

NORTH DORSET LOCAL PLAN 2011 – 2026 PART 1 EXAMINATION

HEARING STATEMENT

ISSUE 11

Development Management Policies

- **parking standards**
- **design**
- **amenity**

March 2015

Question 11.1: Does policy 24 (Design) satisfactorily encapsulate the requirements of NPPF paragraph 58? Would a decision-maker know how to re-act to a proposal in terms of design (NPPF paragraph 154)?

- 1.1 Paragraph 58 of the NPPF states that planning policies should aim to ensure that developments:
- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
 - establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;
 - optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;
 - respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;
 - create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and
 - are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.
- 1.2 In developing the LP1, the Council has created a holistic framework within which design matters are to be considered. This framework is informed by the Vision and Objectives Background Paper 2013 (NDC001) which identified the issues and challenges facing the District as well as setting the vision and objectives for the area.
- 1.3 The background paper summarised the parts of the evidence base that informed the preparation of LP1 and the policy background, at national and local levels. Design was identified as a thread running through several of the Local Plan objectives, including:
- encouraging the use of sustainable construction techniques (Objective 1);
 - ensuring that North Dorset's wildlife, landscape and cultural heritage are protected and well managed (Objective 2);
 - encouraging design that maintains the quality of the District's built and natural environment (Objective 2); and
 - ensuring that housing is designed to support the changing needs of its occupants and users (Objective 5).
- 1.4 Policy 24, and its supporting text, set out nine design principles (in Figure 10.1) and four aspects of development form (in Figure 10.2). The design principles and

aspects of development form are based on the objectives in By Design (ECC010), which has since been replaced by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

- 1.5 The PPG enshrines good quality design as an integral part of sustainable development that plan-makers and decision-takers should always seek to secure (paragraph 26-001-20140306). The PPG adds that design quality should be secured through local planning authorities' local plans as good design is indivisible from good planning which should be at the heart of plan making (paragraph 26-003-20140306) and sets a number of issues that should be considered in setting planning objectives for good design (paragraph 26-006-20140306).
- 1.6 To meet NPPF paragraph 58's requirements to develop robust and comprehensive policies for design quality, the PPG also advises that local planning authorities will need to evaluate and understand the defining characteristics of the area as part of its evidence base, in order to identify appropriate design opportunities and policies (paragraph 26-004-20140306).
- 1.7 The policy's design principles aim to break down the key elements of design into a systematic set of principles which can be applied to development sites and establish a clear mechanism to enable good design that reflects the local area. The principles include character, continuity and enclosure, ease of movement, quality of the public realm, legibility, adaptability, diversity, energy and efficiency.
- 1.8 The aspects of development form influence how space functions, its appearance and how people use it for their everyday activities. They include layout (urban structure and grain), density and mix, scale (height and massing) and appearance (details and materials).
- 1.9 The policy also explains that understanding the local context is fundamental to establishing good design for proposed development and sets out how proposals will be required to respond to local context.
- 1.10 In view of the above, the Council considers that policy 24 satisfactorily encapsulates the requirements of NPPF paragraph 58, as well as the PPG's design guidance, as it sets out a holistic framework within which design matters are to be considered.
- 1.11 The Council considers a decision-maker would know how to re-act to a proposal in terms of its design as the policy clearly sets out what is required for different aspects of development. The policy, which has been developed closely with the Council's Development Management team, accords with paragraph 154 of the NPPF as it provides a clear set of principles and standards against which proposals will be assessed. It also sets out what will or will not be permitted from a design perspective and what a decision-maker should do if the tests in the policy are not met.

Question 11.2: Are the Council's parking standards adequately justified?

- 1.12 The residential parking standards at Policy 23 and Appendix C of LP1 are taken from The Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Residential Car Parking Study 2011 (DRCPS) (INF014a* to c*), which was jointly developed by the councils in Dorset taking into account the Manual for Streets. The DRCPS has been prepared as evidence to inform the preparation of local plans by Dorset's local planning authorities.
- 1.13 The residential parking standards derived by the DRCPS (as set out in Volume 1 - INF014a*) are based on a detailed survey methodology and data (Volume 2 - INF014b*) as well as surveying residential development sites in 24 separate towns and villages across Dorset (Volume 3 - INF014c*).
- 1.14 The residential parking standards are in accordance with paragraph 39 of the NPPF as the detailed survey methodology and data used to prepare the DRCPS takes into account:
- the accessibility of the development
 - the type, mix and use of development;
 - the availability of and opportunities for public transport;
 - local car ownership levels; and
 - an overall need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles.
- 1.15 LP1's non-residential parking standards (paragraphs C.26 to C.33 and Figures A3 and A4) are taken from Dorset County Council's Non-residential Parking Guidance which provides suggested car and cycle parking guidelines to meet the likely operational requirements of various establishments and business uses.
- 1.16 The guidance has been publicly available, on the Dorsetforyou.com website (page <https://dorsetforyou.com/397080>), since April 2012. It has been used by Dorset County Council for many years as an initial, pragmatic, County-wide guide to assess a development proposal's specific level of parking provision. It guides joint discussions on parking provision between applicants, the Local Highway Authority and the Local Planning Authority.
- 1.17 The guidance was produced by Dorset County Council to ensure it had relevant non-residential parking standards following the publication of the DRCPS.
- 1.18 In view of the above, the Council considers that the parking standards in LP1 are justified as they are based on strong, evidence-based information from the very comprehensive DRCPS and Dorset County Council's Non-residential Parking Guidance. This approach is considered the most appropriate strategy to deliver the Plan's parking objectives to meet the needs of occupants of new development and to accord with the NPPF's requirements.

Question 11.3: Is the Council's approach to the size of garages justified (para 10.46)? Is this supporting text a policy?

- 1.19 The Council's approach to the size of garages has been developed using The Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Residential Car Parking Study 2011 (DRCPS) (INF014a* to c*), which was jointly developed by the councils in Dorset to set residential parking standards, taking into account the Manual for Streets.
- 1.20 Volume 1 of the DRCPS (INF014a*) describes the parking standards for new residential developments. Paragraph 2.13 identifies that on average only 50% of garages are used for parking a car and unless a garage's internal dimensions meet the minimum requirements set out in Appendix C – Geometric Guidance it will not be counted as useable space.
- 1.21 Appendix C (of INF014a*) requires garages to be designed to be used for the parking of cars, rather than storage, to reduce on-street parking demand and sets minimum internal dimensions for a typical garage of 6.0 metres long by 3.0 metres wide. Paragraph 3.1.5 explains that garages with these internal dimensions, or greater, will be counted as allocated parking spaces.
- 1.22 The first note at the bottom of Appendix C (of INF014a*) explains that the DRCPS's parking size standards were developed on the basis that vehicles using Dorset's highways have increased in size in recent years and the geometric criteria have not kept up with this. Therefore, for the purposes of the DRCPS, a Ford Mondeo has been used to represent a "generic car", measuring 4.8m in length and 2.0m wide (including the wing mirrors).
- 1.23 The supporting text at paragraph 10.46 of LP1 is not a policy as the Council does not require garages to be built to a particular size. The intent of the supporting text is to explain that garages below 6.0 metres long by 3.0 metres wide are less likely to be used for storing a vehicle and consequently will not be counted towards parking provision.
- 1.24 The approach to the size of garages is considered justified as it is informed by the DRCPS and is the most appropriate strategy to ensure that garages provided in new developments are of a sufficient size to allow the parking of a car.

Question 11.4: What is the status of the Dorset Waste Partnership Guidelines (paragraph 10.55)?

- 1.25 The Dorset Waste Partnership (DWP) Guidelines (ECC023*) referred to in paragraph 10.55 of LP1 have no status as planning policy. However, they provide evidence of: the shape and size of the receptacles currently used by the DWP for waste collection; and the collection arrangements across the County.
- 1.26 The DWP was launched in April 2011 to provide a collaborative waste, recycling and street cleaning service for seven partner Councils across Dorset, which are:

- Christchurch Borough Council;
 - Dorset County Council;
 - East Dorset District Council;
 - North Dorset District Council;
 - Purbeck District Council;
 - West Dorset District Council;
 - Weymouth; and
 - Portland Borough Council.
- 1.27 The DWP was set up after the seven councils adopted the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy in 2009, which guides how the councils will deal with waste up to 2033 and beyond.
- 1.28 The DWP is rolling out the 'recycle for Dorset' service across the county, which is a standardised, county-wide recycling and refuse collection service that will replace the previous collection systems by 2015.
- 1.29 The DWP's 'recycle for Dorset' Service Policy (updated January 2013) (ECC023*) is referred to as the 'latest guidelines' at paragraph 10.55 which residential developments will be required to be in line with to provide adequate space for the storage of recyclables and bins. This approach to refer to the DWP's 'latest guidelines' has been taken as the guidelines may change over the plan period and it will help to avoid the plan becoming out-of-date.
- 1.30 The guidelines are used by the Council as a Development Management tool in assessing whether developments include sufficient space to enable the efficient use of buildings. The Council takes into consideration whether there is adequate space for the storage of recyclables and bins when assessing the design and functionality of development proposals which may include:
- kerbside refuse collections for larger schemes;
 - appropriate points of collection for schemes on private/un-adopted roads; and
 - alternatives for properties unsuitable for wheeled bins, such as town centre developments and flats over shops.

Question 11.5: Is it sufficiently clear in policy 25 exactly what the expectations of the Council are in terms of open space provision; light availability; unacceptable levels of noise/vibration; and exposure to unpleasant emissions? If not how could those expectations be clarified? Would a criteria-based policy be clearer?

- 1.31 Policy 25 is considered sufficiently clear in terms of open space provision, light availability, unacceptable levels of noise / vibration, and exposure to unpleasant emissions as the Council's expectations for amenity are set out in the supporting text (in paragraphs 10.71 to 10.98).

- 1.32 The supporting text also highlights that new development proposals will be expected to take account of amenity through appropriate published guidance, in the form of relevant British Standards, guidance notes, and the like. This approach is considered in accordance with the NPPF's core principle to 'always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings'.
- 1.33 Open space provision under policy 25 means private open space rather than public open space. Paragraph 10.76 highlights that the amount of private open space required will depend on the type of residential development proposed and how it will meet the needs of the future occupants of the development. It also provides examples for different types of development and how they can meet the requirements for private open space.
- 1.34 A criteria-based policy format was used in the draft Core Strategy (draft Development Management Policy 4: Amenity - in Document COD009). However, following a review, it was considered clearer to set the policy out in sections where each section has the same heading as each section of the supporting text. This approach makes it clear which part of the supporting text relates to which part of the policy.
- 1.35 It may be possible to establish more detailed criteria for each element of the policy. However, to do this it would be necessary to define standards relating to daylight, noise and smell in policy, which would be taken from British Standards or other similar sources. Such standards are likely to change over time and their use in policy would increase the risk of the Local Plan becoming quickly out-of-date. As a result, the approach of setting standards in criteria has not been used.