



Purbeck Core Strategy Development Plan Document

Examination into the soundness of the plan

Statement on behalf of Purbeck District Council

Hearing date: Thursday 10 May 2012 – 10am

Matter 9: Green Infrastructure, Recreation and Sports Facilities (Policy GI)

Issues

- 9.1 Is policy GI consistent with national guidance? What is the justification for the provision of green infrastructure and how will it be provided?
- 9.2 What is the status of the South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy?

Introduction

1. This statement considers all the issues within Matter 9: Green Infrastructure, Recreation and Sports Facilities (Policy GI).

Statements of common ground

2. No statements of common ground have been submitted in relation to this Matter.

Why the Council considers the Core Strategy sound

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

9.1 Is policy GI consistent with national guidance? What is the justification for the provision of green infrastructure and how will it be provided?

Consistency of Policy GI: Green Infrastructure with national guidance

4. National planning guidance has historically (PPS1, PPS7, PPS9, PPG17, Consultation paper on a new Planning Policy Statement: Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment) set out the importance of the provision of good quality green infrastructure for everyone within the community, particularly in providing sustainable, attractive and healthy environments. The provision of green infrastructure supports access, leisure, sport and recreation opportunities, and provides the opportunity to protect and enhance biodiversity and natural habitats within urban and rural areas. Provision of green infrastructure also provides the opportunity to link up existing networks of natural habitats improving biodiversity and increasing adaptability to climate change. New development provides the opportunity to include green infrastructure as an integral part of overall layout, ensuring linkages within the development itself and with wider green infrastructure provision.
5. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires Local Planning Authorities to plan positively towards the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure (para 114).

Justification for the provision of Green Infrastructure

6. The Council considers that Policy GI: Green Infrastructure, Recreation and Open Space, together with policies DH: Dorset Heathlands and BIO: Biodiversity and Geodiversity provide an essential and locally strategic policy framework that reflects local circumstances and conforms with the NPPF.
7. Policy GI: Green Infrastructure, Recreation and Sports Facilities ensures the provision of new and replacement recreation and sports facilities and will safeguard existing green infrastructure and facilities. The policy addresses local circumstances and requires new development to provide towards recreation and sports facilities and green infrastructure. The policy protects existing provision from loss unless an excess of provision can be proven or suitable replacement facilities are provided. The policy requires replacement facilities to be of equivalent or improved provision to existing.

8. Other policies within the Core Strategy also support the provision of green infrastructure in accordance with national planning guidance. Policy BIO: Biodiversity and Geodiversity establishes a local framework for the provision of Strategic Nature Areas, linkages between habitats and the achievement of projects with wider geographical extent such as 'Wild Purbeck'. The provision of a rural network of green infrastructure through projects such as 'Wild Purbeck' will improve existing wildlife habitats, retain and enhance wildlife corridors and habitat functions, restore ecological processes, build adaptability and resilience of habitats to (climate) change and ensure that the landscape contributes and connects to local economies and communities. Policy DH: Dorset Heathlands requires the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS) as mitigation against the impact of new housing development on protected heathland. The provision of SANGS also delivers a form of green infrastructure increasing wider networks of provision across the District.

Provision of Green Infrastructure

9. Across South East Dorset, including part of Purbeck district, local authorities have produced a Green Infrastructure Strategy¹ which recognises the assets within the sub-region (based on [previously] emerging Regional Spatial Strategy sub-regional boundaries) and approaches to management as part of a wider multi-functional green infrastructure network. Areas of the district which fall under the Strategy may need to provide a financial contribution towards Green infrastructure provision in accordance with the strategy's projects. Alternatively, larger scale development proposals may need to provide on-site provision. However, a development proposal that includes SANGS as a means of heathland mitigation may not need to provide additional green infrastructure.

9.2 What is the status of the South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy?

10. The Council has endorsed the South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy which has some weight as background evidence. The next potential stage to explore is the preparation of a delivery strategy for each project together with funding availability. The outcome of this stage may require new development which does not provide on-site green infrastructure to provide a contribution as part of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Suggested changes for the Inspector to consider

11. Update as per changes 89 and 90 of the Minor Changes Schedule².

¹ CD97: Investing in Green Places – South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy

² SD26: Minor Changes Schedule