

Housing Provision relating to the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2033

- Blandford + (B +) emailed a proposed specification relating to the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan (Version 2) to North Dorset District Council (NDDC) on the 30 April 2018, in advance of a meeting held on 1 May 2018. The proposed specification set out the requirement for the neighbourhood plan to allocate land for at least 400 homes (upper objectively assessed need (OAN)¹ with the same District spatial strategy).
- B + sought agreement from NDDC, regarding the requirement for at least 400 homes, at the meeting on the 1 May 2018. Following consideration of the matter at the meeting and following the meeting NDDC agreed that the requirement for at least 400 homes was an appropriate figure on which to progress the NP.
- NDDC reached this decision on the basis of a number of factors including:
 - a.) The evidence of increased housing need since the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1) was examined. This evidence of increased need is set out in the 2015 Eastern Dorset Strategic Housing Market (SHMA) Assessment and has also been identified by using the standard methodology that the Government has introduced for assessing housing need. The evidence of increased housing need, as set out in the SHMA, is one of the main reasons that the Inspector who examined the LPP1 required NDDC to carry out an immediate review of the plan.
 - b.) The fact that North Dorset cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.
 - c.) The fact, as referred to in the North Dorset Issues and Options Document (November, 2017), that NDDC does not envisage making fundamental changes to its spatial strategy as part of the Local Plan Review process. Consequently, Blandford, which is identified in the LPP1 as one of the four main towns within the District that should be the 'main focus for growth, both for the vast majority of housing and other development', is highly likely to continue to be a focus for growth. This is especially the case given it is the main service centre in the south of the district and serves a sizeable rural hinterland that contains a large number of villages. In the North Dorset Issues and Options Document,

¹ 366 dwellings per annum: North Dorset Local Plan Review Issues and Options Paragraph 5.8 (Nov 2017)

the land that is allocated for residential development in Policy B2 - Land North and East of Blandford Forum of the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2033, is identified as having possible development potential.

- d.) Issues regarding making further large scale allocations at Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton as part of the Local Plan Review process. Whilst NDDC acknowledges the constraints, including environmental constraints, to further growth at Blandford there are also significant constraints to growth at both Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton. Furthermore, there are currently particular issues surrounding the availability of further greenfield land at Sturminster Newton for large scale residential development.

Whilst Gillingham is less constrained from an environmental perspective it is already the subject of strategic site allocation (for 1,800 homes) and the LPP1 identifies that at least 2,200 dwellings should be developed at Gillingham by the end of the current plan period (2031). Due to a number of reasons, to date there have been problems relating to the delivery of this strategic site allocation at Gillingham. This could impact on the scale of future growth directed towards Gillingham as part of the Local Plan Review process particularly given the Government's emphasis, as set out in national policy and guidance, on the need to ensure that sites that are allocated for development are deliverable.

- e.) The need for new residential development to support the delivery of critical infrastructure required at Blandford, including a two form entry primary school, as identified in the latest version of the North Dorset Infrastructure Delivery Plan (November, 2014) and more recent documentation produced by Dorset County Council (the Local Education Authority).