



**Purbeck Core Strategy Development Plan Document**

**Examination into the soundness of the plan**

**Statement on behalf of Purbeck District Council**

**Hearing date: Tuesday 15 May 2012 – 10am**

**Matter 12: North West Purbeck (Policy NW)**

**Issues**

- 12.1 Is the policy for growth and change in this area appropriate and justified, including in relation to national guidance and local needs, and in terms of economic, social and environmental impact?
- 12.2 Is the approach taken towards development at Bere Regis sufficiently sustainable? Would the allocation of further employment land provide a more balanced community?

## Introduction

1. This statement considers all the issues within Matter 12: North West Purbeck (Policy NW).

## Statements of common ground

2. A statement of common ground (SCG) has been agreed with the Highways Agency.

## Why the Council considers the Core Strategy sound

3. Each issue raised by the Inspector is considered in turn below:

**12.1 Is the policy for growth and change in this area appropriate and justified, including in relation to national guidance and local needs, and in terms of economic, social and environmental impact?**

### National Guidance

4. Policy NW: North West Purbeck was written to be consistent with national guidance in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1: Delivering Sustainable Development which has now been deleted. The PPS required development plans to contribute towards the delivery of sustainable development through the achievement of social, economic and environmental objectives. The policy for growth and change in the North West Policy Spatial Area reflects this approach by focusing development in the most sustainable settlements, thereby reducing the need to travel by car and the subsequent impact on climate change. The policy also sets out an integrated approach to achieving sustainable development by addressing a range of social (housing, education, community facility provision), economic (employment provision) and environmental objectives (habitats and wildlife, green infrastructure and transport).
5. The NPPF which supersedes PPS1 sets a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Policy NW: North West provides a clear local policy to ensure the delivery of sustainable development within the North West Policy Spatial Area of the district (as set out above) whilst fully taking into account local circumstances and the area's relationship with the rest of the district.

### Local Needs

6. Bere Regis is identified in Policy LD: General Location of Development and Policy NW: North West as a Key Service Village. This level of village has the highest level of population and facilities, including important facilities such as a school and doctor's surgery, and acts as a hub to surrounding settlements thereby reducing the need to travel. Key Service Villages are therefore considered suitable for some limited growth due to their sustainable location and role as a hub. Limited growth would also help to sustain vital rural services and facilities for example the local school and doctors surgery, reducing the need to travel within the wider rural area, and supporting remaining shops.
7. Elsewhere in the North West Policy Spatial Area, Briantspuddle is identified in Policy LD: General Location of Development as an 'other village with a settlement

boundary' within which some small scale development would be considered appropriate.

8. Background Paper 4<sup>1</sup> sets out 9 development options for growth across the district. Officers assessed each option in detail and all were considered to be reasonable taking into account the [previously] emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), the settlement strategy<sup>2</sup>, existing housing completions and commitments (planning permissions), retail and employment provision, and the large number of constraints within the district. Of the 9 options assessed in detail, the Council considered the following 3 were the most appropriate for consultation<sup>3</sup>: (i) distributing development around Swanage, Upton, Wareham and the Key Service Villages of Bere Regis, Lytchett Matravers and Wool; (ii) concentrating growth on the edge of Wareham and (iii) focusing growth at Swanage. An alternative option assessed was to improve the self sufficiency of Bere Regis with large scale development of 450 dwellings. This option was discounted as the sustainability appraisal had concerns that it would increase out-commuting rather than improve self sufficiency.
9. Consultation results<sup>4</sup> indicated clear support (67% of responses from an 8% overall response rate) for the distribution of development around the district's towns of Swanage, Upton and Wareham and the Key Service Villages of Bere Regis, Lytchett Matravers and Wool. This approach, together with Policy LD: General Location of Development will ensure that affordable housing is delivered in each spatial area addressing one of the district's biggest issues.
10. The 'Where shall we build in North West Purbeck 2012 – 2026?' consultation<sup>5</sup> in the Summer of 2010 considered three options for growth at Bere Regis. The Preferred Option for growth, which 80%<sup>6</sup> of respondents and Bere Regis Parish Council supported, proposed 50 dwellings, a new primary school and employment provision. The Council has not allocated a specific site in the Core Strategy as options will be considered through the emerging Bere Regis neighbourhood plan. However, the provision of the additional housing will provide the option to bring forward land for a new primary school (replacement first school) and informal open space. It will also provide the opportunity to investigate the provision of a larger health centre, employment site and community meeting space.
11. Dorset County Council (DCC) is working on a review of school places<sup>7</sup> in Purbeck, due to falling school rolls. The Council has worked alongside DCC to ensure that growth at Bere Regis continues to support future school rolls and maintain the presence of a viable school in the village. This has a number of social and environmental benefits by maintaining the accessibility of education in North West and minimising trips to alternative schools further afield. The community is keen to support the new primary school and secure a new school on a site nearer to the village centre.

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<sup>1</sup> CD30: Volume 4: Development Options

<sup>2</sup> CD36: Volume 10: Settlement Strategy

<sup>3</sup> CD16: Core Strategy Preferred Options 2009 ('Planning Purbeck's Future')

<sup>4</sup> CD17c: Appendix 2 - Responses to development options and supermarket responses

<sup>5</sup> CD23: Where shall we build in North West Purbeck 2012 – 2026?

<sup>6</sup> CD21-26: Where shall we build in Purbeck 2012-2026?

<sup>7</sup> CD93: Statutory Notice for the Proposed Reorganisation of Schools in the Purbeck Area

## Economic, Social and Environmental Impact

12. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA)<sup>8</sup> notes that the housing allocation in Bere Regis would be expected to generate some positive effects, particularly if linked to bringing forward employment opportunities and new education, open space, health and community facilities. Relocation of the school to the centre of the village may reduce car trips and although the self-containment of Bere Regis could be improved, the SA remains concerned about out-commuting. The SA also identifies potential although not significant environmental impacts on the landscape, and likely increases in waste production, land, water, air and light pollution, and water and energy consumption.
13. In terms of mitigation measures, the SA notes that the housing and employment sites should come forward together; the frequency of public transport serving the village should be improved and live/work units and home working provision should be explored.

**12.2 Is the approach taken towards development at Bere Regis sufficiently sustainable? Would the allocation of further employment land provide a more balanced community?**

14. As outlined above, the level of development proposed for Bere Regis is appropriate to improve the self sufficiency of Bere Regis and has local support. The Parish Council has already commenced work on a neighbourhood plan to deliver the development proposed in the Core Strategy.
15. The Highways Agency has raised concerns throughout the preparation of the Core Strategy about housing in Bere Regis increasing traffic on the A35/A31. Bere Regis is midway between Poole and Dorchester and these two roads are attractive to commuters. The SA also recommends that employment provision should be delivered alongside the proposed housing provision to reduce potential out-commuting from the village.
16. The Purbeck District Local Plan Final Edition<sup>9</sup> (2004) allocated a 0.7 hectare employment site. This allocation has not yet come forward. The land around Bere Regis is in two ownerships, one of which includes a number of trusts. Both landowners have shown a willingness to work jointly to bring forward the school, housing and employment. In particular the Trustees of WH Drax (3070) have indicated that they would like the employment allocation rolled forward in the Core Strategy and have indicated a willingness to develop the site alongside the housing allocation.
17. As discussed in 12.1, the SA highlights the need to bring forward the housing and employment together. Development of the employment site in tandem with the housing site helps to encourage self sufficiency and minimize the increase in commuting.
18. The Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission Core Strategy<sup>10</sup> deletes the reference to new employment land. Instead the existing safeguarded employment

<sup>8</sup> SD15: Sustainability Appraisal for Proposed Changes to Pre-Submission 2011

<sup>9</sup> CD136: Purbeck District Local Plan Final Edition (2004)

<sup>10</sup> SD13: Core Strategy - Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission 2011

site will be rolled forward which is explained in the Appendix 4 schedule of changes to the proposals maps, the vision for North West Purbeck and Policy ELS: Employment Land Supply.

19. Policy NW would benefit from a specific reference to the safeguarding of the existing site and this is proposed in the Minor Changes Schedule<sup>11</sup>. In addition, a further change is proposed to the policy for additional clarity as set out below. The Highways Agency has agreed these changes in a SCG with the Council.

**Suggested changes for the Inspector to consider**

20. Update as per changes 33-37 of the Minor Changes Schedule. In particular, to improve clarity and consistency of the Core Strategy, include references to employment development at Bere Regis, as set out in changes 34 and 35 of the Minor Changes Schedule.
21. In addition, add the following to Policy NW: *“A new employment site at Bere Regis will provide for local job opportunities linked to housing growth. The existing allocation at North Street will be safeguarded on the Proposals Map and reviewed through a subsequent plan(s)”*.
22. As per the SCG agreed between the Council and the Highways Agency, the Council proposes to amend Map 8 to show the correct road name (A35 instead of A31).

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<sup>11</sup> SD26: Minor Changes Schedule