

Matter 11, 4<sup>th</sup> December  
Summerfield Homes (853)

# **West Dorset District Council**

## **Local Plan 2011 – 2028 Examination**

### **Pre-Hearing Statement on behalf of Summerfield Homes**

#### **Matter 11: Western Localities of West Dorset**

##### **Beaminster (BEAM 1 -3)**

**November 2014**

Hawkridge House, Chelston Business Park, Wellington, Somerset, TA21 8YA

Tel: 01823 666150

Email: [planning.wellington@wyg.com](mailto:planning.wellington@wyg.com)

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Summerfield Homes submitted representations concerning the proposals for Beaminster and the Hollymoor Lane omission site. This statement is intended to supplement, not repeat, those representations. Attached as **Appendix 1** is a copy of our previous representations.
- 1.2 On 24<sup>th</sup> October Summerfield Homes submitted a detailed planning application for 23 dwellings on the Hollymoor Lane site. The Local Planning Authorities reference number is WD/D/14/002796.

## 2.0 Inspector's Questions

### **Question 11.1 - Is it clear what exceptional circumstances exist for the Council to promote development in the AONB at Beaminster?**

- 2.1.1 The West Dorset AONB washes over the greater majority of the West Dorset District including settlements such as Bridport and Lyme Regis, both of which are completely located within the AONB, where the Council is also looking to make site specific housing allocations.
- 2.1.2 The two Authorities need to deliver at least 13,000 houses over the plan period (up to 2028). In order to achieve this, it is appropriate for them to allocate housing growth within the most sustainable settlements. Given the geographic coverage of the AONB it is inevitable that allocations will need to be at settlements within the AONB.
- 2.1.3 The Framework makes clear that one of the core principles is that planning, including the plan making process should appropriately recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside including designated landscapes.
- 2.1.4 Whilst this is the case the Framework at Paragraph 116 states that major development within such designations as AONBs can be acceptable where the proposals would be within the public interest. Paragraph 47 of the Framework seeks to "*boost significantly the supply of housing*" and such a strategy is pursued in order to seek positive improvements to people's quality of life, which includes "*widening the choice of high quality homes*" (Paragraph 9).
- 2.1.5 In their objective assessment of housing need the Authorities have identified the need for approximately 13,000 new dwellings over the Plan period. We and others believe the need is higher still. It is therefore important that sufficient sites are identified to meet the need and that these sites are in locations which are in the most sustainable locations. It is clear from the assessment of the role and function of settlements that Beaminster is such a location. Consequently, we consider that the Council is justified in allocating development within Beaminster even though it falls within the

AONB. Indeed, we believe that Beaminster is suitable for and capable of accommodating more housing that is now proposed by the Plan without harming the special qualities of the AONB.

- 2.1.6 In earlier versions of the Plan, land at Hollymoor Lane was allocated for housing (BEAM2) and in doing so the Authorities accepted that the site was a suitable location for housing and capable of accommodating a housing development without harming the special qualities of the AONB. Furthermore, the scale of housing that the Hollymoor Lane site would accommodate is unlikely to be deemed 'major development' within the context of paragraph 116 of the Framework.

**Question 11.2 - Are the reasons for objecting to BEAM1 (Land North of Broadwindsor Road) valid?**

- 2.1.7 Summerfield have not previously objected to the allocation of BEAM1: Land north of Broadwindsor Road as a result we have no comment to make in respect of this question.

**Question 11.3 - Are there wider consequences for the soundness of the Plan given the Councils' intention to delete BEAM2 (Land off Hollymoor Lane)?**

- 2.1.8 As highlighted in our previous representations Summerfield considers that the deletion of the proposed Hollymoor Lane allocation results in the Plan directing a disproportionate and unjustifiably low amount of new housing to Beaminster, particularly when compared against other market and coastal towns within the same tier of the settlement hierarchy.
- 2.1.9 Consequently, the scale of housing proposed for Beaminster is therefore inconsistent with the draft Plan's strategy for the distribution of housing across the Plan area.
- 2.1.10 Summerfield considers that the Plan is unsound as the proposed strategy would not provide the most appropriate strategy for delivering development and is therefore unjustified. Summerfield further considers that such a strategy would not be consistent with national policy as highlighted previously.
- 2.1.11 Summerfield also considers that insufficient land is now identified for housing across the Plan to meet the housing needs. Due to this imbalance the Plan is unsound as it has not been 'Positively Prepared' as it would not meet the objectively assessed need for housing development.
- 2.1.12 Although beyond the scope of the initial question but relevant nonetheless to the consideration of this site, is the fact that the Council deleted the proposed allocation unjustly. Again as highlighted in our previous representations the allocation appears to have been deleted by Members who made a decision without having taken account of evidence which demonstrated that a traffic management scheme could be implemented which would overcome the principal concerns of local residents. Such a scheme would have benefits for existing and future residents.

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2.1.13 The proposed improvements to East Street that could be secured by the recently submitted planning application proposals will help to address an existing issue, as identified by Highway Authority that would not be addressed without the development. The Highway Authority has confirmed that there is no public funding to be able to deliver a scheme and has confirmed its support for the proposals (as evidenced by the email attached to our earlier representations). Attached as Appendix 2 is a Transport Statement which accompanies the current planning application. Attached as Appendix 3 is the proposed scheme layout and attached as Appendix 4 is a letter from WDDC dated 27 May 2014 which confirms that the Council considers the site to be suitable for housing.

**Question 11.4 - Is the choice of BEAM3 (Land at Lane End Farm) a suitable location for employment use given the largely greenfield nature of the site and its separation from the settlement?**

2.1.14 Summerfield have not previously commented on whether site BEAM3 (Land at Lane End Farm) is a suitable location for employment use and as a result we have no comment to make in respect of this question.

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# Appendices

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**Appendix 1 – Previous Representations**

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**Appendix 2 – Transport Statement**

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**Appendix 3 – Planning Application Layout**

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**Appendix 4 – Pre-application Feedback**

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