

PURBECK DISTRICT COUNCIL

CORE STRATEGY

EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC

Hearing Statement by Andrew Charles Robinson BSc FRICS FAAV of Symonds & Sampson LLP, 5 West Street, Wimborne, Dorset in relation to Matter 2: General Location of Development (Policy LD)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement is submitted by Andrew Robinson of Symonds & Sampson, 5 West Street, Wimborne, Dorset on behalf of John Baggs (Farmers) Limited in relation to Matter 2: General Location and Development (Policy LD) of the examination in public into the Purbeck District Core Strategy Examination in public. Symonds & Sampson are agents on behalf of John Baggs (Farmers) Limited.
- 1.2 This statement is specifically intended to respond to the Inspector's questions and set out Symonds & Sampson's case on matters of soundness,

2. RESPONSE TO INSPECTOR'S QUESTIONS

- 2.1 Matter 2. General Location of Development (Policy LD)

Issue 2.3: Have the proposed amendments for the Green Belt boundary been properly justified and has the Council's approach heeded the advice in National Guidance? What are the exceptional circumstances that exist to justify such revisions? Has sufficient consideration be given to opportunities of development within urban areas and on other sites beyond the Green Belt?

- 2.2 PPG2 has been cancelled as of 27th March, 2012 following the publication of the NPPF.

Paragraphs 79 – 92 of the NPPF now provide National Planning Policy guidance on Green Belts. The five purposes of Green belt are retained by the NPPF. Once established Green Belt boundaries "should only be altered in exceptional circumstances". If LPA's are considering amendments to boundaries, they must have regard to their intended permanence in the longer term: beyond the plan period: in this case beyond 2027.

- 2.3 This statement is intended to deal with the soundness of Purbeck District Council's approach to districtwide issues in relation to what has been included and excluded from the Green Belt within the Purbeck District council's Green Belt Review (January 2012).

2.4 The NPPF now provides National Policy Guidance on Green Belts. The five purposes of the Green Belt as mentioned in PPG2 are retained by the NPPF. Once established, Green Belt boundaries “should only be altered in exceptional circumstances”. Essentially, therefore, this means that if LPA’s are considering amendments to boundaries, they must have regard to their intended performance in the longer term which, in this case, would be beyond 2027. It seems, therefore, that the Green Belt boundary does need to be drawn carefully, but to sensibly include areas for development in the longer term as well as the shorter term.

2.5 Whilst it is, therefore, right that the Green Belt review should consider the issues of sprawl, merging, countryside encroachment, historic setting and urban regeneration, what is important is that the approach to these issues is properly concluded.

If situations arise whereby, in terms of meeting the five criteria in the National Planning Policy Framework, Green Belt section, the effect of these issues can be reduced or minimised, then surely in the interests of meeting Wareham’s housing requirements where it cannot already be met by land within the settlement boundary, an amendment to the Green Belt boundary must become essential.

2.6 I would, therefore consider that exceptional circumstances that justify a revision to the Green Belt do, in many cases, exist and that the Purbeck District Green Belt Review, whilst highlighting these possible revisions, then rejects the revisions quite unnecessarily.

2.7 It is clear to me that sufficient consideration has been give to opportunities for development within urban areas and it is quite clear that these opportunities do not exist and, therefore, that other sites currently within the Green Belt but which could be excluded from the Green Belt without detriment should now be considered.

2.8 The Core Strategy, therefore fails

Paragraph 1.8.2 of the NPPF because:

- It is not positively prepared because the approach within the Green Belt Review has been to highlight negatives, except that there is a solution to the negatives and, having done this, the Review then fails to create a change in the Green Belt boundary.
- It is not the most appropriate strategy and, therefore, cannot be justified because development land is clearly needed within the Purbeck District and yet the potential development has been included within the Green Belt.
- It is not consistent with National Policy because a negative approach has been taken.

2.10 The Core Strategy could be made sound by including small sections of land which are currently within the Green Belt within the town development boundary without detriment to the Green Belt. It would also ensure that the Green Belt boundary will not have to be altered in the future.

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Andrew C Robinson BSc FRICS FAAV

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