

WEST DORSET, WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND LOCAL PLAN

MATTER NO 5:

ECONOMY

ON BEHALF OF PERSIMMON HOMES SOUTH COAST

Pegasus Group

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5. MATTER 5 – ECONOMY

5.1 Does the spatial strategy provide an adequate basis for addressing the future needs of the two areas or would other options provide better outcomes?

5.1.1 In the Hearing Statement to Matter 3, Persimmon Homes have raised issues with the spatial strategy, particularly with regard to the distribution of growth across the eastern area of the plan and the oversupply of housing in Weymouth and Portland being used to mask the vulnerable housing land supply in West Dorset. These issues relate to housing more than the economy and so will not be repeated here.

The economic ambitions of the Local Authorities

5.1.2 The Local Plan includes a number of Strategic Objectives including:

- To support the local economy to provide opportunities for high quality, better paid jobs.
- To regenerate key areas including Weymouth and Dorchester town centres, to improve the area's retail, arts, cultural and leisure offer, and increase employment opportunities.

5.1.3 Similarly the Dorset Local Economic Partnership sets out its aim within the Prospectus for Dorset LEP (June 2011) to:

- Support a strongly performing, productive and sustainable economy, characterised by a greater incidence of higher paid and higher skilled jobs, and to do this in a manner that harnesses and protects our unique environmental assets.

5.1.4 This is further reinforced within the objectives and the priority actions which include:

- 4th objective - To create the conditions for enterprise; with an initial focus on establishing a coherent framework for spatial planning consistent with the imperative for appropriate forms of sustainable economic growth. Associated work will address the issue of affordable housing which impacts upon workforce availability.
- 1st priority action - Creating a global hub for trade and international business – focussing particularly on opportunities linked to Bournemouth Airport, Port of Poole and Portland Port (potentially focussed initially on the development of a proposal for an “archipelago” Enterprise Zone, or using available powers to achieve the outcome).

- 4th priority action - Planning positively for sustainable economic growth, emphasising the need to be “open for business” – particularly in more rural areas.

5.1.5 These documents set a positive aspiration for significant levels of economic growth. However, these ambitions are at odds with the revised job growth target contained in the Local Plan. Indeed, FPC3 proposes a very significant reduction in the growth of the number of jobs (from that previously proposed) from 16,100 between 2011 and 2031 to 2,300 between 2011 and 2028 which will not support the economy of the plan area in accordance with paragraph 154 of the NPPF.

The number of jobs planned for within the Local Plan

5.1.6 A full review of the revised housing and job numbers is included in the Chelmer Demographic and Housing Review Paper prepared by Pegasus Group (which is attached to the Further Proposed Changes response ID797 –September 2014). Some of the key points as they relate to jobs are summarised below.

5.1.7 In paragraph 16 of the Inspector’s response following the exploratory meeting requested that various economic forecasts were compared. This has not been achieved within the PBA SHMA report.

5.1.8 The PBA SHMA report (CD/SUS10 July 2014) which provides the evidence used to justify the revised job growth figure projects the population growth and calculates a single assessment of the potential job growth arising from this. This projected job growth is therefore constrained by the projected population growth arising from a specific number of homes and fails to reflect the needs of or the opportunities available to the economy. This is contrary to the PPG (ID: 2a-032-20140306) which requires that “Local authorities should develop an idea of future needs” for employment. In order to do this an unconstrained jobs-led projection, such as that used in the Chelmer Demographic and Housing Review Paper, is required rather than the approach adopted by PBA.

5.1.9 A number of other projections and estimates of the annual number of jobs that have been or will be delivered in the plan area are presented in the table below. This clearly demonstrates that the job growth proposed in Further Proposed Change 3 is not in accordance with paragraph 154 of the NPPF as it is not aspirational, nor is it in accordance with the aims and objectives of the Local Plan or the Prospectus for the Local Enterprise Partnership. A far more aspirational number of jobs should be planned for.

Source	Average number of jobs per annum
Proposed in Pre-submission draft of the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan from 2011 to 2031	805
Proposed in FPC3 from 2011 to 2028	135
Data obtained from Cambridge Econometrics (November 2013) for the period 2011 to 2031	638
Data obtained from Oxford Econometrics (September 2014) for the period 2011 to 2031	415
Experian (September) for the period 2001 to 2011	965

The Local Plan's approach to rebalancing homes and jobs

- 5.1.10 The PBA SHMA report identifies in paragraph 5.6 that the local resident workforce is expected to increase although the number of jobs is expected to remain similar to the level in 2011. Paragraph 5.7 then identifies that this is accounted for by an assumed reduction in commuting. Whilst a reduction in commuting is to be supported, this should not be achieved at the expense of economic growth as is proposed in the Further Changes. Rather the growth of the workforce should be supported by providing additional housing in order to achieve the same goal.
- 5.1.11 The Chelmer Demographic and Housing Review Paper presents a dwelling constrained projection assuming that 775 dwellings are built per annum to 2031. This indicates that if the proposed numbers of dwellings are delivered, the labour force will increase by only 693 persons. Based upon this robust projection there would be a shortfall in the growth of the workforce as compared to even the limited increase of 2,300 jobs. The result of providing the planned levels of homes and jobs is that an even greater level of net in-commuting would be required. However, this could be addressed by providing further homes as detailed in the recommendations of the Chelmer Demographic and Housing Review Paper prepared by Pegasus that accompanied our representations to the Further Proposed Changes in September 2014.

The distribution of employment growth

- 5.1.12 The Strategic Approach to Employment within the Local Plan identifies that employment land will be delivered through the allocation of new sites, with the greater proportion of these at the towns. However, the Local Plan identifies only one site for employment growth at the largest town within West Dorset, namely Dorchester, at Poundbury. Rather than address the employment needs of the town at the town, the Local Plan then seeks to deliver the remaining employment provision for Dorchester at Crossways, which is remote from the town and the workforce. Thereby, the Local Plan does not support the economic growth of Dorchester in the most sustainable way or in accordance with its own Strategic Approach.
- 5.1.13 Land at North Dorchester is well related to Dorchester and would provide for the employment (and housing) needs of the town. Allocating this site now would ensure that the development needs would begin to be addressed for Dorchester both within and beyond the plan period.
- 5.1.14 During the course of the preparation of the Local Plan the following documents have been prepared on behalf of Persimmon Homes as part of the North Dorchester Consortium in order to promote the land at North Dorchester including the provision of employment land:
- Transport Sustainability and Traffic Modelling report – PFA Consulting
 - A Vision for Sustainable Growth at North Dorchester – Terence O'Rourke
- 5.1.15 The provision of additional employment land at North Dorchester would align with the Vision and Objectives of the emerging Local Plan, as well as providing for greater consistency with the NPPF and the PPG by:
- contributing to economic growth in the plan area in accordance with the Strategic Objectives of the Local Plan, paragraph 154 of the NPPF and ID: 2a-032-20140306 of the PPG, rather than constraining economic growth to accord to a set level of housing provision.
 - reducing the need to travel by providing for better alignment of homes and jobs through the delivery of more jobs in Dorchester in accordance with the Strategic Approach of the Local Plan, and
 - delivering a greater proportion of employment land at the towns in accordance with the Strategic Approach of the Local Plan.

5.2 Is sufficient attention given to employment needs in rural areas?

5.2.1 Persimmon Homes have no comments on this question.

5.3 Is the general approach to retail development appropriate and in accordance with the principles in the NPPF?

5.3.1 Persimmon Homes have no comments on this question.

5.4 Does the Plan provide a suitable framework for supporting the tourist economy?

5.4.1 Persimmon Homes have no comments on this question.

5.5 Have the needs of primary industries (agriculture, forestry, extraction operations) been adequately addressed?

5.5.1 Persimmon Homes have no comments on this question.