

Matter 9 – Green Infrastructure, Recreation and Sports facilities (Policy G1)

Introduction/Background

Policy G1 requires new residential development to make provision for green infrastructure, sport & recreation facilities and purports to safeguard existing facilities. It also states, in respect of Replacement Facilities: *“Any replacement provision will take account of the needs of the area and current standards of open space, sport and/or recreational provision but should be equivalent to, or an improvement upon, the existing resource, in terms of size, attractiveness, quality and accessibility.”* The Sports & Recreation Audit & Assessment [CD98] states that the area is deficient by 6 No. junior playing field pitches. However Policy CEN states that a mixed-use settlement extension will include 200 new dwellings of which a minimum of 50% will be ‘affordable’ together with new open space to mitigate potential impacts upon nearby heathland; this site includes the site of the Wareham Middle School playing fields. CD152 is the Worgret Road Development Brief for this site. It states (in paragraph 57) that there is a requirement to retain the WMS *“playing fields where they are or provided elsewhere on the development brief site, or in an accessible location close to the main residential areas of Wareham.”* It also states (in paragraph 58) that new housing will generate a consequential need for additional open space, recreation and sports provision *“which, if possible, should be provided on site.”*

What particular part of the Core Strategy is unsound?

Policy G1, in seeking to safeguard and improve the provision of green infrastructure, sport & recreation facilities including in Wareham, is actually frustrated by Policy CEN, as are the requirements of the Development Brief.

Which criteria set out in paragraph 182 of the NPPF does it fail?

Although Policy G1 attempts to deliver appropriate sports & recreation facilities, it will be ineffective as set out below.

Why does it fail?

It is impossible to re-locate the existing playing fields at the Wareham Middle School site to a more accessible location in the town because there simply isn't an alternative site more accessible than this one. The allocation of 200 new houses including on the current playing field site therefore frustrates the aim to improve such facilities, irrespective of the fact that 200 houses themselves will generate a requirement for more open space and playing fields in circumstances where the area is already 6 No. junior pitches deficient as identified by the Council's own Sports & Recreation Audit & Assessment. There is simply insufficient land at the Worgret Road Brief site to provide 200 new houses, retain the same area of open space and sports pitches and rectify the existing deficiency. Policy CEN therefore frustrates the aims of Policy G1 and the Worgret Road Development Brief because they are mutually

incompatible. The Plan is therefore nonsensical and unsound because it is incapable of delivery.

How can the Core Strategy be made sound?

Policy CEN should be deleted. The Green Belt boundary should be maintained in its current position, which is the most effective means of securing the Wareham Middle School playing fields in their current use for the benefit of the local community as well as the expanded Purbeck School.

What is the precise change/wording we are seeking?

Delete Policy CEN in its entirety along with any accompanying text.