

The Purbeck Core Strategy Development Plan Document

Written Statement on behalf of Bloor Homes Limited

Respondent reference number: 4951

Matter 2: General location of Development (policy LD)

1 Matter 2.3: Have the proposed amendments to the green belt boundary been properly justified and has the council's approach heeded national guidance? What are the exceptional circumstances that exist to justify such revisions? Has sufficient consideration been given to opportunities for development within urban areas and on other sites beyond the green belt?

1.1 The South East Dorset Green Belt was first established in the South East Dorset Structure Plan 1980, with detailed boundaries around Wareham subsequently being defined in the North East Purbeck Local Plan (March 1994). Subsequently, the extent of the green belt boundary around Wareham was defined in the Purbeck District Local Plan Final Edition, a document that the council was never able to adopt because of its non-conformity with the Dorset Structure Plan 2000.

1.2 However, as the policies in the North East Purbeck Local Plan have not been saved and the Purbeck District Local Plan Final Edition was not adopted, there is no statutorily defined green belt in the district. Indeed, the council's own green belt review from January 2012 states that:

"the current status of the Green Belt is that it is not covered by a regional tier of planning, no relevant Structure Plan policy has been saved and due to issues of conformity, no policies or maps have been adopted at the local level"
(paragraph 2.24)

1.3 In the absence of a statutorily defined green belt in Purbeck, the Core Strategy is once again seeking to define the extent of the green belt, rather than revise it.

1.4 Paragraph 84 of the NPPF states that when drawing up or reviewing green belt boundaries, local planning authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. When defining boundaries, paragraph 85 requires local planning authorities to define them clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.

1.5 In Purbeck there is a significant need to deliver new homes to meet both market and affordable housing need. In order to meet part of this need the Development Options background paper acknowledges that it is, "*necessary to consider options for growth on the edge of settlements*", and that, "*due to the districts constraints*", these options, "*often fall within the Green Belt or AONB*", (paragraph 1.3 volume 4 Development Options background paper).

- 1.6 The need to promote sustainable development lies at the heart of the NPPF. Wareham has been identified by the council at the top of the district's settlement hierarchy in terms of its role and function, and it is a logical location for sustainable growth to occur. The land at Worgret Road provides the opportunity to deliver a sustainable settlement extension in close proximity to the town centre, but within the confinement of the A351, which is a good example of a readily recognisable and permanent boundary feature. The site's development would not encroach into the countryside beyond the bypass, and neither would it impact on the gap that exists between Wareham and North Wareham. The development would therefore deliver much-needed new homes in a sustainable location.
- 1.7 Bloor Homes promoted land at Worgret Road for residential development as part of the Purbeck Local Plan Final Edition. In adjudicating on whether the site should be allocated in May 2002, the local plan Inspector noted that (paragraph 2.274):
- *“in view of the location on the outer edge of the green belt and on the western site of the town, its significance would be limited in terms of maintaining the openness around the conurbation”*
 - *“I accept that the proposal would fit well with the urban form of the town. It would be well within the line of the by-pass”*
 - *“In view of the substantial development on the other site of Worgret Road the proposed development would not be seen as extending the town further to the west. And, owing to the strength of the surrounding physical, environmental and landscape constraints, I see no danger of the proposal leading to urban sprawl”.*
- 1.8 Ultimately, the land was not allocated for development because the Inspector recommended the allocation of non-green belt land at Redbridge Pit at the western end of the district to deal with the council's housing shortfall. However, this site has never come forward for development and so the land at Worgret Road and other green belt sites on the edge of the town need reconsideration of in light of the NPPF's fundamental requirement to promote sustainable development.
- 1.9 We conclude that the land is suitable for development, that it provides a sustainable site to deliver growth and that the green belt boundary can be defined in accordance with guidance in the NPPF. We consider the Core Strategy to be sound and should not be altered in this respect.