

Inspector's Note to the Council (post hearings)

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2015

It has been brought to my attention that the Eastern Dorset 2015 SHMA is to be published soon. I understand that it concludes that the objectively assessed need for North Dorset is 330 dwellings a year – as opposed to the 285 figure on which the housing policies of LP1 are based.

I have not seen or tested any of the evidence which informs the revised SHMA but nor am I aware of any reasons why I should question its conclusions.

Although there is a degree of flexibility embedded in the policies of LP1 (in terms of housing numbers and provision) and the Council is committed to an early review of the local plan, I nevertheless consider that the requirement for an additional 45 dwellings a year is significant.

I therefore ask the Council to carefully consider the implications of this new evidence and let me know, via the Programme Officer, as soon as possible how it wishes to proceed.

For example, the Council may wish to reconsider LP1 in the light of these new figures, identify where to locate the additional housing (including updating the Sustainability Appraisal) and engage in full appropriate public consultation before revising the plan. Alternatively it may wish to re-emphasise in writing its commitment to an early review of the plan which would take the new figures into account. This should include confirmation of specific dates by which the review would commence and be completed and clearly these dates should be as soon as is reasonably possible. If the Council follow the latter route, I would take this into account in completing my Report.

David Hogger

Inspector

13th November 2015