

North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 Examination

Statement submitted by Savills on behalf of Barratt David Wilson Homes

Issue 9: Shaftesbury (Policy 18)

Respondent ref number: 3027

Hearing Session: Thursday 19 March 2015, 10.00

February 2015

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Inspector's questions

9.1 Is there any evidence that the proposed residential development sites in Shaftesbury, including the development of land to the east of the town; to the south-east of Wincombe Business Park; and to the west of the A350 are not available, sustainable or deliverable? If such evidence exists what alternatives are available and have they been satisfactorily considered by the Council?

Land to the east of Shaftesbury (part of the Hopkins land) and to the south east of Wincombe Business Park (the Site)

The Site is available

2. The Site is available for development. The Site comprises agricultural land and is made of two parcels of land. The largest parcel of land is to the north of Wincombe Lane and is referred to as 'land to the south east of Wincombe Lane' in criterion 'g' of Policy 18. The smaller parcel is to the south of Wincombe Lane which forms part of the allocation carried forward from the adopted Local Plan and is part of the area referred to as 'to the east of the town (including the Hopkins land)' at criterion 'f' in Policy 18.
3. Barratt David Wilson Homes, a major nation-wide house builder, has control of this land and has submitted a detailed planning application for 196 dwellings (Ref No 2/2014/1350/FUL, and referred to as 'Land off Wincombe Lane'). The detailed residential development application includes the provision for new vehicular and pedestrian accesses on to Wincombe Lane, with off-site highway improvements, creation of footpath links to Tollgate Park and Cranborne Drive, creation of new public spaces and play areas, and a comprehensive landscaping scheme with the retention of most of the surrounding trees and hedgerows.
4. The eastern extent of the Site is defined by land safeguarded by Policy SB18 of the adopted North Dorset Local Plan for the construction of an A350 Shaftesbury Bypass road. The Draft North Dorset Local Plan also maintains this safeguarding.

The Site is sustainable

5. The Site is a sustainable location for development. To the west, the Site adjoins existing residential development, Shaftesbury C of E Primary School is located on Wincombe Lane very close to the Site entrance, and includes a large open area of playing fields. The proposed development continues as a logical progression from the planned

development south of the Site and to the east of Shaftesbury currently being built by another nation-wide house builder.

6. The proposed development fulfils the three dimensions of sustainable development identified in the NPPF. The Site would deliver 196 dwellings that will bring about a range of positive economic benefits. This includes jobs in the construction and real estate sector, related additional expenditure in the local economy, and in the longer term supply-side assistance to the housing market, and expenditure by new residents on local goods and services. Social benefits derive from providing mixed housing and tenure types to meet local needs (including affordable housing) and additional jobs in the short and long term. Environmental aspects have been addressed as the Site is in a highly sustainable location with no statutory environmental protection. The submitted application incorporates features with environmental values – hedgerows and trees – within the development.
7. The amenity of neighbouring land uses is safeguarded. The Site has allowed for a planning application to be submitted with a scheme that effectively respects the amenity of existing neighbouring residents through appropriate set-backs of building orientation. The form of development has taken into account landscape and visual studies to influence the green space, planting and development layout. The Site further benefits as being a sustainable location with existing footpaths being safeguarded and a scheme that is sympathetic to the provision for pedestrians and cyclists.

The Site is deliverable

8. The Site is deliverable. The detailed planning application (Ref No 2/2014/1350/FUL) is accompanied by a full suite of specialist reports undertaken by a consultant team looking at different areas to ensure the deliverability of a residential scheme.

Ecology

9. A Phase 1 Habitat Survey has been undertaken. The recommendations of this report have influenced the design of the detailed planning application. An oak tree is being retained and made a feature. The majority of hedgerows are being retained and where hedgerows are affected on Wincombe Lane, relocation is proposed. The scheme design has been influenced by the potential needs of badgers.
10. A non-licensed method statement approach is adopted in respect of great crested newts, as agreed with the LPA ecologist. No reptiles have been recorded on the Site or receptor

site. No dormice were confirmed. Development can proceed with no further constraints in relation to reptiles and dormice.

11. The scheme will allow for the continued commuting and foraging of bats around the Site. This will be done through the retention of a buffer of hedgerow, grassland and trees around the Site boundary. The hedgerow along the northern boundary of the smaller site will be translocated further south into the site to maintain commuting and foraging routes. Foraging resources for bats would be incorporated into the landscape design through a diverse collection of native planting. There will be no light spill over 0.6 lux along the boundaries and these light levels are not considered to impact foraging and commuting bats. Construction practices will avoid delaying the emergence of locally roosting bats.
12. To mitigate for breeding birds, largely all the hedgerows are retained within the scheme design and buffers are created alongside the hedgerows. Public access is not encouraged in these buffer areas. The western hedgerow of Area 2 will be translocated into the development site to allow for Wincombe Lane to be widened.

Trees

13. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been completed and finds that the majority of trees to be lost are '*low category*'. A small number of '*moderate category*' trees to be lost are '*not significant skyline features due to the rural location*'. The loss of trees will have '*no significant*' impact on the present character of the area and there is plenty of space for tree planting and a new landscape scheme includes substantial new tree planting.

Archaeology

14. An Archaeological Assessment has found that the Site possesses an overall '*low potential and low archaeological significance*'. No further work is recommended.

Land contamination

15. A Land Contamination Assessment has identified that the Site is not considered to have a potentially contaminated current use or history. Ground investigation works did not indicate the presence of elevated concentrations of a wide range of potential soil contaminants. A requirement for remediation has not been established.

Noise

16. A Noise Assessment has confirmed that the proposed development is not expected to have an '*adverse impact on health or quality of life*'. Noise mitigation is sufficient to reduce the effects of noticeable and disruptive noise currently emitted from the surrounding environment to levels not exceeding BS 8233 criteria within all areas of the proposed development.

Odour

17. As identified in the Odour Assessment accompanying the application, a small area of the north west corner of the Site may experience odour. It is proposed that mechanical ventilation is provided for properties in this area. There are on-going discussions with the LPA on this issue.

Lighting

18. A Lighting Assessment has been completed and concludes that provided the specified lighting design is implemented, the sky glow levels associated with development at the Site will not have a significant effect on the surrounding dark sky landscape.

Landscaping

19. A Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal and Landscape Strategy has found that through an appropriate layout and building design and landscape spaces and planting, the proposed residential development adjacent to the existing settlement would not have long term negative effects on the townscape character or the wider landscape setting of Shaftesbury. The Landscape Strategy will be followed to assimilate the new development into its surroundings.

Transport

20. The Transport Assessment that accompanies the application has analysed the transport related impacts of the proposed development and suggests infrastructure improvements which increase the opportunity to travel other than by the car. The proposal would not have a material impact upon the local road network.
21. A Travel Plan with the objective to reduce the development's travel demands through promoting more sustainable travel practices accompanies the application. This has a

target to create a 7% shift in modal choice away from single occupancy car trips towards more sustainable modes.

Open Space

22. The scheme submitted provides for 0.89 hectares of open space on-site. This over provides open space which can be used for casual children's play by up to 0.59 hectares. One local equipped area of play (LEAP) and one local area of play (LAP) are proposed on-site. Through agreement with the LPA, a commuted sum to improve an existing off-site facility could be made.

Conclusion

23. The Site is available and is currently subject of a detailed planning application for residential use. The Site has been demonstrated as a sustainable location for residential development, adjacent to existing residential development and within close reach of local services. Extensive specialist assessments confirm the Site is deliverable for residential use. The current submitted planning application (Ref No 2/2014/1350/FUL, 'Land off Wincombe Lane') demonstrates a scheme that can deliver 196 dwellings without creating any significant adverse impacts.

24. The evidence confirms the Site is available, sustainable and deliverable.

9.3 Can the proposed development be satisfactorily assimilated into the town without significant detriment to the character of the environment and the living conditions of nearby residents?

25. Residential development at this location can satisfactorily assimilate into Shaftesbury without significant detriment to the character of the environment and the living conditions of nearby residents, as demonstrated by the detailed planning application submitted by Barratt Homes for 196 dwellings at this Site (Ref No 2/2014/1350/FUL).

26. The proposed residential scheme provides a mix of dwellings including detached, semi-detached, terraced houses and some apartments. The mix reflects the mixed character of the surrounding area. The building types draw from the neighbouring area to ensure a good fit with the urban form of the vicinity.

27. Where development lies adjacent to the Site boundaries, the buildings generally present less visual dominance. The dwellings either edge on, are set back or have lower roof profiles when adjacent to existing development. Two-storey buildings are proposed adjacent to the boundaries of existing development, rising to a maximum of three-storey within the development. This ensures neighbouring properties are not imposed upon and that views across the countryside are not impinged. The conclusion of the Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA) accompanying the detailed planning application confirms that development at the Site would not have long term negative effects on Shaftesbury or the wider landscape setting.
28. The Site is not subject to any landscape designations, although it is located within 200m of the nearest part of the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The hedgerows and trees around the boundaries of the Site have value in terms of their contribution to local landscape character and as foraging and community corridors for wildlife. There is also historical significance to some of the Site boundary features, and public rights of way that run alongside the Site edges.
29. The design of the proposed development has respect for local landscape and townscape character and residential amenity, the settings of settlements, countryside and designated landscapes, as well as important landscape features including historic assets, public rights of way, vegetation and areas of wildlife value. In addition, an integrated network of new green infrastructure features are proposed that would benefit landscape character and biodiversity. Grassed and planted buffers retained at the Site edges that would have ecological, landscape, and recreational functions, while also providing separation between neighbouring footpaths and built areas, and the new development.
30. The LVIA confirms, *'the landscape effects would be limited to the site and a relatively small surrounding area, up to around 1km distance to the north, east and southeast. While the setting of the closest part of the AONB would be altered by bringing development closer to the designated area, this part of the AONB is heavily wooded, and there would be limited potential for intervisibility with the new built area. The proposed eastern landscape buffer to development would provide a degree of physical and visual separation between development and the nearest part of the AONB'*.
31. The LVIA also confirms, *'there are expected to be some views towards the development from the AONB downland areas south and southeast of the site. However, the built area*

would only form a very small part of a wider built up area - Shaftesbury settlement - in these panoramic and distant views. The approach by the architects to the materials for the proposed buildings is to use muted and earthy tones, in order to reduce the potential for reflection or glare either in bright sunlight or during periods of rain. The approach to the lighting design is also one of minimal, necessary intervention, with a low level of lighting provided near the ecological and landscape corridors at the site boundaries. It is quite possible therefore that a casual observer would barely notice the change in the view, given that other screening elements such as the Dairy buildings, and mature vegetation in the landscape would also provide partial visual screening to the development. The setting to the part of the site south of Wincombe Lane is also planned to change, with further development proposed by others as part of the southeastern extension to Shaftesbury. This in turn would provide further screening'.

Conclusion

32. The Site can be developed and satisfactorily assimilated into the town without significant detriment to the character of the environment and the living conditions of nearby residents. The application details a Design Response contained within the submitted Planning, Design and Access Statement. This confirms that the design features of the proposal allow it to be developed without detriment to the character or living conditions of nearby residents. The LVIA has assessed the scheme's impact on the town and nearby AONB. This has concluded that the Site can be developed for residential purposes with appropriate layout and building design, landscape spaces and planting, and *'would not have substantial long term negative effects on the townscape character or the wider landscape setting of Shaftesbury'*.

9.4 Are all the infrastructure requirements listed in policy 18 justified and deliverable?

Grey Infrastructure

33. Policy 18 seeks *'grey infrastructure to support growth'* which includes provision of a new road link from the B3081 to the A30 at Enmore Green, and improved walking and cycling links between the town centre and residential development to the east of the town. The policy also protects the route of the Shaftesbury Outer Eastern By-pass from development that would prejudice its implementation in the longer term.

34. The planning application submitted at the Site does not affect the provision of a new link road from the B3081 to the A30.
35. The Travel Plan accompanying the application looks at ways of supporting a reduction in single occupancy car trips towards more sustainable modes. The application makes provision for on-site cycleways and pedestrian routes to run around the main site. This comprehensive pedestrian and cycle connectivity route would connect to the existing Shaftesbury network. The development would encourage more users to walk and cycle.
36. The residential development application does not prejudice the protected area intended for the Outer Eastern By-pass. There are no features on the site that correspond or intrude into the area protected for the by-pass. The scheme is a comprehensive application and accommodates and screens the proposed residential development from the by-pass route intended to run parallel to its eastern boundary.

Social Infrastructure

37. Policy 18 also seeks to provide social infrastructure to support growth. This includes a new community hall for the town; a new primary school, extension to the secondary school, and an expanded further adult education provision in the town. The policy also seeks a new doctor's surgery or the expansion or relocation of the existing doctor's surgery.
38. The Applicant is discussing Heads of Terms with the Local Planning Authority to form a Section 106 Agreement to deliver the following indicative list of the infrastructure:
- Highway improvements (including off-site improvements)
 - Education – financial provision for school places.
 - Improvement to waste management provision (off-site).
 - Landscape mitigation.
 - Improvements to Shaftesbury Doctor's Surgery (off-site).

9.5 Should there be a reference to the Minerals Safeguarding Area? (see rep 2783)

39. The Minerals Strategy is a stand alone development plan document in its own right. It is therefore not necessary to cross-reference between the plans, although it may be of benefit for users of the plan, any reference is at the discretion of NDDC. It is understood that detailed maps of minerals safeguarding areas have been supplied to the Local

Planning Authorities for development management purposes. Consultation on the current application has not raised this as an issue and it is therefore assumed that the Site lies outside this area. In the event that it is identified as falling within the safeguarding area, consideration will be given to the viability of extracting part of the minerals resource as part of the development of the Site. This need not cause significant delay to the delivery of the proposed development.

40. The Minerals Strategy includes Policy DM1 – Key Criteria for Sustainable Minerals Development. This Policy requires the protection of local amenity. In the supporting text accompanying Policy DM1, it states that impacts must be kept to a minimum through the use of appropriate mitigation measures, such as *‘the incorporation of an appropriate buffer between residents and minerals workings – this should be a minimum of 100 metres from the nearest sensitive receptor(s)’*. A minimum buffer zone of 100 metres to protect residential amenity would make most, if not all, of the Site identified as Land south-east of Wincombe Business Park unavailable for minerals development because of its adjacent proximity to existing residential dwellings to the north and western boundaries. The remainder of the identified Site lies within an area protected for the Outer Eastern By-pass.

41. Therefore, the Site cannot support minerals development.

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42. Land to the south-east of Wincombe Business Park and to the east of the town as identified in criterion ‘f’ and ‘g’ of Policy 18/Site 8 of Figure 8.3 of the emerging North Dorset Local Plan is an available, sustainable and deliverable Site for residential development. A full planning application for 196 dwellings on the Site has been submitted (Ref No 2/2014/1350/FUL). The Site forms part of NDDC’s five year land supply as set out in the AMR 2014 and should be included in the settlement boundary and allocated for development on the proposals map.