby locations such as the heaths instead. One large site would provide a much more satisfactory longer walk for recreation.

The proposed SANGs are not appropriate in terms of location because of the distance residents will have to travel to reach them. The proposed development is located adjacent to Wareham Common – 125 acres of CROW access land which comprises SSSI meadows and the River Piddle within 400 metres of the site and direct footpath links to Wareham Forest and Worgret Heath.

This area of land is already heavily used by the public for recreational purposes and residents will prefer to access this location rather than travel to the proposed SANG sites which are located almost 2 kilometres away. This will only increase the amount of visitor pressure on the Common, the forest and the heath as visitors continue their walks directly from the site to these locations, therefore the SANG land will not fulfill the requirement to act as an interceptor site.

The location of the SANG sites are no closer to Worgret Road than the various protected heaths in the district. If they are not large enough or interesting enough in terms of variety of habitat and views to rival the heath land sites for recreation they will not get used. People will continue to visit the sites that are already well known and are just as easily accessible by car.

The HRA¹ stresses the importance of mitigation measures in terms of SANG provision to reduce pressure on the heaths in the district but makes no reference to the pressure that the Worgret Road Development will have in terms of the increased detrimental urban effects on Wareham Common as listed in the HRA. The Core Strategy does not provide for a realistic and attractive alternative recreational area for the site to compete with Wareham Common because the proposed SANG is not of a **“sufficient size, character and quality or location”** to be more attractive to the residents.

¹ Habitats Regulations Assessment SD6 (2010) and SD16 2011)

Wareham Common is privately owned and managed with no input from the town or district council to assist with any public access issues such as litter, fly tipping, dog control and illegal use of the access track and footpaths by vehicles and cyclists. The management of the grazing is governed by SSSI and Countryside Stewardship agreements and overseen by myself as Hayward but a considerable increase in public use of the land will also require management. Public lack of knowledge of the Common boundary means many residents are unaware of the limits of the CROW access land and often walk on the private farmland adjacent to the Common off the line of the footpath, in particular along the river banks. The Worgret Road Development Brief² makes no reference to implications of the development on the Common despite referring to the impact of the site on the residents of Worgret Road and therefore no mitigation measures are proposed in the brief.

The Core Strategy is unsound in relation to issue 14.4 and fails to comply with the national policy in section 11 of the NPPF, because it does not provide sufficient evidence that the proposed SANGs will meet the criteria required in the HRA for mitigation avoidance measures for the heaths or Wareham Common and so cannot be fully implemented.

² CD 152 Worgret road, Wareham Development Brief Appendix 3 (Adopted 13/3/12)