

Response to Main Issues for Examination from West Parley Parish Council

This document represents West Parley Parish Council’s written response to Matter 11 of the examination hearings in support of WPPC’s previous representations through the consultation process.

Issues and Questions addressed

Inspector’s Questions

- 3 Policy HE1 Protection of local historic and architectural interest**
 - Is the policy heading coherent?**
 - Is the policy consistent with the NPPF?**
 - Is the policy internally consistent?**

Summary

	3
Test of Soundness	Not effective – does not protect SAM
Suggested Modification	Include a criteria-based policy which describes the process for dealing with the historic environment in planning applications.

Matter 11: Other Matters

Question 3: Policy HE1 Protection of local historic and architectural interest

Is the policy heading coherent?

- 1.1 WPPC consider that policy HE1 is unclear and imprecise, the heading “Protection of local historic environment” would be more effective in place of that currently proposed. This would accord better with the language used in the NPPF.

Is the policy consistent with the NPPF?

- 1.2 The NPPF is clear that Local Planning Authorities should set out a positive strategy for the protection of the historical environment as part of their Local Plan (paragraph 126). Policy HE1 provides no locally specific guidance on how historic assets will be protected in East Dorset and Christchurch; neither does the policy identify specific assets requiring protection. The policy contains a lack of local detail on historical assets and the methods the Councils intend to use to protect them from unsympathetic development. WPPC are particularly concerned that the policy does not provide any information on how the Councils intend to deal with planning applications which impact on nationally recognised heritage assets and the process a developer will have to follow in order to gain permission. Without outlining the procedure, developers and the public face considerable uncertainty in understanding how the Councils will reach a decision on planning applications involving the historic environment. WPPC consider that HE1 is not consistent with the NPPF as the policy does not provide a positive strategy for the protection of the historic environments specific to Christchurch and East Dorset.

Is the policy internally consistent?

- 1.3 The policy uses unclear and imprecise wording which makes it difficult to judge the consistency of the policy. Most notably the policy refers to a ‘heritage protection strategy’ without stipulating the format of this strategy. WPPC would question the status of the proposed Heritage Protection Strategy as it appears to be an example of the Council retro-fitting policy without fully justifying the need with evidence. WPPC have concerns that this creates considerable uncertainty, particularly since the Councils are seeking to allocate a large housing site adjacent to the Scheduled Ancient Monument at Dudsbury Rings, West Parley.

Suggested Modification

- 1.4 We suggest the Councils re-title the policy as listed in our response to the Inspector’s question above. We suggest the Council reword the policy to be criteria-based, showing the level of weight the Councils will give to each type of heritage designation. This would provide more certainty to both developers and the public to enable an understanding of the local process for dealing with a heritage asset through the planning process.