

The Purbeck Core Strategy Development Plan Document Examination March 2012

Matter 1 – Basis for Overall Approach of the DPD (Chapters 1-4)

Introduction/Background

Purbeck is an area of special environmental quality which includes a high proportion of Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, including a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Special Protection Areas (Ramsar sites) as well as Green Belt land.

Under the Duty to Co-operate with neighbouring authorities it is clear that the Bournemouth/Poole/Christchurch conurbation serves as the main area of population growth for this area, with Purbeck serving in a similar capacity to the New Forest as a green lung of high environmental quality. The New Forest has been designated a National Park and Purbeck has similar environmental quality, as illustrated by its identification in the John Dower Report to the Minister on National Parks in England and Wales (1945) as a potential National Park area (See Appendix 2). This was recognised by staff of the Regional Assembly when housing figures were being discussed in preparation for the RSS who suggested that consideration be given to adopting the National Park approach to allocation of development in Purbeck (see para 4.8 in the attached Appendix). At the time, Purbeck District Council officers rejected this. However it is the Wareham Town Trust's view that this area is of such quality as to warrant a National Park style approach to development in order to safeguard this sensitive and special area for future generations.

A further point with regard to the duty to cooperate concerns the Planning Inspector's recommendations with respect of the former Local Plan which recommended that 44 ha of land at Redbridge Pit (Crossways/Moreton Station) be allocated for "comprehensive mixed use development including about 600 dwellings, employment uses, community facilities, open space and areas for nature conservation." (See Appendix 3 - Purbeck District Local Plan Inquiry Inspector's report 25 May 2002 page 215 para 6.125). The draft Local Plan for Weymouth and Portland and West Dorset proposes development at Crossways.

What particular part of the Core Strategy is unsound?

The proposal for 200 houses on Green Belt land at Wareham and the requirement for new retail floor space. The vision in the Core Strategy is too focussed on addressing the economic aspects of sustainable development at the expense of social and environmental aspects, contrary to the balanced approach suggested in the NPPS; its vision should be 'Keep Purbeck Special' rather than 'Where shall we Build'.

Which criteria set out in paragraph 182 of the NPPF does it fail?

Not justified.

Why does it fail?

This would not appear to be justified in that it would involve releasing of Green Belt land where exceptional need is unproven and where other potential development opportunities under the duty to co-operate have not been fully investigated – the land at Redbridge Pit in Crossways near the border with West Dorset; the duty to co-operate has not therefore been

fulfilled. The justification for new retail floorspace is based on evidence in the Nathaniel Litchfield & Partners Retail Impact Assessment, which is not credible or robust. The overall spatial strategy is not based on the realistic environmental constraints of Purbeck and, as such, too much development (especially the 2,520 housing target and the retail floorspace requirement) is proposed the impacts of which have not been effectively assessed. There is an unquestioning assumption that this quantum of development should automatically be located in Swanage and Wareham, which are themselves heavily constrained by AONB and Green Belt designations, whereas other areas (such as Wool and Crossways) are not.

How can the Core Strategy be made sound?

Retain the Green Belt designation to the West of Wareham and delete the requirement for any specific amount of new retail floorspace

What is the precise change/wording we are seeking?

Policy LD should be amended to delete reference to the strategic settlement extension at Wareham. Policy CEN should be deleted in its entirety, as should Policy RFS and any introductory text to any of these policies. Policy HS needs amending to incorporate a housing supply figure that is realistic when assessed against the environmental constraints of the District.

Appendices attached:

Appendix 1 – ‘Summary of Emerging Findings and issues from the November Officer Workshops’ (RSS Development) 11/11/2005 – see para 4.8 Dorset and Somerset area

Appendix 2 – ‘National Parks in England and Wales A Report to the Minister of Town and Country Planning’ by John Dower 1945

Appendix 3 – Extract from Purbeck District Local Plan Inquiry Inspector’s report 25 May 2002 Crossways/ Moreton’s Station – Land at Redbridge Pit

Appendix 1

Summary of emerging findings and issues from the November Officer Workshops

Authorities represented:

Somerset CC Cheltenham BC Wiltshire CC Forest of Dean DC Stroud DC West Wiltshire DC Gloucester City Council Cotswold DC JSPTU South Gloucestershire Council Gloucestershire CC North Somerset Council North Wiltshire DC West Wiltshire DC Mendip DC Swindon BC Kennet DC Taunton Deane BC North Cornwall DC Torrridge DC West Devon DC Cornwall CC East Devon DC Dartmoor NPA Cornwall CC Teignbridge DC Caradon DC Exeter City Council South Hams DC Devon CC West Somerset DC Dorset DC Poole BC East Dorset DC Christchurch BC Weymouth and Portland BC Poole BC Bournemouth BC North Dorset DC South Somerset DC

Apologies: Carrick DC Salisbury DC

Follow up meeting 11/11/05: West Dorset DC Purbeck DC Weymouth & Portland BC Dorset CC

1 Gloucestershire group

- The general principle of growth at urban areas with the ability/flexibility to allow appropriate development in the market towns was supported.
 - The District officers broadly agreed with the RPB's initial guideline range and agreed that a greater proportion of the growth needed to go in the urban areas. This contrasted with the view from the County Council. The issue will be further discussed at the Panel meeting on Gloucester / Cheltenham JSA.
 - Stroud and Forest of Dean requested that the district housing allocation take the higher end of the RPB range in order to assist them in delivering affordable housing requirements.
 - Forest of Dean district also requested the higher end of the range in order to assist them in delivering key regeneration sites.
- Cotswold District felt that a point within the RPB range would be appropriate for their area, but preferably not right at the lower end. Directing a larger share of the District's development towards Cirencester was supported. The lack of affordable housing is a significant contributory cause of cross-commuting between Cirencester and neighbouring PUs and other centres (which offer cheaper housing options for many working in the town but forced out due to high housing costs). Concern was expressed that a reduction at Cirencester could further aggravate affordability problems and could weaken the town's role as one of Gloucestershire's main employment and commercial centres. There were also worries that reducing the Cotswold build total

below the RPB range could affect the ability of the smaller towns to perform their local service centre role and therefore adversely affect sustainability.

housing numbers and the fact that these would almost entirely be in the 5 towns demonstrated the sustainability of this approach, it was maintained. Only Liskeard could really be said to be in the commuting catchment of Plymouth and therefore at risk from too many houses going to commuters. However, the effects of retirement and second homes were major problems throughout the District. These demands would continue and would further force up prices if more affordable homes were not provided.

- Cornwall CC said that its study work had demonstrated the need for more substantial provision in several Cornish towns.

4.7 SE Dorset group

- East Dorset DC raised concerns over the need to carry out a hydrology study to confirm whether the likely housing numbers are deliverable in their area as some of the sites might not be realistically developable.
- Concerns were raised over the available housing stock and the units being delivered in the urban areas and whether this will meet people's aspirations.
- Additional housing sites could be provided in the SE Dorset area but these will be mainly outside the PUA area and therefore may not be compatible with the RSS. In addition concerns were raised that the required infrastructure investment would not be available to provide more sustainable transport links between the surrounding settlements and the PUA.
- The higher levels proposed for Salisbury are required to assist in the delivery of affordable housing requirements and also to meet the existing commitments in the district. Further information will be submitted to justify these issues.
- Concerns were raised that the SE Dorset JSA work may not have considered the possible impact of the economic growth proposals in the Hampshire area.
- Concerns were raised that the SE Dorset JSA strategy may not be sufficiently flexible in the event that high levels of economic growth do occur in the JSA, particularly in terms of delivering affordable housing levels required.
- Concerns were raised that the economic growth proposed for the SE Dorset area may not be delivered if the area is competing with Hampshire growth proposals. The key area is the Bournemouth Airport proposals. If this site is delivered before the Hampshire proposals come forward then the SE Dorset area could compete with the Hampshire proposals. If not this could limit SE Dorset's economic potential.
- The urban areas cannot phase sites as they are heavily dependent on small brown field sites which Local Authorities have little control over.

4.8 Dorset and Somerset area (note that much of this was

supplemented by further discussion on 11 November with County, Weymouth & Portland, Purbeck and W Dorset officers owing to difficulties in attending the main session).

- Concerns were raised that the proposed housing numbers in the rural districts are too low in order to deliver affordable housing requirements and meet the economic potential of the rural areas. This was particularly the case in North Dorset. Information on the market towns potential had recently been provided but post-dated the second round of housing number work by the RPB and had yet to be taken on board.
- Concerns were raised over the delivery of affordable housing in Purbeck as there it limited development land available and the Western Sector area was rejected due to environmental constraints. Most of the allocation, even without a western extension to the JSA, would go to the eastern part of the District, for example around Upton. Potential around Winfrith/Wool was limited; only some local provision could be made without encouraging commuting back to Dorchester or to the conurbation. The District officer felt that the RPB's figures were closer to the overall requirement than the eventual 4/4 Advice however. The Isle of Purbeck was seen as an area with problems similar to those of national parks owing to its high quality natural and cultural heritage landscape. Worth Matravers for example has around 40% of its housing stock owned as second homes. There was a discussion as to whether national park style local private housing market restrictions would be required at this stage, however. The requirement was felt to be allowing scope for a flexible "palette" of measures to be tailored to specific needs in LDDs.
- Weymouth totals were felt following further work to be capable of being increased significantly but not quite to the levels suggested in the RPB's draft set. The major concern in Weymouth was to increase employment provision and it was important to protect the few sites capable of meeting this. Arrangements were being made with West Dorset and the County to carry out a detailed study of the joint requirements and interactions between Weymouth and Dorchester. A start on this was likely by December with a reporting date in the spring/ summer of 2006.
- West Dorset requested high total provision for the District to better reflect the position of Dorchester as a named settlement and the fact that it would provide around 50% of the total growth for the District.
- West Dorset and South Somerset. There was concern about the capacity for significant expansion of Yeovil without extending growth towards Sherborne. South Somerset required the capacity but West Dorset were concerned about pressures on the high quality urban heritage value of Sherborne. Analysis of Sherborne 2001 commuting data found that the town is much more self contained in employment terms than originally expected. Further joint discussions were required.