

Official

Mrs Leani Haim,
Assistant Town Clerk to Blandford Forum
Town Council,
Town Clerks Office
Church Lane
Blandford Forum.
DT11 7AD

Economy, Planning and Transport

County Hall
Colliton Park
Dorchester
DT1 1XJ

Telephone:

Minicom:

We welcome calls via text Relay

Email:

DX: DX 8716 Dorchester

Website: www.dorsetforyou.com

Date: 06.11.2015

Ask for: Gill Smith

My ref:

Your ref:

Dear Mrs Haim,

Blandford + Draft Neighbourhood Plan consultation

Thank you for consulting Dorset County Council on the Draft Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan and for allowing us an extension of time to respond. I have consulted colleagues around the Council and we would offer the following comments which we hope you will find useful. Please note these are officer comments and should not prejudice any future views of members of the Council.

Waste Planning comments:

It is noted that land to the north of Blandford Forum is proposed as an area for development comprising employment land, self-build housing, public open space and larger allotments. It is indicated that a recycling centre could also be located here. It should be noted that Neighbourhood Plans cannot undertake minerals and waste planning however your support for the provision of a new household recycling centre for the town is welcomed.

The Town Council is aware that Dorset County Council, together with Bournemouth and Poole Councils, is currently preparing a new Waste Plan to provide for waste management facilities to serve the county. It has been identified that a new waste management centre is required in Blandford. We recently consulted on a Draft Waste Plan that included a series of site options that could meet this need. This included a site named 'Land south of Sunrise Business Park' (ref WP ND03 in the Draft Waste Plan), which is within the land north of Blandford Forum area referred to above. We are now undertaking further assessment and reviewing the outcomes of the consultation to decide upon a preferred site for the development of a waste management centre. The preferred site will be subject to further consultation when the Pre-Submission Draft of the Waste Plan is published in Summer next year and will ultimately be allocated in the new Waste Plan. The Blandford + group should keep up to date with the progress of the Waste Plan and will need to take account of its site allocations. Should the site option to the south of Sunrise Business Park (ND03) be preferred, the Neighbourhood Plan will need to reflect this.

It should be noted that, should this site option be taken forward in the Waste Plan, it would be for the provision of a household recycling centre with a waste transfer facility (a 'waste

management centre'), rather than for a household recycling centre alone. Such uses are considered compatible with neighbouring employment land. However, the County Council would resist residential development in close proximity to a waste transfer facility if it would prejudice the operation of the facility, in line with its safeguarding policies.

Minerals Planning comments:

The Neighbourhood Plan group should consider the contents of the Minerals Strategy 2014 and in particular the issue of minerals safeguarding. It should be noted that there is an area of safeguarded minerals around the Stour as it passes through the proposed Neighbourhood Plan area - perhaps unlikely to be built on, but the draft Neighbourhood Plan should refer to it. A map is attached and further information can be supplied if required.

Transport Planning comments:

DCC Transport Planning officers welcome the opportunity to comment on the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan and are pleased to see that it recognises the need for sustainable transport, connectivity and self-containment. The plan makes careful consideration of how opportunities for sustainable transport can be maximised.

However, we would urge the Neighbourhood Plan Group to assess the available evidence particularly that contained within the "*North and North East Dorset Transport Study 2010*". This study was produced by Buro Happold on behalf of Dorset County Council, for the purpose of informing the development plan. This ranked potential development sites in order according to the sustainability of their likely transport impacts. It found that all things considered, sites at Blandford St Mary were more sustainable than sites to the North and East of the Blandford bypass.¹

The B+ NP recognises that the emerging North Dorset Local Plan proposes to direct growth to the southern and western edges of Blandford St Mary. Whilst this strategy has not yet been formally ratified, the Plan is at an advanced stage in the process. It is therefore likely that the sites now being considered in the NP should provide additional rather than alternative growth opportunities which may come on stream later in the Plan period.

The draft NP rightly focuses on what can be done to integrate its proposed sites into the fabric of the town and the catchment of its centre by way of public transport connections. However the proposal to use shuttle buses which are likely to require ongoing subsidy may prove problematic in the longer term. When planning for climate change and health, locations which support active travel by walking or cycling are generally preferred. DCC transport planning officers would welcome the opportunity to work with the NP group on any future master plan for the sites, should they be taken forward, to help address the best means of providing sustainable travel links.

Flood Risk Management comments:

We are pleased to see the reference made to relevant NDDC and NPPF policies within item 5 of the SA/SEA Appraisal Framework (SO6 & SO10 a/b) (page 6) and para3.3 of the Land Use Planning Policies (page 10) sections, respectively.

Equally, we are encouraged by the inclusion of item viii of Policy 2, which highlights the need for flood risk / surface water management to be considered in relation to the development proposal for land north-east of the town centre. **However, given the strategic nature / major status of other potential development sites it would be appropriate to include a similar reference within corresponding Policies, namely 3, 4 & 5.**

We note and concur with item d of Policies 12 and 13, which advocates the use and promotion of SuDS techniques to achieve necessary surface water management, namely the use of permeable surfaces.

Dorset Property/Education

We note that Policy 10 Local Green Spaces lists a number of green areas/open spaces to assess as potential Local Green Spaces. The list includes a number of sites belonging to

¹Table 5—16 Weighted accessibility assessment for residential sites in Blandford Forum, North and North East Dorset Transport Study 2010, pp70-71

Dorset County Council, such as Preetz Way, The Milldown, and several school playing fields.

We note that Policy 10 states *“Proposals for development in a Local Green Space will be resisted, unless they are ancillary to the use of the land for a public recreational purpose or are required for a statutory utility infrastructure purpose.”*

We seek confirmation that under the policy the County Council would be able to

- undertake ancillary development that would enhance or improve the recreational or educational facility /site; and
- if necessary seek alternative use on the land if a facility/site became surplus to requirements, subject to there being sufficient provision of the open space/ recreation use elsewhere in the town and providing all statutory requirements have been met.

We are seeking this assurance as we are concerned that the policy should not give rise to a conflict with s123 of the Local Government Act 1972, which could in the future prevent the Council disposing of assets at best value.

Thank you again for allowing an extension of time for me to compile this response. If you require any further clarification on individual comments made, please do not hesitate to ask.

Yours sincerely,

Gill Smith

Senior Planning Officer

Enc Blandford Forum Mineral Safeguarding Plan.