

**NORTH DORSET LOCAL PLAN 2011 – 2026 PART 1**

**EXAMINATION**

**Inspector's requests and points arising during hearing sessions**

**Issue 1: Procedure and Strategy**

**Note on the broad location for growth at Bay, Gillingham.**

**May 2015**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 During the Examination in Public first Hearing Session, the Inspector asked the Council to produce a note setting out why the site south and south-west of Bay at Gillingham is identified in the Plan; the justification for the Council's approach including the reasons for identifying a site of such small scale; and confirming the uniqueness of the site.
- 1.2 The Council's intention is to retain the site south and south-west of Bay as an identified indicative area for growth as shown in LP 1: Policy 17 – Gillingham.

## 2. Why the site is identified in the Plan

- 2.1 The proposed residential development site to the south and south-west of Bay lies within the settlement boundary of Gillingham, as defined in the 2003 Local Plan (COD030). Whilst the site is not allocated in the 2003 Local Plan, Policy 2.6 allows infill / windfall development within defined settlement boundaries. It could, therefore, be developed under the currently adopted local planning policy framework.
- 2.2 In meeting the objectively assessed need identified in the SHMA (MHN005), and following the Council's sustainable spatial development strategy of concentrating development at the four main towns to increase self-containment, the logic to identifying an indicative area for growth that can accommodate a major level of development is that it gives a clear indication to readers of the LP 1 that the Council positively encourages this site to come forward for development through its strategic plan.

## 3. Justification for the Council's approach

- 3.1 In addition to general infilling in the town, Land at Bay (GILL 8) was one of nine key sites (based on information from the Council's SHLAA (MHN007)) that were identified in the North and north East Dorset Transport Study (N&nEDTS) (INF009) as growth options. An accessibility audit was undertaken based on quality of access for each site to existing amenities such as food shops, education, GP surgeries and employment opportunities.
- 3.2 The site was assessed as being available through SHLAA (2/20/0548) and its sustainability was further assessed through Assessing the Growth Potential of Gillingham (MTC004), as part of 'Scenario 2' which concluded that this site, along with the other areas of growth identified at Gillingham, namely the SSA and Station Road, formed the most sustainable growth scenario.
- 3.3 Given the amount of assessment undertaken for the site, and that it is specifically identified as part of a scenario for sustainable growth for Gillingham, the evidence

justified the inclusion of the site as an indicative area for growth as a clear policy position of the Council in encouraging its development.

- 3.4 Land to the south and south-west of Bay is proposed for the development of about 50 dwellings. The infill site is located adjacent to the hamlet of Bay, which the 2003 Local Plan (COD030) Policy GH3 identifies as an 'area of local character' within the settlement boundary of Gillingham. The Gillingham TDS also recognises it as an area of character in the town. Local Plan Policy GH3 will be retained and used for development management purposes along with the TDS until it is reviewed through the neighbourhood planning process or the Local Plan Part 2 (LP 2). This policy and the evidence base will be used in the design and approval process for planning applications on the site. Discussions, in particular with DCC Highways, have raised no highways related issues with the development of the site.

## Reasons for identifying a site of such small scale

- 3.5 Land south and south-west of Bay could accommodate approximately 50 dwellings, categorising it as a site for major development.
- 3.6 The site is identified in the report Assessing the Growth Potential of Gillingham (MTC004), as part of 'Scenario 2' which concluded that this site, along with the other areas of growth identified at Gillingham, namely the SSA and Station Road, formed the most sustainable growth scenario.

## 4. The uniqueness of the site

- 4.1 Land at south and south-west of Bay is unique in the context of the indicative areas for growth in LP1 because it is the only major previously unallocated site in the District that is vacant and available for development and that is located within the settlement boundary.

## 5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The capacity of the site will make a contribution to the delivery of housing against the objectively assessed need for the District, as identified in the SHMA. Pre-application discussions have recently commenced with the owners of the site which supports deliverability of the site.
- 5.2 The various technical appraisals carried out for the site south and south-west of Bay, coupled with the pre-application discussions with the landowner's planning agent, demonstrate that this site is capable of accommodating major development and is available, sustainable and deliverable.
- 5.3 The inclusion of the site as an indicative area for growth in LP 1 demonstrates the Council's commitment to bringing forward a site for major development. The

Council's intention is to retain the site south and south-west of Bay as an identified indicative area for growth as shown in LP 1: Policy 17 – Gillingham.