SUBJECT : BLANDFORD PLUS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (2011-2033)

Ref 1 : Blandford+Neighbourhood Plan ( 2011-2033 ) BASIC CONDITIONS
Ref 2 : Barry Watson response to Scoping reference 2/2018/1386/SCHOEIA to your Oliver
Rendle of NDDC , dated 1st Nov 2018 .

INTRODUCTION :
This is a response from Barry Watson of [REDACTED] from this address which is situated within the area
defined as PIMPERNE Parish , and concerns the Blandford+Neighbourhood Plan ( BNP )
issued January 2019 , whereupon I wish to OBJECT to various line items listed under 4
General Conformity with Strategic Policies of the Development Plan given on page 13 ,
particularly that stated under B2 in Table B - Land North & East of Blandford Forum -
which is particular to that allocating virgin white land for ‘ approximately four hundred
(400 )’ homes over and above the commitments and local Plan allocations given under
item 4.3 of the “ General Conformity with the Strategic Policies Development Plan “ .

[ clarification / unclear : it is duly noted this approximate number of 400 homes has
changed from that of ref 2 , the scoping document ; this mentioned 700 homes ! Now , is
it that the 400 homes refers to a Phase 1 Development , whilst the 700 homes is
referred to a total Phase 1 + Phase 2 ? This latter larger area encroaches onto
PIMPERNE lands ! Is that the correct interpretation ?]

Why am I responding to reject the BNP document yet again ?
I know it is the process of democracy , but physiologically , it is well know that the more
times you ask the same question one obtains the desired answer ! [ ref , Mrs May and her
EU solution to the Withdrawal Agreement - may be a bad example , but you know what I
mean ]. This should not be the situation faced by the electorate .

BACKGROUND :
This is my opinion response to comment on the policy concerning the proposed
development of up to 400 dwellings , plus various other Community inspired buildings ,
as an input to the BNP , which is primarily proposed on land situated to the north and
south of the A354 Salisbury Rd and substantially beyond the existing Blandford Bypass .
It is noteworthy this proposed application is , in varying degree , one of at least eight(8)
other proposed development areas around Blandford .
Furthermore , one understands these policies form a ‘ complex ‘ planning parametric
equation with composite parameters to include , Blandford Town Centre Planning ;
Employment attracting substantial and sustainable viable business ‘ ; Secondary
Education School Plus Community Facility ; Health Provision ; Green Infrastructure
Network ; Green Areas ; Managing Design in Conservation Area - open spaces ;
Tourism ; Road Infrastructure ( A 354 & A 350 in particular ) ; Land Availability ;
Population Control with increased people movements ; Vehicle Movement Topology ;
Increased population density , yet Maintaining the Special Heritage ; Landscaping
Characteristics and Challenges ; NOT to Develop outside the the Bypass Boundary ;
Limit / Maintain the Boundary of Blandford / Pimperne to Respect the important aspects of AONB: limit ribbon-Development and boundary-creep.

One question coming to the mind of a plain-vanilla citizen is, how many times does one have to object to such policy directives - one trusts we have reached a final decision point?

Then, Why? does one need all these homes is a very good question; is it a case of the numbers-game to satisfy your untrustworthy political masters? Show us the comprehensive justification - continuous - assessment, from a bona-fide independent referenced source on this subject, please?

The BIGGER PICTURE:

At this point, let's look at the bigger picture of what some people wish to inflict upon this beautiful country area of Dorset within the Blandford, Shaftesbury, Gillingham corridor, and where these towns are situated with respect to transport logistics and commuter routing.

Clearly, all are poorly served by the existing road network, yes, poorly served need be emphasised.

Take for example, the great highway - the A350 - has been described as an untied shoelace meandering, vectorially, North / South through the countryside!

Too many, this A350 is one of the worst 'highways' within the whole of the U.K. road system; a dreadful long stretch of narrow road, particularly the country-lane stretch between Shaftesbury and Blandford, which is characterised by its mean width and inordinate number of unwanted bends, announced and punctuated by the word "SLOW"!

Why do we tolerate this situation in 2019; it is not 1919, to give perspective?

Guys, this A350 is your impression, erroneously, of a modern auto-route with large numbers of 50 ton trucks using this the only arterial road connecting between the M4 Motorway to the Bournemouth - Poole metroplex on the south coast. Additionally, summer beach-seeking traffic and tourist add to the congestion.

Ridiculous many agree, but Planners and Politicians have neglected this fact every time.

Now the situation is CRITICAL, please act.

RAIL CONNECTIONS?

Another thought, where is the Railway connection to the "rest-of-the-world"? What happened to the rail connectivity; if you are to policy increase significantly the local commuter-type populations - because that is exactly what you are creating - yes, dormitory towns - why isn't a light rail network not included in the big-picture, like the very effective and strategic S-BAHN, common in many areas of Germany?

Surely, important features like this must form part of the economic parametric equation alluded to above.

It is noteworthy that the 'whole-run' from Poole to Sherborne, the track-bed exists. Whilst on the subject of transportation, one can virtually forget BUSES as they non-existent - do not contribute - they are 'lip-service'.

EMPLOYMENT: ATTRACTING APPROPRIATE COMPANIES.

And, Blandford - its existing people - it's track-record - it's qualified employment status
What have the Planners and local Politicians created, thus far, out of Blandford to achieve performance, satisfaction and success for their population?
Where are the historic valued investments building Commerce and Industry highlighted?
How have they succeeded and what prospects are in the pipeline?
Everyone needs to know these facts to sustain a substantial growth of employed persons!
It is known as sustainability.
Blandford Town Council And Services - not politically motivated - any new long-term investments?
Just pause a moment, take a look at what you have received - where is the presence of large value-add contribution / profitable FTSE 100 / 250, or DOW Companies to create sustainability / growth continuity to the infrastructure?
I heard they laid off this Enterprise Manager?
A good start!
Where are the modern visionary innovations / start-ups / midsized Corporations?
Looking hard. But not in Blandford, nor Shaftesbury, nor Gillingham.
How pleased is the town council with their resulting performance to attract these corporations over the years?
There is a reality: to me it appears disappointing, leading to a degree of disapproval and despondency in this regard, unless someone can inform me otherwise.
Now, we live in changing times with investment money getting tighter - ref the Brexit era, but we shall need entrepreneurialism to show and shine through in times of austerity. Seriously, think what are the benefits to the indigenous population of Blandford - there are few, as outlined.
This notwithstanding, one can think of a few beneficiaries - those to make narrow business / financial gains. Again, all there is, is the Landowner, the middle-man, the facilitator like Savills, and thereafter, the Developer, like a Wyatt, a Bovis, etc to benefit - not many others, if the truth be known.

BACK to HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS:
Whilst one cannot disagree there is some genuine demand for housing in the U.K., those with greater knowledge than I, like people with the CPRE (Council for the Preservation of Rural England) / AONB (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) for Cranbourne Chase, have understood the big-picture and researched the local North Dorset District Council’s (NDDC) objective five-year housing supply for controlling planning applications.
It is noteworthy from one ‘modern’ idea, that a number of these proposed new dwellings need not be built, offsetting if one engages in re-use - call it repurposing, ‘adaptable-reuse’, or simply good old fashion ‘conversion’ - whatever label, finding new uses for outdated commercial buildings is one of the strongest trends ‘in town’ right now. Driven on the pull-side by the so-called UK’s housing shortage - mostly politically motivated - and the push-side by the availability of unloved and unwanted office buildings, the surge to convert is responsible for a significant slice of the UK’s new housing stock, accounting for an estimated 45,000 new homes in the last three years! This is only a starter. Centre Point and the infamous Hoover Building in London, and the old Blandford Brewery are good examples. Just think about candidate unused office
buildings in the Dorset area? Cynics would say this is only small-beer, but it is a contribution.

LOCALLY:
Accordingly, one is reliably informed about the objective five-year (5) Housing Land Supply, that this local measurement is in short-fall, which is quoted as 3.42 years of resource. To put some numbers to this short-fall, given the difference between an obligation to build 2219 dwellings (five year plan) compared to the predicted supply of only 1551 dwellings, CPRE researched this problem concluding there is no deficit! Wow! In fact, it is evident there is a potential exceedance to provide a sufficient number of dwellings, not just for 3.4 years, but out to a conservative 6.48 years!!! NDDC, please check other calculations.

Perhaps, the recent Forum Focus article should be re-worded to be ‘Town outskirts plan should take a backward step’, meaning people/authorities should reject this somewhat juvenile BNP plan in its entirety?
So, just think - does Blandford really need these additional 400 (or 700) homes, at this particular proposed site?

Hence, from the outset, there is clearly little scope for justification of the development, so, on this basis the ASSESSORS/EXAMINERS should reject this BNP proposal. In a further big-picture, what are the Blandford strategic planners, in their entirety, attempting to achieve; aggregated, this sort of increase of the total Blandford population to create a ‘capital city of mid-Dorset’, if all proposed scheme’s proceed?

I jest!

To move on, there are many parameters in this planning process, so I mention just a few for consideration:
Firstly, ‘movements’ - as the examiners know very well, statistically, those additional persons from 400/700 houses implies an increase of 1600/2800 movements per day for just this cohort!

What do the real people of Blandford say at such an influx, particularly, and in total for all proposed scheme’s under consideration?

Why, Blandford itself does not call for such a large number of additional dwellings - who benefits?

Next, SUSTAINABILITY? - correct if I’m in error, but there is little mention of the strong meaning word ‘sustainability’: the part of the equation to support all these newcomers, locally, in well-paid positions, with a good proportion of professionals. There is the requirement to highlight a comprehensive and well balanced local economy, with commensurate industrial/commercial/financial plan to attract high performance, higher tech type companies, as alluded to above, as a starter to this area. There is little, or no evidence of this initiative here, nor elsewhere!

Then, the ROAD NETWORK and the proposed new ROUNDABOUT on the A350 Blandford Bypass; Why?

This is a ludicrous and crazy idea which surely could not be perceived acceptable to HIGHWAYS, nor EXAMINERS, even when they were experiencing the worst of all
dreams!
Remember, the fundamental idea of a bypass concept is for low-resistance / low impedance flow on a highway connection, in this case between the M4 corridor to the distant north, connecting efficiently with the Poole / Bournemouth Metroplex in the south - this ‘trunk’ road need be enhanced to remain unfettered, unblocked, for now and evermore to cater for its predicted increased long-distance heavy vehicle traffic flow. Any thought of potential congestion should be minimised, and not enhanced via this unwanted road-about design and development.
Makes sense?
Hence the idea of adding a road-about and other complications is not good policy and is clearly, unwanted. In essence all round about - a wonderful British invention - are an imposition to traffic flow and pollution and should be removed - not added!

PROPOSED SITE SITUATION:
It is stated, the site in north of Black Lane statement is mis-leading: the consortium really means it is either side of the A354/A350, Letton Park / Leyton Close for this development, with extensive building on the wrong side of the Blandford Bypass, which detracts from the unwanted ribbon-Development between Blandford and the village of Pimperne.
NEVER is this an intended requirement, as explained by the CPRE, AONB, and the issued Pimperne + Neighbourhood Plan for many reasons, not least of which is the significant increased traffic density, degraded environment and an increase in unwanted pollution.
The Pimperne people will be objecting to this BNP plan independently.

VISUAL ASPECTS of the proposed housing development.
Already this whole eastern aspect of Blandford is poorly planned in the rolling and beautiful Dorset countryside.
Take a look for yourself and get the perspective.
Here i refer to the distant visual aspect when looking from the slightly elevated B3082 Wimborne Road driving in the Blandford direction approaching the ‘Two-Gates’ roundabout. Currently, a ‘blot-on-the-landscape’ exists - horrible - only to be made worse by an additional super-imposition of 400/700 dwellings (and other buildings not spoken about in this poorly proposed plan).
Unfortunately, the resultant view - in my opinion is an escarpment similar and typical to that seen in the degradation of the worst examples viewed in the Upper South Wales mining valley’s of the Rhondda and Rhymney!
Don’t add and degrade to this important visual aspect.

IN SUMMARY:
A re-think of this new Blandford development plan (BNP) requires serious attention and rigorous scrutiny by critical experienced examiners/planners to apply intelligent thought and application of common sense processes to achieve a total clear perspective of this scope published in the development proposal.
One trusts the decision-making process to be executed by the examiners takes commensurate account of previous long-standing agreements?
Furthermore, although the road map ahead is unclear and quite unpredictable, Blandford, at this juncture needs strong leadership to create a happy, prosperous and an attractive integrated town-scape for any future population to enjoy, to be satisfied and be proud of.

Trust this rendering in response to the BNP is understood?
Finally, my recommendation to the decision-maker on the team is to withdraw at this juncture before any more resource is expended.
Mr Examiner, many people urge you to REJECT this poorly conceived and ill thought out plan for additional housing on land to the north and east of Blandford Forum.

Enjoy assessing.

Please confirm receipt of this email.

Here’s to a visionary conclusion by the Examiners.

Thanks.

Barry Watson

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