



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 13: North East Purbeck (Policy NE)

Issues

- 13.1 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?
- 13.2 Are the requirements related to the housing sites at both Upton and Lytchett Matravers justified and reasonable? Will those developments be viable as set out in policy NE?
- 13.3 Is there any justification for including Frenches Farm within the proposed settlement boundary change at Policeman's Lane?
- 13.4 Is there sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the proposed SANGs are appropriate in terms of size, location and use and can be fully implemented?
- 13.5 Is the Council's approach towards the modification of the green belt boundary in North East Purbeck appropriate and adequately justified?

Introduction

1. This statement considers all the issues within Matter 13: North East Purbeck (Policy NE).

Statements of common ground

2. A statement of common ground (SCG) has been agreed between Wyatt Homes, Natural England and Purbeck District Council to provide heathland mitigation for 70 dwellings at Policeman's Lane, Upton.
3. A SCG is being prepared between Mr and Mrs J Hampshire, Natural England and Purbeck District Council to provide a framework of principles in relation to the provision of heathland mitigation for 50 dwellings at Huntick Road, Lytchett Matravers. The SCG has not been finalised by the deadline for submission of this statement (18 April 2012).

Why the Council considers the Core Strategy sound

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

<p>13.1 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?</p>

National Guidance

5. Policy NE: North East 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 East 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, health, education, community facility provision), economic (employment and retail provision) and environmental objectives (habitats and wildlife, green infrastructure and transport).
6. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which supersedes PPS1 sets a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Policy NE: North East provides a clear local policy to ensure the delivery of sustainable development within the North East 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

7. Upton is identified in Policy LD: General Location of Development and Policy NE: North East as a Town. Whilst it is a more constrained settlement than the towns of Wareham and Swanage, the settlement strategy recommends some additional development. This takes into account Upton's proximity to the conurbation of Poole

and Bournemouth and its status in the [previously] emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) as a Development Policy A settlement.

8. Lytchett Matravers is identified in Policy LD: General Location of Development 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 doctors' surgery, and acts as a hub to surrounding settlements thereby reducing the need to travel. Key Service Villages are therefore considered suitable by the Council for some limited growth due to their sustainable location and role as a hub to surrounding settlements. 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.
9. Elsewhere in the North East Policy Spatial Area, Lytchett Minster 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.
10. Background Paper 4¹ 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 RSS, the settlement strategy², 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 consultation³: (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 Lytchett Matravers with large scale development of 400 dwellings. This option was discounted as the sustainability appraisal had concerns that as the village is a dormitory settlement for Poole, it would be unable to increase its self-containment.
11. Consultation results⁴ indicated clear support (67% of responses from an 8% overall response rate) for the distribution of development around the 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.
12. The settlement extensions proposed in the North East have the support of their respective parish and town councils (Lytchett Matravers Parish Council and Upton Town Council). A Development Brief Scoping Report has been prepared and approved by Purbeck District Council for each site. The reports provide a strong steer for future development at Policeman's Lane⁵ and Huntick Road⁶ and have been endorsed by the respective parish and town councils. In Lytchett Matravers in particular, additional housing development will provide the option to bring forward

¹ CD30 Volume 4: Development Options

² CD36: Volume 10: Settlement Strategy

³ CD16 Core Strategy Preferred Options 2009 ('Planning Purbeck's Future')

⁴ CD17c: Responses to development options and supermarket responses

⁵ CD150: Policeman's Lane Upton Development Brief 2012

⁶ CD151: Huntick Road Lytchett Matravers Development Brief 2012

land for a new health centre, informal open space and some employment provision. Bringing the housing development forward at the same time as the employment development will increase the sustainability of the proposal, increase self-containment and help to overcome concerns raised by the Highways Agency over out-commuting.

Economic, Social and Environmental Impact

13. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA)⁷ notes that there will be short term positive effects from the provision of affordable homes on each of the proposed housing allocations, although the longer term housing needs of the District will still remain. Other positive effects include improvements to health and standards of living through the provision of new or improved recreation and community facilities, environmental improvements through the enhancement of the town and village centres, and the provision of short term employment opportunities reducing out-commuting.
14. Potential negative effects include impact on nearby protected habitats and out-commuting to Poole. However, in terms of mitigation measures, the SA notes that the provision of heathland mitigation in the form of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS) will mitigate additional impact on nearby protected habitats. New and / or improved community facilities will increase self-containment and reduce the need for out-commuting. The SA also identifies potential although not significant increases in waste production, land, water, air and light pollution, and water and energy consumption.

<p>13.2 Are the requirements related to the housing sites at both Upton and Lytchett Matravers justified and reasonable? Will those developments be viable as set out in policy NE?</p>
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15. It is justified and reasonable to expect some form of community benefit from major developments, as they will put pressure on existing infrastructure and facilities. Officers have worked closely with landowners/agents and the town/parish councils at both sites to ensure that any community benefits are desirable and deliverable. The level of contributions towards education and recreation are not yet finalised, but developers are aware they must be factored into the developments. Importantly, it is clear in the Core Strategy and the supporting development briefs that the level of contributions are subject to viability, which can be challenged. The development briefs are clear as to which requirements are desirable or vital. Therefore, there is a degree of flexibility that can be applied to the requirements of Policy NE: North East.
16. SANGs are required to mitigate against the impacts upon sites protected under European legislation. Natural England advise that, rather than financial contributions, the housing development sites should provide specific SANGs. Further detail is given below in paragraphs 21-23.
17. Officers have worked closely with Dorset County Council Highways Authority to ascertain that the transport and access requirements are vital to make both sites acceptable in terms of both sustainable travel and safety.

⁷ SD15: Sustainability Appraisal for Proposed Changes to Core Strategy Pre-Submission 2011

18. Viability work⁸ has taken into account 20% developer profit and £15,000 development contributions from every dwelling. This indicates that both sites are viable with 50% at Lytchett Matravers and 40% affordable housing at Upton plus additional costs. Land at Huntick Road should attract £1.1M/ha. There was some concern over the Policeman's Lane site at Upton because £100,000/ha may not be sufficient return for the landowner. However, an updated viability study⁹ shows that the introduction of Affordable Rent will result in much more favourable circumstances for developers and would lead to a land value at Upton of around £550,000/ha. The developers for the Policeman's Lane site, Wyatt Homes, have not submitted any representation to question viability.
19. The development briefs provide further details about site requirements and help ensure deliverability.

13.3 Is there any justification for including Frenches Farm within the proposed settlement boundary change at Policeman's Lane?

20. There are several reasons not to include the farm. The settlement and green belt boundaries both follow the line of Sandy Lane, which acts as the southern extent of south west Upton. Significantly, the farm is within 400m of heathland and would not be suitable for housing development. Any redevelopment of the site would have to be for non-residential uses e.g. community facilities and businesses. This would be in line with the Core Strategy policies CO: Countryside and DH: Dorset Heathlands. Paragraph 89 of the NPPF allows for the redevelopment of brownfield sites in the green belt. Therefore, there would be no advantage to adjust the settlement boundary to include the site. This negates the need for the site to be included within the settlement.

13.4 Is there sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the proposed SANGs are appropriate in terms of size, location and use and can be fully implemented?

21. Natural England made representations to the Core Strategy Pre-Submission requiring greater certainty over the delivery of SANGs. Following discussion with Natural England and the Council's consultant, Footprint Ecology, the mitigation requirements were agreed. Officers approached the landowners / developers of the two housing allocations to discuss the mitigation proposals.
22. Wyatt Homes offered a potential area of SANGs to the south of the Policeman's Lane site and the general location was illustrated on maps in the Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission Core Strategy¹⁰. Agreement over the mitigation requirements could not be agreed with the landowner of the Huntick Road site. Again, a general location was shown in the Proposed Changes, but not with the agreement of the landowner.
23. Natural England again made representations requesting further detail on deliverability. In response, the Council met with the developers/landowners of the two sites in February/March 2012 to agree a SCG on the delivery of the SANGs. A SCG has been agreed between the Council, Wyatt Homes and Natural England for SANGs south of Policeman's Lane, Upton. The location of the SANGs at Lytchett

⁸ CD113 & 114: Purbeck DC Affordable Housing Viability Assessment (2008) and update (2010)

⁹ CD115: Purbeck DC Viability Report Update – The Impact of Affordable Rent (2011)

¹⁰ SD18 Core Strategy - Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission 2011

Matravers has still not been agreed. However, the parties are agreeing a SCG on wording to be added to the Core Strategy to set out the requirements for SANGs. The SCG was not finalised by the deadline for submission of this statement (18 April 2012).

13.5 Is the Council's approach towards the modification of the green belt boundary in North East Purbeck appropriate and adequately justified?

24. Paragraph 83 of the NPPF allows for the modification of green belt boundaries in exceptional circumstances. The Council considers that housing to meet local needs counts as exceptional and is justification. The Green Belt Review informed the boundary modifications in the context of paragraph 80 of the NPPF's criteria and provides the reasoning behind decisions.
25. The eastern boundary along the Huntick Road site follows the edge of previously developed land and is a robust, defensible boundary that is a logical landline. It will not result in undue sprawl of built development towards the Poole/Bournemouth conurbation. The boundary of the site will be supplemented with native planting to maintain its strong edge.
26. On its western side, the Policeman's Lane site has a strong defensible boundary provided by the bypass. Officers have concerns that the site should not extend any further south because it currently sits well with Sandy Lane, which denotes the south western limit of the town. Any extension further south would lead to an undesirable sprawling effect that could lead to coalescence with Lytchett Minster. This would be completely contrary to the function of the green belt.

Suggested changes for the Inspector to consider

27. Update as per changes 57-63 of the Minor Changes Schedule¹¹.

28. In addition, the Core Strategy will be amended as follows:

Add to Policy NE:

"A new employment site at Huntick Road, Lytchett Matravers will provide for local job opportunities linked to housing growth. Existing employment sites at Factory Road (Upton), Wareham Road (Lytchett Matravers) and the Axian Centre will be safeguarded on the Proposals Map and reviewed through a subsequent plan(s)."; and

Amend the second criteria of the Policeman's Lane allocation in Policy NE to state:

"New public open space at French's Farm and screening/signage on the fringe of Poole Harbour to mitigate potential impact upon nearby heathland in accordance with para 7.4.8"; and

Add a new criteria to both the Policeman's Lane and Huntick Road allocations in Policy NE to state:

"Mitigation measures that will ensure the development including the SANGS are nitrogen neutral"; and

¹¹ SD26: Minor Changes Schedule

Add the following text to para 7.4.8: Addressing Impacts on European protected habitats and wildlife as follows:

“(iii) ensuring new development is nitrogen neutral” and “Early indications are that the change of use of agricultural land to provide the settlement extension and the accompanying SANGs will offset the increase in nitrates from sewerage resulting from new dwellings, thereby ensuring the development is nitrogen neutral with no adverse harm upon water quality in Poole Harbour.” ; and “The SANGS comprises fields to the south of the housing site south of Frenches Farm between Watery Lane and Slough Lane which extend to approximately 4.7 hectares. The principal point of access should be to the south east of the housing development adjacent to Frenches Farm. There should be second access on Slough Lane to the south of the SANGS. There should be a third access from Slough lane to the east of the SANGS and south of the allotments. This path should be at least 6 metres in diameter screened on the northern side by the allotments and open on the southern side, possibly through the use of small wooden posts to demarcate the edge of the path. If the field is stocked with animals a livestock fence could be added at a later date. The access should be wide to allow a dog to be taken off the lead. Ensure paths have a semi natural feel (e.g. mown grass), but the use of an all weather surface around the principal access by Frenches Farm will encourage dog walking all year. A small informal car park should be provided by Frenches Farm with space for 2-3 cars. The SANGS should deflect people away from heathland and Poole Harbour to the south east of Upton to ensure there is not an increase in visits and associated disturbance to nesting birds. The use of screening, a ditch or signage could help in diverting people off the track to the sewage treatment works and into the SANGS. Views of Poole Harbour should be maintained if possible. A pond could be provided in the south west corner of the SANGS providing interesting destination for walks.”