



Unclassified

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Date: 07 June 2012.
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Attn Ms J Neale,
Programme Officer
Examination into Purbeck Core Strategy
The Programme Office
Purbeck District Council
Westport House,
Worgret Road,
Wareham,
Dorset.
BH20 4PP

Dear Ms Neale,

Purbeck District Council Statement on the Implications for the Core Strategy of the Publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Comments of Dorset County Council on the Statement.

Introduction

Dorset County Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on Purbeck District Council's statement on the implications for the Core Strategy of the publication of the NPPF. The statement and accompanying "Self Assessment Checklist" comprehensively assess the implications of the NPPF on the Core Strategy and are supported with the following provisos.

Section 2.15 - Plan Making (paras 150 – 157 of NPPF)

The NPPF (para 156) states that local planning authorities should set out in the Local Plan the strategic priorities for the area. Purbeck District Council has not addressed this. Reference could be made in Chapter 1 to the influence of the work undertaken by the Dorset authorities in preparing the South West Regional Strategy on the development of the Core Strategy. Also, how subsequent work reflects more recent population and household projections and other evidence such as the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Workplace Study, Local Transport Plan and Renewable Energy Strategy that relate to the wider Dorset area. This would help provide a more strategic context for the Core Strategy.

Section 2.17 - Planning strategically across local boundaries (paras 178 – 181 of the NPPF)

Purbeck propose a modification (No 1 Main Modifications) which introduces a statement at para 1.4 of the Core Strategy on the Duty to Co-operate.

Dorset County Council welcomes the expressed intention of Purbeck District Council to commit to the duty to cooperate and confirms that it too wishes to be party to any

“memorandum of understanding” (MoU). Dorset Environment Managers Group are actively working on the MoU, however until such time as it is signed off it cannot be tabled at the examination.

It should also be noted that the MoU is only a template for how the authorities intend to co-operate and whilst it will provide a valuable confirmation of the willingness to do so, it does not in itself represent a strategy or evidence base for matters of cross boundary significance (such as housing, employment or infrastructure.)

Until such times as there is agreement between authorities on how their strategies for matters of cross-boundary significance join up, the Purbeck Core Strategy, like others in the area, has some degree of uncertainty about future spatial relationships with neighbouring areas (notwithstanding the RSS evidence base).

Bearing this in mind, Dorset County Council considers that, to have the necessary flexibility, the plan may require an early review should any emerging evidence or strategy work under the duty to co-operate reveal a need to adjust the strategy approach. (See further comments below under “Examining Local Plans”.)

Para 1.4.1 could go further in defining how Purbeck will work alongside neighbouring authorities by amending the text to read:

“1.4.1. The Council through the duty to cooperate will work with local authorities in the Dorset Economic Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area on an ongoing basis to agree matters of a strategic nature ~~for inclusion in a~~ that will steer any future review of the Local Plan.”

In this way it leaves open the possibility that, should work at the strategic level determine that providing for development in the conurbation would be a more sustainable option than requiring additional development in Purbeck, any review of the Local Plan would be on this basis.

Para 1.4.2. Whilst recognising the intent behind this statement, it might be re-phrased as follows:

“The Local Authorities in the Dorset LEP area are addressing the housing and employment growth needs of the area within their individual adopted and emerging development plans, having regard to cross boundary issues. Purbeck’s Core Strategy has been prepared in this context, based upon relevant evidence of strategic needs and its role in meeting these.”

Para 1.4.3. Possible future development at Crossways.

Whilst recognising the need to investigate possible opportunities for development at Crossways, Dorset County Council as minerals authority would advise that the emerging Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Core Strategy proposes a Minerals Safeguarding Area (MSA) protecting minerals of likely economic importance from sterilisation by built and other development which covers much of the land around Crossways including that within Purbeck District.

Should development be promoted at Crossways in the future, the County Council as highway authority would wish to be involved in any discussions with West Dorset District Council regarding possible transport links to Moreton railway station.

Section 2.18 - Examining Local Plans (para 182 – 185 of NPPF)

Purbeck District Council recognises that the Core Strategy does not provide for sufficient housing to meet local needs. It is acknowledged that a partial review may be necessary but is not stated how or when this might take place. Dorset County Council would

advocate a recommendation that the Plan should be the subject of an early review unless the outcome of any evidence and strategy development under the duty to co-operate confirms that it is consistent with neighbouring areas and adequately addresses matters of cross-boundary significance.

It is suggested that wording could be inserted at the end of section 6.1 as follows:

“In view of the potential shortfall in housing supply over the plan period, it is intended that, in addition to annual monitoring a cycle of more comprehensive monitoring and review of the Core Strategy housing provision is established with review dates of 2016 and 2021. Review processes would start in advance of the review dates to enable any new policies to be adopted in a timely manner. All available evidence sources, including demographic forecasts and actual provision in the intervening years, as well as the outcome of any strategic assessment of development requirements agreed under the duty to cooperate, will be examined.”

If the evidence suggests that additional housing is required the review will consider the appropriate response, bearing in mind the potential adverse effect upon European sites.

Policy HS should be amended as follows:

“Monitoring of housing development is critical to ensure that

- sufficient housing is provided and
- there is no adverse impact upon protected habitats.

The appropriate number of new homes will be reviewed in 2016 and 2021. Currently the Habitats Regulations Assessment has indicated that 2,520 dwellings are achievable with suitable mitigation....etc”

Please note this is an officer response.

Yours faithfully,

Gill Smith
Senior Planning Officer