

**LAND SOUTH OF CHANTRY FIELDS**

**PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

ND328/1/0673/TV(15)1.16/KV  
ND328/2/0674/TV(15)GH12/KV

Sherborne School  
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**ISSUES**

15.1.38 Whether the sewage treatment works protection area (Policy 1.16) should be modified.

15.1.39 Whether the northern part of the objection site should be allocated for community use.

15.1.40 Whether the objection site, or part of it, should be allocated for housing instead of as a proposed informal recreation area (Policy GH12).

**INSPECTOR'S CONSIDERATION AND CONCLUSIONS**

15.1.41 This objection site lies between existing housing to the north west and the River Stour and main line railway to the south east. There is open countryside to the south west and Gillingham town centre lies to the north east, separated from the site by Le Neubourg Way. The land comprises a number of fields with hedges, but the area in question is considerably smaller than the site immediately above (described as Land at Chantry Fields), of which it forms a part. This site lies within a proposed informal recreation area and partly overlaps a flood protection area. Part of it lies within a 400m radius sewage treatment works protection area.

15.1.42 Buffer zone policies of the sort appearing here also appear in many other local plans. In attempting to assess whether this particular protection area is appropriate, I draw no clear cut conclusion from the isopleths or "smell contours" presented to the inquiry. Although there is little evidence of complaints from occupants of nearby housing and I detected no on-site smells during 3 visits to the locality, the objector accepts that the protection area here is appropriate for the existing odour emission situation. That acceptance is important. The objector also accepts that any proper reduction in the protection area depends on the abatement of emissions. However, it remains unclear exactly what abatement measures would be undertaken, at what cost, and when. I conclude that the sewage treatment works protection area should not be modified.

15.1.43 Although the Council wish to keep open the option of allocating the northern part of the objection site for community use, that is not a proposal in the deposit Plan nor, because of the on-going nature of existing negotiations, do they put forward any proposed Change to that effect. Their plans for a community hall here are tentative. No firm decision has been made to pursue such proposal within the Plan period. Other possible sites in the town centre are still being considered. I see no basis for a recommendation for community use.

15.1.44 I concluded in the Housing section that the Plan made adequate provision overall for residential development. In coming to this conclusion I took account of such matters as the role of Gillingham as a larger town suitable for concentrating growth. Nevertheless, housing in the

northern part of the site would be between existing development to both east and west. It would be in a very sustainable (albeit greenfield) location, close to the town centre, mainline railway station and to employment opportunities, notably Brickfields Business Park. Although housing here would be on the proposed informal recreation area, the Council's plans for that area are vague. There appear to be no plans to acquire the land and no specific funds have been allocated for its purchase and conversion to public use. I conclude that a housing allocation would be appropriate on part of the site.

15.1.45 As to the extent of the area that ought to be so allocated, 3 factors are particularly important. First, although flexibility in terms of choice of sites would be beneficial there is the need to avoid significant over provision of housing. Second, the requirements of the sewage treatment works protection area need to be met. The Plan provides for an extension to the sewage works (Policy GH17) which, other things being equal, would move the protection area towards the north-east (ie towards the northern edge of the objection site). My recommendation elsewhere leaves the extension unchanged. However, I am content for no more protection to be provided than shown on the Plan now in view of the likelihood of some abatement to existing odour conditions, particularly with the prospect of a high standard for any expansion of the works. Third, I see no justification for housing to extend into the area liable to flood (Policy 1.13). Those constraints would leave over a hectare of land for allocation for housing. This would help to compensate for the proposed residential allocation of land at Sandways Farm, Bourton, which I recommend elsewhere be deleted

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

15.1.46 I recommend that the Plan be modified by allocating that part of this objection site which lies outside the sewage treatment works protection area (Policy 1.16) and outside the area liable to flood (Policy 1.13) for housing.