

Response to Main Issues for Examination from West Parley Parish Council

We wish to attend the examination to respond orally to the issues listed below. James Stacey, BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI, Director at Tetlow King Planning will represent the Parish Council at examination. Cllr. Richard Heaslip CB (WPPC) will also participate in the debate where appropriate.

Inspector's Questions

- 1 Do they reflect an objective assessment of alternatives?
- 2 Is the CS supported by a robust IDP which: sets out programmes and timescales for delivery, linked to the housing trajectory and timing of other development which is key to the strategy, identifies agency/s responsible for bringing infrastructure forward, identifies funding streams, risks to delivery and contingencies?
- 4 Is the proposed quantum of housing development (KS3) justified by the evidence?
- 8 Is the need for housing to be located outside the urban areas/ in the green belt justified by the SHLAA and other evidence?
- 9 Is the need for employment land to be located on greenfield/ green belt land justified by the evidence?

Summary of Objections

	1	2	4	8	9
Test of Soundness	Not justified by the evidence base.	Not effective	Not justified by evidence base.	Not effective .	Not Justified by evidence.
Suggested Modification	Council undertake Green Belt Review	Not applicable	Publish housing figures justification statement	Council undertake Green Belt Review	Not applicable

Matter 1: Overall Strategy – Key Issues/ Settlement Hierarchy/ Quantum and Location of Development / Green Belt / Flood Risk

Question 1: Do they reflect an objective assessment of alternatives?

- 1.1 West Parley Parish Council (WPPC) has consistently raised concerns about the process the Councils have used to define the Core Strategy policies. The Councils should have set out clearly to the public how alternatives were developed and evaluated to produce a sound plan. As the Councils selected Core Strategy policies, such as the location of development and the strategic allocations, it should have been clear to the public how these ideas were developed.
- 1.2 A key concern of WPPC has been the lack of clarity on the development of alternatives throughout the Core Strategy process. The Parish Council's concerns at each stage of the consultation process are outlined below and are further discussed in a letter from the Parish Council contained in appendix 2.

Issues and Options Document 2008

- 1.3 The first round of consultation on the joint Core Strategy used the RSS Areas of Search to define broad locations for development. No sites were actually allocated and no housing numbers were suggested. Given that no alternatives were suggested in this document the community had no opportunity to consider the relative merits of development sites. The Council relied on evidence prepared for the South-East Dorset area (OD21) and a regional report assessing Green Belt value (OD19). This evidence base was prepared without any community engagement and did not examine the value of Green Belt land at the local level. WPPC consider that a strategic Green Belt review should have been conducted at this time to enable a clearer understanding of the alternative sites available for development and their respective merits. Even at this early stage of the process the Core Strategy was not using appropriate evidence.

Options for Consideration 2010

- 1.4 The options for consideration stage provided the first definition of the site allocations, including sites and housing numbers. The document presented sites for development without explaining how these had been narrowed down from the RSS Areas of Search. The proposed sites were not judged against reasonable alternatives.
- 1.5 Three alternatives were presented for consultation in the Green Belt in West Parley: FWP3 210 homes west of Ridgeway, FWP4 100 homes, foodstore and open space East of New Road and FWP5 400 homes, foodstore and open space at land to East of New Road.
- 1.6 The Council stated that option FWP5 was a 'non-preferred option', which gave the community the strong impression that this alternative would not be progressed. The Parish Council objected to this option during the consultation although they accepted

option FWP4 in principle. These options did not include the provision of link roads to achieve the now suggested junction improvements.

Pre-Submission Draft Core Strategy April 2012

- 1.7 Two policies for West Parley were progressed by the Council at the Pre-Submission draft stage. FWP7 replaced FWP3 to allocate 200 homes on land to the West of Ridgeway and FWP6 replaced the non-preferred option FWP5 to allocate 320 homes, a foodstore and open space on land to the East of New Road.
- 1.8 The policies also introduce two link roads to relieve traffic congestion at the Parley Cross junction. Option FWP4 (100 homes), which the Parish Council supported, was removed from the Pre-Submission consultation.
- 1.9 A number of background documents were published prior to the publication of the Pre-Submission draft to support the policies within the plan. To justify the strategic allocations the Council's consultants produced two masterplan reports, ED62 and ED64, which provide an analysis of the effects of the strategic development. Local residents specifically requested to be involved in the masterplanning process but were refused the opportunity.
- 1.10 One notable omission from both masterplan reports (ED62 and ED64), especially ED64 published in January 2012, are the link roads. These reports do not provide any details of the location of these roads or any description of the process taken by the Councils to consider the link roads.
- 1.11 The Council published the Ferndown and West Parley Proposals Background Paper (SD15.8) in February 2012 just prior to the publication of the Pre-Submission Draft in April 2012. This document states on page 37 that the non-preferred option would be progressed because a smaller number of houses would jeopardise the viability of the whole development including the link roads.
- 1.12 The link roads are a key feature of the urban design of the strategic allocations at West Parley. However the Council's evidence does not show how these roads were developed through the planning process, especially any consideration of alternatives. From the published documents E64 and SD15.8, the link roads policy appears to have been formulated between January 2012 and February 2012, suggesting that the roads are neither **positively prepared** nor **justified**.
- 1.13 The Parish Council made specific representations to the Council objecting to the lack of consultation that had taken place on the link roads and the community benefits of the scheme.

Schedule of Proposed Changes to the Core Strategy Pre-Submission Draft November 2012

- 1.14 The Council published ED67 to provide justification for the link roads previously consulted upon in the Pre-Submission Draft. The report does not consider alternatives for traffic alleviation at Parley Cross, instead presenting only one “complete” option for junction improvements i.e. that both FWP6 and FWP7 are required as a single entity. We make significant further representations on this issue in our response to matter 5 (page 4, 5/359553). The principle concern is that if only 50% of the housing on each allocation is constructed this will negate the requirement for the whole link road completion. Due to the excessive costs of the links road, this could seriously jeopardise the entire raison d’être to for allocation which includes the technically flawed linked roads.

Consideration of Alternatives to Protect Heritage Assets

- 1.15 The Councils have failed to consider the effect of strategic development on significant heritage assets within the districts or to justify the least damaging quantum of development at strategic sites by assessing alternatives. Land adjacent to Dudsbury Rings Scheduled Ancient Monument has been proposed for a strategic housing allocation since 2010. In their consultation response to the Core Strategy dated 20 December 2012, English Heritage stated that the Councils should produce a Heritage Landscape Assessment to consider alternatives for the optimum level of development to the site to protect the SAM. East Dorset District Council distributed a Historic Landscape Assessment on the 16 August 2013, which does not consider alternative methods of developing the site it only attempts to justify the numbers already proposed. Policy FWP7 is not **justified** as it was not formulated from a robust evidence base which tested the alternative development options to evaluate the proposal with the least impact on a nationally recognised heritage asset.

Summary

- 1.16 The strategic allocations for housing (and the associated strategic transport improvements) do not demonstrate an adequate assessment of alternatives. Given that all the large sites are within the Green Belt a strategic review should have taken place at district level to assess the development potential of sites. The Councils should also have considered alternatives to reduce the impact on nationally recognised heritage assets. This would have enabled the community to follow the Council’s reasoning at an early stage of the Core Strategy process. Once sites were chosen, the Councils failed adequately to assess the alternative features for the sites and excluded the community from the process. WPPC consider that the plan is unsound as it is not **justified** by a full assessment of the alternatives with the early engagement of the community.

Suggested Modification

- 1.17 We are unable to suggest a proposed modification. The Plan should be either withdrawn or postponed until a strategic review has taken place to inform the entire plan-making process. We suggest that a strategic Green Belt review is commissioned across the two districts in order to establish the most suitable areas for development. This should be conducted with the input of local communities in order to assess the local value of Green Belt land.

Question 2: Is the CS supported by a robust IDP which: sets out programmes and timescales for delivery, linked to the housing trajectory and timing of other development which is key to the strategy, identifies agency/s responsible for bringing infrastructure forward, identifies funding streams, risks to delivery and contingencies?

- 1.18 WPPC is concerned that the IDP (SD11) does not provide a robust framework for the delivery of infrastructure. As earlier identified in the Parish Council's comments during the November 2012 consultation there are some items of infrastructure which have not been justified by the plan.
- 1.19 The Parish Council's main concern is that the IDP will not effectively support the improvements to Parley Cross. The Councils' evidence does not provide an accurate estimation of the costs of the link road development or a timescale for the road works to be delivered.
- 1.20 The draft IDP (SD11) identifies the Parley Cross junction improvements as a major scheme and estimates the cost of the work at £5.5million (page 38). Further improvement of key junctions, including Parley Cross, is listed on page 41 and the cost of these improvements is estimated at £8.8 million. The Councils have not provided an overall figure for the cost of improvements to Parley Cross and have not used this figure in their viability calculations. Hence there is no certainty to the comments contained with the Councils Risk assessment (FD5).
- 1.21 The supporting viability work to the East Dorset strategic allocations (ED66) includes a £2million distributor road contribution for each of the West Parley allocations. This falls short of the £5.5million suggested cost for the road improvements and does not take into account the additional share of the £8.8million total for the three junctions, which Dorset County Council are clear that developers will fund (see appended email from Katherine Tunks). WPPC are concerned that this disparity in the costs will result in the road improvements not being deliverable. Policies FWP 6 and FWP 7 are clear that the link roads must be provided before 50% of the housing allocation is completed. Developers would, however, be able to deliver up to 1 dwelling less than 50% of the total allocation without providing the road infrastructure. This would result in a significant number of additional car movements being added to an already congested

junction. Further comments on this is provided in response to Matter 5 concerning deliverability of FWP6 and FWP7.

- 1.22 The Councils have listed the all improvements as Essential Strategic Infrastructure but the timescale for the completion of junction improvements is 2018 to 2022. The delivery agencies are expected to be Dorset County Council and Developer Contributions. WPPC notes from FD5 that the developer has no set delivery timescale for the site at FWP7 except that housing will be brought forward within the plan period. FD5 contains the possibility that FWP6 may be developed very late in the plan period. Given that the plan period runs to 2028 there is no certainty that this essential strategic infrastructure will be provided within the medium term (as set out in policy KS10).
- 1.23 Improvements to the B3073 Chapel Gate to Parley Cross road section are also listed within the IDP. The costs associated with these improvements have not been confirmed within the IDP, where the delivery agencies are suggested to be central Government funding, Dorset County Council and developer contributions.
- 1.24 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan also identifies the A31 Trunk Road dualling from Ameysford to Merley as 'Essential Strategic Infrastructure'. ED49, the Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan 3 (14 July 2012) concludes in Section 12 para 12.4.3 that:

"the dualling of the A31 from Ameysford is considered an essential pre-requisite to the implementation of urban extensions proposed for East Dorset".
- 1.25 The projected cost was put at £143 million and the delivery of funding is not yet positively identified. WPPC are concerned that the Infrastructure Delivery Plan will not effectively deliver the dualling of the A31 as the document provides no certainty as regard to the funding. Without this improvement to the strategic road network WPPC considers that that the proposed urban extensions are not justified.

Suggested Modification

- 1.26 WPPC are concerned that the IDP does not provide a robust framework for the delivery of the road improvements at West Parley. Of particular concern is the lack of a combined figure for the cost of the road improvements at West Parley, given the expectation that developers will have to contribute all of the funding for this infrastructure. In order for the plan to be robust and deliverable the developer contributions should be shown to be deliverable. We suggest the Councils calculate the full cost burden to be borne by developers, and the total amount should then be included in the Council's viability study.

Question 4: Is the proposed quantum of housing development (KS3) justified by the evidence?

- 1.27 WPPC previously raised concerns regarding the evidence base which supports the housing figures. The Councils have not justified how either the 2008 SHMA or the 2012 update justifies the quantum of housing proposed. The Parish Council would expect to see a position paper explaining the Councils' reasoning for the housing numbers based on the evidence produced.

Suggested Modification

- 1.28 We suggest the Councils publish a further statement to justify their housing target based on the previously published SHMA evidence.

Question 8: Is the need for housing to be located outside the urban areas/ in the Green Belt justified by the SHLAA and other evidence?

- 1.29 WPPC find it difficult to follow the Councils' justification for allocating land for housing in the Green Belt without a strategic review of Green Belt land. Whilst the Council has conducted extensive masterplanning exercises in 2010 and 2012 these do not provide the strategic explanation for the necessity of homes in the Green Belt. As mentioned previously in response to question one of issue one WPPC considers that a district-wide Green Belt review should have taken place to objectively assess the development potential of Green Belt land. Without this review the Parish Council considers that the strategic allocations are unjustified and the policy unsound.

Suggested Modification

- 1.30 We are unable to suggest a proposed modification. The Plan should be either withdrawn or postponed until a strategic review has taken place to inform the plan-making process. We suggest that a strategic Green Belt review is commissioned across the two districts in order to establish the most suitable areas for development. This should be conducted with the input of local communities in order to assess the local value of Green Belt land.

Question 9: Is the need for employment land to be located on greenfield/ green belt land justified by the evidence?

- 1.31 A district-wide Green Belt review should have taken place to objectively assess the development potential of all Green Belt land allocations and the most appropriate future use. Without this review the Parish Council considers that the strategic allocations are unjustified and the policy unsound.

Suggested Modification

- 1.32 We are unable to suggest a proposed modification. The Plan should be either withdrawn or postponed until a strategic review has taken place to inform the plan-making process. We suggest that a strategic Green Belt review is commissioned across the two districts in order to establish the most suitable areas for development. This should be conducted with the input of local communities in order to assess the local value of Greenfield land.

APPENDICES

**APPENDIX 1: EMAIL FROM KATHERINE
TUNKS, DORSET COUNTY
COUNCIL TRANSPORT
PLANNING**

**APPENDIX 2: STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT LETTER
DATED AUGUST 2013**

APPENDIX 1

**EMAIL FROM KATHERINE TUNKS, DORSET
COUNTY COUNCIL TRANSPORT PLANNING**

From: Tunks, Katherine
Sent: 06 August 2013 16:12
To: Smith, Ian M.
Cc: Gobbett, Don M.; Willis, Paul D.; Sayers, Wayne
Subject: RE: Question re road planning

Dear Mr Smith,

Thank you for your email to my Group Manager Paul Willis who is away on leave currently. I have tried ringing you and left a message to say I would email, so I hope the following is helpful.

General junction improvements

The "Improvement to key junctions" entry in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan refers to a selection of junctions that need improvement in the near future in the East Dorset area. The improvements might be for safety, to improve facilities for cyclists and pedestrians or vehicle capacity. This list of 3 junctions is not exhaustive and we have left it fairly flexible so that if other junctions need improvement further on into the plan period then money can also be spent on those. At this early stage the costs provided are also indicative as we will only know the actual costs once designs have been drawn up. Parley Cross is listed here as improvements are needed now even without the proposed development in close proximity. If the proposed development goes ahead then a different scheme will be delivered here (please see the third paragraph below).

In terms of the split of funding between DCC and developers this is also flexible at this early stage of the process. If development is deemed to have a significant impact on a junction then our group will work with that developer to determine what is necessary for the development to proceed. DCC is allocated government funding through the Local Transport Plan (LTP) process on an annual basis and prioritises which schemes it spends money on by assessing how improvements contribute towards a set criteria. As well as paying outright for transport schemes this money can also be combined with developer contributions to deliver a scheme. The balance of funds is worked out on the basis of development impact and this will be calculated through the Transport Assessment process which accompanies a planning application.

Development related Parley Cross improvements

The "B3073 Parley Cross junction improvements" is also listed three pages further back in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. **This scheme relates to the development proposed in the Core Strategy and includes the 2 development related link roads and is estimated to cost approx. £5.5M. The roads will serve the development sites as well as helping to remove traffic from the Parley Cross junction. The developers of the eastern site will be expected to provide the eastern link road and a contribution towards the Parley Cross junction improvement. The developers of the site to the west of Parley Cross will provide the western link road and a contribution towards the Parley Cross junction improvement. The roads will be provided at the same time as the development and will have to be in place before the Parley Cross junction improvements.** Funds collected through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) could also be used to pay towards the Parley Cross junction improvements. The developers are already aware of our expectations and the detail will be worked out through the planning application process.

I hope this answers your questions.

Regards

Kate

Kate Tunks
Transport Planning
Dorset County Council

01305 228534
07920503447

From: Smith, Ian M.
Sent: 05 August 2013 15:12
To: Willis, Paul D.
Subject: Question re road planning

Paul,

I understand that you are involved in the forward planning of roads & highways. I am hoping you may be able to answer a question relating to the East Dorset Core Strategy pre-submission document (<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/404577>) relating to West Parley. In the Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan on page 26 there is reference to 'Improvement of Key Junctions including Parley Cross, Longham mini roundabouts and Penny's Hill'. It says that there is a cost of £8.8M for these improvements. It indicates that the delivery agency is DCC/developer contributions. The question I want to answer for West Parley residents is with regard to the two new link roads proposed for the area. Are they included in these costs and if so what is the split between DCC & the developer? If the costs are not included in the £8.8M would DCC be involved in part funding and if so at what cost and when or would the developer fully bear the costs? Also when would such a decision be made as to who is bearing the costs for the link roads? These new link roads are seen as crucial to the overall development proposed so it is a subject of local interest.
Regards, Cllr Ian Smith.

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APPENDIX 2

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT LETTER DATED AUGUST 2013



c/o Mrs J Neale, Programme Officer
Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy - Local Plan Examination in Public
Christchurch Borough Council
The Priory Room
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Christchurch
Dorset
BH23 1AZ

August 2013

Dear Mrs Turner,

RE: Non- compliance with Statement of Community Involvement (S.C.I.) Adopted by East Dorset District Council August 2006

It is the position of the West Parley Parish Council that the East Dorset District Council's Core Strategy is UNSOUND, in that the District Council did not comply with its own policy on Community Involvement.

Paragraph 155 of the NPPF calls for "early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with a wide section of the community" This has not been achieved as the Council have not adhered to its own Statement of Community Involvement.

Consultation of the public on planning policies is a statutory part of the planning policy process. The definition of a lawful public consultation has been defined by Lord Woolf in his decision, Regina v North and East Devon Health Authority, 16 July 1999.

"A lawful consultation must (a) take place at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage, (b) give reasons for any proposal so as to permit intelligent consideration and response, (c) give adequate time for consideration and response and (d) give the product of the consultation conscientious consideration"

R v North and East Devon Health Authority [2001] QB 213 (CA) page no (8)

Subsequently, the definition was applied to consultation in the planning policy process in the case of R (on the application of Abdul Wakil (t/a) Orya Textiles) v Hammersmith and Fulham LBC and Orion Shepherd's Bush Ltd.

Para 2.3 of the S.C.I. lists the key features of effective community involvements:

“Focus on priorities identified by the community.”

This would have to include a focus on the Parish Plan, and meetings with the Parish Council.

When West Parley’s Parish Plan was published in November 2011 it was not formally acknowledged or responded to. There is no record of the District Council meeting with the Parish Council to discuss the developing plans and the community’s priorities between October 2010 and the final publication of the Changes to the Plan in November 2012.

“Greater transparency.”

Throughout the period under discussion the W.P. community, through the residents association, sought to meet with District Council planners to gain some familiarisation with the ongoing progress of their Broadway Malyan masterplan work. In Christchurch the residents associations were granted this facility, gained useful knowledge, and imparted their ideas. In East Dorset this request was consistently refused (see attached emails} Reference to this was made in the House of Commons by Annette Brooke the MP for Mid Dorset and North Poole (which includes the Wimborne area) who said on 20 June 2010:

“A district council in my constituency is obviously drawing up plans for its development framework busily behind closed doors and is, almost certainly, reducing the impact on the green belt but not protecting it fully.”

“Consensus and ownership of the process.”

In no sense can this be said to be achieved or even seriously attempted. West Parley opinion, expressed both formally in surveys and informally, has always been opposed to the scale of housing (a 32% increase in the housing stock) and the loss of two key gap green belt fields. Far from ownership of the process, what was experienced was old fashioned top down planning.

“Influencing site specific proposals.”

No realistic chance was offered to do this during the formulation of the 3 stages of the proposals.

Paragraph 2.4 of the S.C.I. sets out the document’s main principles.

“Involving the community early in the process to resolve conflicts – “Front Loading””

The community was involved, but only **after** each of the three stages of the plans – options, plans, changes – were published. Far from conflicts being resolved, there was large scale public opposition in the form of protest meetings and marches. A good example of this was the publication of the Core Strategy Pre Submission Consultation in April 2012. For West Parley this differed significantly from the 2010 Options paper. New proposals for the village included: firstly, whole new road system involving two new Link Roads through the planned housing sites. Secondly, a change from 100 homes to the hitherto “non preferred” FWP6 option of 320. Finally, the addition of a new 3000 sq mtr supermarket. Far from the community having been involved in these proposals, they came as a complete surprise.

“Seeking by community engagement to establish a shared vision.” Self evidently not achieved, and never seriously attempted. What the community saw was an exercise in top down planning, a seamless transition from the Regional Spatial Strategy’s “Areas of Search” to the Core Strategy plans for FWP6 and FWP7.

“Methods of Engagement should encourage comprehensive community engagement.” Communities were sometimes engaged, but it could hardly be said to comprehensive. There were some mock planning exercises to establish the principles of town planning, and a 2008 Ferndown/West Parley focus group was held where landowners representatives outnumbered residents by 2 to 1.(see attachment}

“Feedback should be provided on decisions.”

This, after the event, was adequately accomplished. The District Council gave sufficient time for the public to respond to the Options, the Plans, and the Changes. The response mechanisms were (perhaps necessarily) pro forma, legalistic, had to be cross referred to the main document (which few people had) and each point had to be on a separate form. However the District Council both accepted and published the public’s more informal communications.

“Procedures and Rules of Engagement should be explained to the public.”

These were adequately explained, in the sense that the public had the opportunity to respond to the three stages of the Core Strategy, *after* these documents had been published. Procedures for the public to become involved in the planning, so that a degree of community ownership could be achieved, were always unclear.

“Community involvement should be encouraged and built into the process from the start.”

This was self evidently not achieved, with the result that the community of West Parley (and it has to be said of other communities as well) always felt estranged from the process. This was demonstrated by the scale of public opposition and protest, and the way in which the public consistently saw the plans as top down planning with little regard being paid to their views.

4. Para 6 to 6.9 describes the expected role of the East Dorset Community Partnership in the community planning process. This Partnership - organised by the Council and served by Council Officers and made up from selected or self nominated individuals – had some merit in principle but was always conceptually flawed as an instrument of community involvement. It has not functioned for the last few years and only one themed action group is now left.

Summary

The East Dorset District Council has given the public quite adequate opportunities to comment *after* each stage of the Core Strategy Plans has been published. In formulating the plans it has made sporadic efforts to tick the boxes in focusing on community priorities and establishing a shared vision and community ownership of the process, but what the community has in fact seen is the old fashioned application of top down planning. West Parley Parish Council consider that East Dorset Council have not complied with its Statement of Community Involvement and request that the Inspector find the Core Strategy unsound.

Yours Sincerely,

Cllr. Richard Heaslip CB
On behalf of West Parley Parish Council

CC: East and South of Ferndown & West Parley Focus Group Notes 1 May 2008

Notes of informal meeting between Chairman West Parley Residents Association and East Dorset District Council lead Planning Officer July 2009

Exchange of emails between the Chairman W. P.R.A. and E.D.D.C. lead planning officer March/April 2010