

North Dorset Local Plan 2011 – 2026 Part 1 Examination in Public

Hearing Session Statement: Issue 1 (Broad Strategy) & Issue 6 (The Countryside)

on behalf of:

The Charborough Estate

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North Dorset Local Plan 2011-2026 Part 1
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ISSUE 1 BROAD STRATEGY (POLICIES 1 & 2)

Q1.7b Will housing need in the rural areas be met?

- 1.1 No. The Charborough Estate objects to Policy 2, which identifies the four towns as the main focus for growth. This will severely limit development in the rural areas. Policy 2 should seek to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements in the rural areas, to ensure that the Local Plan is positively prepared.
- 1.2 A 2001 report on access to services in rural areas within the District highlights that 100% of the population live in rural areas. It is a rural area without strategic transport connections. There are no nearby motorways. The population of North Dorset is approximately 70,000 (source: ONS). Approximately 50% of the population lives in the main towns (source: www.sustainabledorset.org.uk). Therefore approximately 35,000 people live in villages, dispersed settlements and rural areas. However only 6% of new housing over the plan period is allocated to Countryside areas. This equates to 230 dwellings over the plan period at 15 dwellings per annum. Accordingly housing need in the rural areas will not be met.
- 1.3 The application of a policy of restraint to the rural areas will cause negative demographic effects in the rural areas and prevent the delivery of sustainable development.
- 1.4 Policy 2 is not justified. Insufficient evidence is provided to demonstrate that housing need in North Dorset must be focused on the four main towns. Housing should be planned to meet identified need throughout the District, including within the rural areas. Much of the growth in Gillingham is due to the substantial increase in out-commuting to London from the town. Therefore it is unlikely that housing development in Gillingham will meet local need or be sustainable.
- 1.5 Policy 2 should be consistent with Paragraphs 54 and 55 of the NPPF which promote sustainable development in rural areas. Paragraph 54 states that Local Planning Authorities should plan housing development to meet local need in rural areas, whilst paragraph 55 recognises that housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Paragraph 55 acknowledges that housing development is appropriate in the countryside where it would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance the immediate setting.

Q1.7b Are there any significant opportunities for sustainable residential or economic development in 2010 SHLAA settlements?

- 2.1 Yes. Winterbourne Kingston is a sustainable location with a population of over 800, a village hall, a church, a public house, a bakery and local employment. The settlement contains a primary school and there is a regular bus service to Dorchester and Poole. Market housing would help to improve the sustainability of Winterbourne

Kingston, provided development was part of a package of housing, employment and a village shop. The settlement and the adjacent brownfield sites should be inset from the countryside designation.

Q1.8 By removing all settlement boundaries (except the four main towns) will the Council's approach stifle sustainable development in rural areas?

3.1 Yes, for the reasons set out above and because the approach will be flawed for as long as there is a policy of restraint in rural areas and new development is directed principally to the main towns.

Q1.9 Is the option to 'opt in' to the LPP2 or the reliance on Neighbourhood Planning the appropriate framework for ensuring the rural housing need is met?

4.1 No. With a requirement for only 15 dwellings per annum covering the plan period, it is unrealistic to expect rural communities to seek to be involved in either the LPP2 process or a Neighbourhood Plan process. This is not the appropriate framework for ensuring that rural housing need is met.

ISSUE 6 THE COUNTRYSIDE (POLICIES 20, 28 – 33)

Q6.1 Is sufficient support given to sustainable economic growth in the countryside?

5.1 No. The Charborough Estate supports the provisions for economic development in the countryside set out in Policies 11 and 30. However, the policies should be permissive of well-designed new buildings which provide employment in the rural areas, in addition to extensions to existing sites.

5.2 Redevelopment of Abbot's Court Farm, Marsh Farm and Anderson Manor Farm could increase the sustainability of Winterbourne Kingston area by providing further small-scale, employment provision.

5.3 The policy should be based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed rural employment development requirements as well as housing requirements. Paragraph 28 of the NPPF states that Local Plans should support the sustainable growth of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings. As a large proportion of the population of the District lives in rural areas away from the main towns there is a need to provide employment opportunities in these areas to reduce the need for commuting and to replace jobs lost in agriculture and associated rural industries over recent decades.

Q6.2 Does Policy 20 adequately support thriving rural communities?

- 6.1 No. The Charborough Estate objects to Policy 20 which identifies the four towns as the main focus for growth and severely limit development in the rural areas. Policy 20 should seek to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements in the rural areas, to ensure that the Local Plan is positively prepared. The application of a policy of restraint to the rural areas will prevent the delivery of sustainable development.
- 6.2 Policy 20 is not justified. Insufficient evidence is provided to demonstrate that housing need in North Dorset is focused on the four main towns. Housing should be planned to meet identified need throughout the District, including within the rural areas.
- 6.3 Development should be enabled in rural settlements in proportion to their size and sustainability qualities and taking into account the absence or otherwise of environmental, landscape or other constraints. Much of the growth in Gillingham is due to the substantial increase in commuting to London from the town. Therefore it is unlikely that housing development in Gillingham will meet local need or be sustainable.
- 6.4 Policy 20 should be consistent with Paragraphs 54 and 55 of the NPPF which promote sustainable development in rural areas. Paragraph 54 states that Local Planning Authorities should plan housing development to meet local need in rural areas, whilst paragraph 55 recognises that housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Paragraph 55 acknowledges that housing development is appropriate in the countryside where it would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance the immediate setting.

Q6.5 Is the supporting text in paragraph 10.200 too prescriptive?

- 7.1 Yes. The supporting text at 10.200 is unnecessary. Reference to the strict control of residential development outside settlement boundaries is addressed by the NPPF and elsewhere in the Plan.
- 7.2 The supporting text is too prescriptive and contradicts Policy 30 which is permissive of development for which a specific need has been identified, it comprehensively deals with the site as a whole and a significant environmental benefit will be achieved. For example where an existing site is redundant and/or its use represents an acknowledged problem locally. In such circumstances, redevelopment for mixed use, including residential schemes in some instances, should be considered.

Q6.6 Should more support be given to sustainable tourism and leisure developments in the countryside?

- 8.1 Yes. In 2011, the wider Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole area received 21 million day visits, along with 14.3 million visitor nights. These visitors contributed £1.5 billion to the local economy in 2011 and sustained approximately 54,000 jobs in the tourism sector alone (in addition to general service sector jobs) (source: Volume and Value of Tourism, 2011 South West Research Company).
- 8.2 As currently drafted, Policy 31 limits the development of tourist accommodation in the countryside to the re-use of existing buildings. The effective re-use of existing buildings in rural areas can often be beset with viability issues and hence as it stands, this policy could stifle the delivery of suitable tourism accommodation. The Local Plan should also support the development of new tourist accommodation in the countryside where appropriate. A combination of the reuse of existing buildings and the development of new tourist accommodation would be the most appropriate strategy to respond to tourism demand.
- 8.3 Policy 31 is inconsistent with paragraph 28 of the NPPF, which supports the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings to promote sustainable growth in rural areas. Local Planning Authorities should encourage sustainable rural tourist and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities.