

From: Cllr David Northam

Sent: 14 July 2025 11:20

To: IPE Steve Carnaby [REDACTED]

cc. Redacted.

Subject: Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan note of clarification.

Dear Steve,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a note of clarification in response to emails submitted by Mr van der Pas after the closure of the Reg16 Consultation period.

Mr van der Pas has repeatedly challenged the process and integrity of the process and Steering Group members. He has raised multiple Freedom of Information (FOI) request and procedural complaints. The FOIs have been responded to and the complaints have not been upheld. He has submitted a large response to the examiner as part of the Regulation 16 Consultation. His email of 5th July repeats these challenges. I remain confident that I, and the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Steering Group (SG), have properly followed the defined process for Neighbourhood Planning and has acted in a proper manner in dealing with questions from members of the public, engaging the statutory authorities and working with Landowners and Dorset Council (DC) to produce a balanced plan for Weymouth.

The following is a response to his email of 5th July 2025 and is supported by evidence in the attached Annex.

Mr van der Pas' concerns regarding the Neighbourhood Plan Area are founded on a belief that changing the area will reduce the demand on housing – that is not the case and has been confirmed with DC.

Viability is a complex matter. Bailey and Venning Associates have completed Viability Testing of all the sites that were considered by the SG delegated to produce the Neighbourhood Plan. This has shown that the sites proposed in the Submission Plan for allocation are viable, ie the probable selling price exceeds the development costs (which include a suitable level of Profit for developers) whilst still delivering mixed developments of homes for market-led sale (50%) and affordable homes (50%) to meet local people's needs which can't be met by the market.

The Submission Plan will be modified so that the Green Gaps will not overlap the allocated sites. This will provide a level of protection from further development particularly where the land has been transferred, as a condition of development, into the hands of a suitable public organisation.

It is an accepted fact that all developments must deal with water run-off and the risk of flooding. Each of the site allocations include specific conditions to ensure that this is the case.

Mr van der Pas' main concern relates to the allocation of land at Wyke Oliver farm for 250 homes. The SG group are confident that all relevant planning concerns have been covered in the policies in the Plan such that a Planning Application will need to address these concerns.

He continues to state that 573 people objected to this allocation and their views are being ignored. This was not the case. 573 people took part in the third public engagement, in Jan/Feb 2023'. In this engagement 367 people were against the allocation of land on 6 sites outside the

defined development boundary for 100% affordable homes. The Submission Plan now takes into account the pertinent planning concerns and proposes a mixed tenure development of market homes alongside much needed affordable homes for local families on 2 sites.

He spuriously states that the 2nd developer has withdrawn – this is a baseless statement.

He spuriously states that raw sewage is constantly discharged into our bathing waters – this is untrue also, the Weymouth Central beach water quality has dropped from excellent to good but this relates to outflows through the harbour, Weymouth Lodmoor beach water quality remains excellent. The Council is working with relevant authorities to address Water Quality in the Weymouth Central area and recent water testing shows a return to excellent water quality levels once again.

Mr van der Pas is correct there is a shortage of sustainable land for development – Weymouth being bounded by the sea and much of the Town Centre being low lying. That is why, to meet the demand for affordable homes, in addition to the brownfield sites in the Town Centre the WNP is proposing allocating greenfield sites inland.

Mr van der Pas suggests that the Examiner is not independent. This is not the case, Examiners are professional Planning Inspectors.

Despite all the FOIs and complaints raised by Mr Van der Pas, the evidence shows that the plan is soundly based. There is no ‘secrecy’ but matters of land ownership and development, and land protection need to follow a defined process which reveals intent as maturity progresses to avoid financial speculation.

Lastly Mr Van der Pas accuses me of not meeting with residents. The Consultation Statement shows the level of engagement and I attended the last Preston ward meeting in February 2025. Mr van der Pas and another resident had 30 minutes to talk whereas I was only allowed 10 minutes.

Sincerely,

Cllr David Northam, Chair of the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Annex Details and Supporting Evidence

These emails of 22nd June, 24th June, 5th July and 7th July offer little new information relating to planning matters and statutory steps as directed by the examiners email of 30th June. The topics raised have previously been raised with Weymouth Town Council (WTC) and Dorset Council (DC), notably during the WTC Full Council Meetings on 20th November 2024, and 26th February 2025 which addressed the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan (NP). Answers were provided to questions raised by the public and recorded in the minutes. Alongside these meeting there have been a series of FOIs which have also been responded to by both Dorset Council and Weymouth Town Council. The general progress of the NP has been reported regularly to the Planning & Licensing committee and in the Notes of the Steering Group's (SG) Meetings. The records of these meetings are all published on our website together with some FAQs responding to questions from members of the public.

The Plan has been published as it has progressed and the Submission version of this is accompanied by the required Basic Conditions Statement and Consultation Statement together with a raft of supporting documents.

As these emails are to be published as part of the record of the Examination and I am pleased to provide clarification on a number of matters stated within these emails.

Much of this has already been stated or is evidenced in the following references:

1. Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2038 submitted to the Town Council in December 2024 and Updated in January 2025.
2. WNP Basic Conditions Statement, published October 2024.
3. WNP Consultation Statement, published November 2024.
4. WNP Viability Report produced by Bailey Venning Associates (BVA), [Weymouth-NP-Viability-Report-Compiled-Sept-2024.pdf](#)
5. Reg 16 Submission by Turley on behalf of the owners of Wyke Oliver Farm. [turley-on-behalf-of-landowner-of-wyke-oliver-farm-north-combined-redacted](#)
6. Email 28th June 2024 from Dorset Council revised Flooding Note.
7. Third Engagement Report. [Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan Further Supporting Information - Weymouth Town Council | Weymouth Town Council](#)
8. Notes of Steering Group Meetings: [Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting Notes - Weymouth Town Council | Weymouth Town Council](#)
9. Frequently Asked Questions: [Frequently-Asked-Questions-1.pdf](#)
10. Town Council Minutes of Meetings: [Committee Papers - Weymouth Town Council | Weymouth Town Council](#)
11. [Haven reveals plans to expand Weymouth Bay holiday park | Dorset Echo](#)
12. Dorset Council's response to Examiner Questions 20th June 2025: [dorset-council-cover-letter-and-response-to-examiner-s-questions-final-combined-redacted](#)

In reference to Mr van der Pas's email of 5th July the following clarifications are provided using the headings in his email:

Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Mr van der Pas suggests the NP Area has not been properly determined and was done in secrecy. This not the case. The proposed boundaries were discussed and agreed at WTC Full Council (Ref 2 Page 3 and Appendix 1) in 2020 and a request was submitted to DC to approve. Ref 1 Para 1.1 states the NP Area was agreed with DC in 2020 and this has since been displayed on both DC and WTC's website. Ref 3 Para 3 states that because Weymouth Town Council is the Qualifying Body there was no requirement to consult on the NP Area.

Mr van der Pas previously raised these concerns at Full Council on 26th February 2025 and received a full answer from the Town Clerk which is recorded in the minutes of the meeting (Ref 10) – a summary is given below.

Following the change to the Town Council boundaries in April / May 2024, advice was sought from DC. The response indicated that there was no requirement to align the boundaries and that this could be done at a later date. It was also advised that should the boundary be changed to incorporate the new areas then the housing requirement would be updated to include the already approved developments north of Littlemoor. The Steering Group therefore decided not to update the plan area at this stage as the supporting documents all relate to the Town Council boundary as extant in 2020 and no benefit would accrue. Also, the SG would look at updating the Designated Area at a future date such as following the publishing of the DC Local Plan, see Ref 9 FAQ4.

Mr van der Pas, questions the Site Assessment process and the options that were considered for residential use. The sites allocated in the extant Local Plan will not provide enough homes to meet the identified need for Affordable Housing. The SG issued a Call for Sites inviting local landowners to respond and also identified sites and contacted public land owners such as Dorset Council, Network Rail and leased by DWP. These were independently evaluated and feedback on the sites under consideration was sought from the public and statutory authorities. This has resulted in some sites that were being considered being excluded and only 4 sites are allocated for housing, see Ref 1 Policy W19.

The Weymouth NP can only address sites within the NP Area. The new Local Plan will be totalling up the demand across Dorset and is likely to continue to identify Weymouth as the principal site for development and within the Portland, Chickerell, Weymouth, Dorchester travel to work area which dominates Dorset Council's housing and employment requirements.

Mr van der Pas refers to 240 homes at Weymouth Bay. I think this shows confusion. There is a recent 2024/25 proposal by Haven to add 240 caravans to their Weymouth Bay holiday park as identified in Ref 11.

Mr van der Pas also refers to the small plot of land owned by DJ Property to the north of Littlemoor (see within WNP Map 11A shown as an existing planning permission and forming part of Site 7 Litt1 of the extant LP shown on Map 17) is defined in the extant Local Plan and Dorset Council advised that we should not include this site as it is already allocated – hence it was withdrawn.

Viability

Mr van der Pas' assertions do not reflect what occurred. Our viability consultant Bailey Venning Associates (BVA) was selected and contracted by Locality (the government agency supporting Neighbourhood Plans). BVA undertook the Viability Testing of our NP and addressed all the sites being considered within the WNP, Ref 4. This informed our site criteria and site allocation and required several iterations. BVA took the Three Dragons report produced as a supporting paper to the draft Dorset Local Plan to provide a common basis for CIL, as it is more recent than the papers produced for the 2015 LP. The 3 Dragons report lumped Weymouth and North Dorset as of similar types and grouped these in its broad recommendations to Dorset Council. How this report will inform the new Local Plan has not been declared by Dorset Council.

When BVA submitted their draft report, Ref 4, the Steering Group were able to identify better sources of data for letting and sales for viability comparisons and clarify sites which were outside the Weymouth designated area.

Mr van der Pas raises concerns that developers will raise compliant planning applications but will renege on their commitments. This concern is shared by the SG. The Policies within the WNP set more demanding criteria on developers (eg 50% proportion of affordable homes rather than the 35% within the Local Plan, and include transfer of land into public ownership to protect from further development.

The margins of development with 50% Affordable Homes are low but nevertheless demonstrate viability at the point of time of the investment (note development costs have increased). But it is recognised that any developer has the right to produce his own Viability Assessment. Most recently DC has been successful in mitigating the impact of development on Dorset Heathlands by changing the farming practice in the river catchment of these areas – this resulted in a change to the level of tariff imposed by DC on developers this has made the Weymouth sites more viable.

The examiner asked DC and WTC to clarify certain questions on Viability. Ref 12 shows that DC no longer recommend WTC to update the Viability Report.

Green Gaps

The WTC response to the examiner's query indicates that we are content to align the boundaries of Green Gaps and Developments once it is clear that specific development allocations are accepted.

The landowners of the Green Gaps between Preston and Littlemoor both objected to the Draft Dorset Council Local Plan extending the boundary of the Lorton Valley Nature Park across their land. The landowners of Wyke Oliver Farm have indicated (Ref 5) that they would support transfer of the remaining land if part of their holding were developed this condition 5 of Policy W20 in Ref1. The land to be developed is three times smaller than that to be released and still retains a visual and wildlife gap.

Development Boundaries

There is significant national concern about climate change, rising sea levels and change in weather causing increased flood risks. Dorset Council has progressed the work for the primary affected area ie Weymouth Harbourside and Esplanade – most of the town centre is on land reclaimed from the sea in the last 200 years. The brownfield sites in the town centre are often

within Flood Zone 3 and require due consideration to support their development which has not been forthcoming in the last 10 years perhaps due to the uncertainty relating to funding the necessary coastal defences in the town. Many other parts of Weymouth are at risk of water run-off flooding arising from the hills and the clay sublayers across much of Weymouth. Dorset Council advice, Ref 6, on the sites (outside FZ3) remains the same that any development will need assessment and approval of SUDS before planning permission is granted.

Policy W20 Land at Wyke Oliver Farm

Mr van der Pas has been provided the logic for the change in housing numbers. The NP has evolved since it started in 2020, as a result of growing understanding of processes, public engagement, and statutory consultation. This is reported in the Consultation Statement Ref 3. To begin with the Steering Group aspired to, development outside the Defined Development Boundary, meeting the Exception Site Policy in the extant LP and providing 100% Affordable Homes. This figure was used in the Third Public Engagement (See Ref 3 section 5.9 and Ref 7). This engagement asked for feedback on the SG consideration of allocating 6 sites for Exception Site Development of 100% affordable homes (Q8)– the number of homes was referenced in the Site Options and Assessment report as between 112 and 135 for the Wyke Oliver Farm site. At the time of this engagement the local conservative councillors produced a leaflet, and held a public meeting, which talked about the plan being complete, there being no consultation and the site combined with the then adjacent site providing 500 homes. This distorted the local response with 64% responding negatively to Q8 ie 367 out of 573 responses.

Following WTC discussions, the landowner and developer agreed to provide 50% affordable homes on a site of 250 homes. This was then put forward in Public 4th Engagement (Ref 7) which explored response to the SG consideration of allocating individual sites. Subsequently this informed the figures and policies in the Pre-Submission and Submission Plans.

Mr van der Pas refers to disregarding the input from 573 (sic) people during the Third Public Engagement. The total number of online responses was 573, there were 367 negative responses at this stage. These and other comments were used to frame the Policies within the NP - this has been pointed out several times. See FAQ20 and 21 in Ref 9.

The landowner has proposed extending this to 270 homes but this has not been taken forward by the SG and the number in the Submission Plan remains 250.

The Viability report is complex. In determining Viability landowners are allowed to make a profit between 15 and 20%. VBA used a figure of 17.5% for Open Market Profit and 6% for Affordable Housing page 27 of Ref 4. It has been pointed out to Mr van der Pas in response to FOIs that £100 is not the estimated Profit but the difference between the Sale Value and the Cost of Development. The Cost of Development includes an estimated profit figure for Wyke Oliver Farm of £9,554,032 with 50% Affordable Homes see page 90 of Ref 4. Cllr Northam did refer to 20% Profit this was an error as noted above.

Mr van der Pas says the figure of 32ha is contingent on WNP24 – this is not the case Policy W20 condition 5 relates to 23ha and Policy W21 condition 6 relates to 9.1ha of land being transferred to an appropriate body for public use. With respect to W20, Condition 5 refers to ‘a suitable organisation such as Dorset Wildlife Trust’ other bodies apart from Dorset Wildlife Trust manage land within Lorton Valley Nature Park.

BVA considered the viability of the development noting the transfer of land offset the BNG requirements and support the Green Gaps policy. BVA did not consider inclusion of SUDS condition as an exceptional cost.

Mr van der Pas is confused about the housing mix and accuses the Viability Testing of only considering 6% being 1-bed. Policy W17 Housing mix states that 'this should be based upon up to date local housing needs analysis'. For this the demand for Affordable Homes for Rent is captured in the Housing Register. The site allocations in the Local Plan in the town centre are expected to bring forward 1 and 2-bedroom homes. The wider need for Affordable Homes is for 2 and 3-bedroom homes with a smaller number of 1-bed and some 4-bed, Ref 1 paras 9.32-9.36. Ref 4 Page 36 para 6.30 states the housing mix for Market Homes and Affordable Homes used for Viability Testing at Wyke Olver Farm. The market homes are dominated by 4 and 3 bed homes whilst the Affordable Homes are dominated by 2-bed (1-bed 12 – 10%, 2-bed 65 – 48%, 3-bed 46 – 37, and 4-bed 2 – 10%).

Mr van der Pas wrongly refers to a second developer as 'pulling out' based upon the fact that the letter from WTC to the examiner says we are still awaiting a response from the owners/developers. This has now been provided to the examiner and will be published.

Mr van der Pas wrongly states that raw sewage is constantly discharged into our bathing waters – this is not the case. WTC are proud of the quality of the water in Weymouth Bay and are pressing the relevant authorities to address public concerns about the capacity of the sewage system and to reduce/eliminate the occasional storm overflows. Weymouth Central beach water quality fell from excellent to good in 2024 – investigations as to the cause are underway. Weymouth Lodmoor (which is most relevant to W20) water quality remains excellent.

Policy W20 Condition 2 requires Master-planning for Wyke Oliver Farm. As part of development condition 4 vi of Policy W20 requires inclusion of community focus – this would be discussed and agreed as part of the master planning. This is stated in response to the examiner's questions and resulted from both public comments and direction questions to the developer. Children's Play Areas are already a Local Plan requirement.

The initial response to the Call for Sites was made by Morrish Homes on behalf of the landowner – no other developer has discussed this site with WTC. As previously stated, the landowner has confirmed their desire for the site to be allocated.

Sustainable Development

There is a shortage of land for sustainable development. The sites within the town centre do not provide sufficient homes to meet the requirement for affordable housing which is a primary concern for many residents who fear their children will have to leave Weymouth. This is why the WNP explores sites outside the Town Centre. The new governments housing targets for Dorset Council will place increased demands on land in Weymouth. The WNP has carried out Viability Testing – this may, of course, be subject to a Viability Appraisal case made by developers as part of the planning application.

Fairness and Public Examination

Mr van der Pas intimates that the Examiner may be biased, he wrongly states that the Examination Company has been selected by WTC. Dorset Council appoint the examiner, WTC

were asked to comment on the two candidates and preferred Mr Mead as it was felt his experience better matched characteristics of the Weymouth Neighbourhoods Plan.

I have sought advice from both Dorset Council and the Town Clerk at Weymouth Town Council and have complied with FOI requests. The Town Clerk is happy that we have complied with requests but this has only resulted in the same statements being repeated. I assume that Mr van der Pas is not content with the answers he has received, but I am happy that we have followed due process, have engaged local people and experts in producing the plan and have produced a sound plan.

Lastly, Mr van der Pas refers to my not meeting with residents as committed to on 20th November – I made efforts to do so as follows. I wrote to Cllr Louie O’Leary ref arranging to talk to residents in his ward on 9th Dec 2024. Cllr O’Leary responded on 22nd Jan 2025 saying he did not think such a meeting was appropriate. But he organised a ward meeting for 10th Feb which included WNP on the agenda and I asked him to invite me to attend and speak which I did. Mr van der Pas and another resident spoke for 30 minutes – I was allowed by Cllr O’Leary 10 minutes to respond. In this response, I stuck to facts rather than responding to accusations, I spoke of the positive features of the WNP and urged residents to form their own opinion on the merits, or otherwise, of the WNP when responding to the Regulation 16 consultation.

Mr van der Pas raised his concerns ref the changes made to the plan following the meeting of the 20th November at Full Council in writing and formally as questions to the Full Council meeting on 26th February 2025. The changes which have been made since the Reg 14 Consultation have been properly recorded along with the minor changes made to the format and one policy following the WTC endorsement of the Plan Submission for Regulation 16 Consultation. The Town Clerk provided a formal response to this effect (Ref 10) and the Full Council endorsed the Plan proceeding to Reg 16 Consultation.

Cllr David Northam, Chair WNP SG 14th July 2025