

Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



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By Email planningpolicy@north-dorset.gov.uk

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Dear Ed

Neighbourhood Plan for Fontmell Magna

General comments, recommendations, and advice

The relevance of this nationally designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to this consultation is set out in Annex A to this response. Annex B lists the organisations that make up the Cranborne Chase AONB Partnership Board.

The Local Authority partners have formally adopted the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Management Plan 2014 – 2019. It is accessible on our website at <http://www.ccwwdaonb.org.uk/publications/aonb-management-plan/>. The Management Plan is a material planning matter.

This consultation response has been prepared under delegated authority.

The Fontmell Magna Neighbourhood Plan Team has engaged with this AONB Partnership.

The Neighbourhood Plan Team appear to have addressed competently the issues that arise in a rural Neighbourhood Plan. In particular they have taken considerable account of the natural environment, green space, and amenities of the village. The proximity of the AONB, with significant parts of the village being within the setting of the AONB, have been taken into account.

The Plan appears to comply with the adopted AONB Management Plan, particularly giving attention to the setting of the AONB and the provision of affordable housing. The issue of steady and carefully managed development at a speed appropriate for the neighbourhood seems to have been approached in a clear and positive way. This AONB notes that a number of housing options were carefully considered and the decisions appear to be based on community benefits rather than simply adding, fairly rapidly, to the supply of housing.

Having reviewed a number of other Neighbourhood Plans this AONB **commends** the Neighbourhood Plan Team on its work and suggests to you that the Fontmell Magna Neighbourhood Plan is a good example of a clear and effective document for a rural neighbourhood.

I hope these comments are helpful to you,

Yours sincerely

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Richard Burden BSc DipCons MSc FLI PPLI

Landscape and Planning Advisor ████████████████████████████████

For and on behalf of the CCWWD AONB Partnership

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Encs: Annex A and Annex B

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Annex A

The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB has been established under the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act to conserve and enhance the outstanding natural beauty of this area which straddles three County, one Unitary and five District councils. It is clear from the Act, subsequent government sponsored reports, and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 that natural beauty includes wildlife, scientific, and cultural heritage. It is also recognised that in relation to their landscape characteristics and quality, National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are equally important aspects of the nation's heritage assets and environmental capital. This AONB's Management Plan is a statutory document that is approved by the Secretary of State and is adopted by the constituent councils. It sets out the Local Authorities' Objectives and Policies for this nationally important area. The national Planning Practice Guidance [Natural Environment paragraph 004] confirms that the AONB and its Management Plan are material considerations in planning.

The National Planning Policy Framework states (paragraph 109) that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes which include AONBs. Furthermore it should be recognised that the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' does not automatically apply within AONBs, as confirmed by paragraph 14 footnote 9, due to other policies relating to AONBs elsewhere within the Framework. It also states (paragraph 115) that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in these areas.

Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires that holders of public office, councillors and the like have 'a duty of regard' to the purposes of AONB designation. National and local Government are thereby clearly directed to have regard for the purposes of AONB designation when carrying out their functions that affect land in or near an AONB. National and local Government, and their departments, therefore have to be able to demonstrate that they have considered the purposes of AONBs in their decision making on any proposed legislative, strategy, policy or implementation matters.

Cranborne Chase is the 6th largest of the nation's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and some 95% of the land in this AONB is under agricultural or woodland management. The combination of farming and forestry activities has contributed to the landscape character of this valued part of the nation. It is, nevertheless, vital that the needs of a viable farming industry are balanced against the need for sensitive environmental management in landscapes of national importance.

Annex B



Cranborne Chase

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership Board is made up of the following Partner Organisations

Unitary, County, and District Council Membership (1 Member and 1 Officer Representative each)

- Wiltshire Council
- Dorset County Council
- Hampshire County Council
- Somerset County Council
- East Dorset District Council
- North Dorset District Council
- New Forest District Council
- Mendip District Council
- South Somerset District Council

Other Organisations

- Natural England (2 Representatives)
- Historic England (1 Representative)
- Campaign to Protect Rural England (1 Representative)
- Forestry Commission (1 Representative)
- The Country Land and Business Association (1 Representative)
- National Farmers Union (2 Representatives)
- Community Representatives from the Wiltshire and Dorset Associations of Town & Parish Councils (ATPCs) (2 Representatives)