

## **CEDC Core Strategy Examination in Public**

### **Matters and Issues number 5** **Strategic Allocations**

#### **Individual site allocations in East Dorset.**

With regard to item 2, which refers to WMC7, whilst this site does not fall within the boundaries of the Colehill Parish it is the view of the Colehill Parish Council that the area now left available for potential development as the result of a large proportion having been allocated as 'recreational' park would be suitable for development for homes being strategically placed in relation to Wimborne itself.

With regard to item 7, which refers to WMC5 (the Cranborne Road New Neighbourhood), this does indeed fall within the Colehill Parish boundary and by virtue of the position of the site it would impact upon both Colehill and Wimborne in equal measure.

It has throughout been the position of the Colehill Parish Council that the proposal amounts to Urban Sprawl and is unsustainable. In a letter dated 26<sup>th</sup> June 2009 to the Secretary of State and relating to proposals of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the building of 400 homes on the eastern side of Cranborne Road, East Dorset District Council described it as being 'environmentally damaging'. It also highlighted the fact that there were issues of complex topography with issues of traffic and flooding which may be impossible to resolve satisfactorily.

The East Dorset District Council, in that letter, also supported the local desire to see the Green Belt of the area protected from development.

Citing the problems of the area in relation to nature conservation and natural habitat the Council indicated a belief that there might be a fatal flaw in implementing such proposals and asked the regional Spatial Strategy to delete the site as one for development.

Since that date nothing has changed except the view of the District Council that now not only considers the site to be sustainable and desirable for development but that it can be increased in size by more than 50%, extended to both sides of the Cranborne Road and be created as a 'New Neighbourhood'. Colehill Parish Council considers that whilst it has always taken the view that there is genuine and reasonable potential for some homes to be built on the eastern side of Cranborne Road, it should be limited (perhaps 250). The sheer

scale and impact of the present proposal is not sustainable and potentially seriously damaging to the environments of both Wimborne and Colehill.

Basic issues particularly relating to the infrastructure are not, in our view, properly addressed and that as far as can be established from the Core Strategy neither have there been thorough assessments made of the potential environmental impact on either existing community. Colehill Parish Council would urge the Inspector to consider particular issues arising from such a large scale development.

Street Scene Wimborne is an ancient settlement that developed into an important market town and that today is a magnet for tourism. The approaches are from the direction of Ferndown, Corfe Mullen, Dorchester and Cranborne. The proposal would make the approach from Cranborne one which would see visitors coming in through a housing estate rather than the present rural approach, hardly in keeping with the centuries old ambience of the area.

#### Transport and Travel

However this proposal is viewed it is a fact that the vast majority of new residents of working age will have to commute to work, whether it be to occupations in Bournemouth, Poole, other business zones in the area or further afield. Even if extended bus services are provided to the 'New Neighbourhood' the majority will use their cars. To access the main transport artery, the A31, vehicles will have just two choices of route.

The first through Wimborne is via its biggest bottleneck, the Walford Mill Bridge. It has been suggested that this route can cope. That is certainly not the view of Highways experts whose reports will be referenced by other representatives at this Examination and it is not the experience of local people. The present periods of high road use in the mornings and evenings are already at capacity and will, if further loaded, lead to regular log jams at all intersections.

The likelihood is that drivers will seek the one alternative route which is via Burts Hill, Smugglers Lane and across the top of Colehill. Again at peak times this is already seriously overcrowded. The roads were not built for high capacity, the main road (Middlehill Road) is the main access from several estate areas and it also has to be borne in mind that Colehill has six schools which at peak morning and afternoon times are served by many parents delivering children to those schools. The area could not cope with a significant increase in traffic.

#### Employment

There is virtually no employment in Colehill. What is available in Wimborne is extremely limited with only one large employer, Cobhams, which is a specific aeronautical concern. Any proposed extension of employment such as envisaged on the Ferndown Industrial

Estate is still very limited in scope and will still require commuting. The vast majority will use their cars to go to work, wherever that might be.

There is little or no prospect that any significant employment could be attracted to, or accommodated within Wimborne and certainly not Colehill.

### Schooling

The Core Strategy envisages the construction of two new First Schools, one on the proposed Leigh Road site (WMC6) and one within the area of the New Neighbourhood (WMC5). It is also envisaged that this would lead to the closure of the existing Wimborne First School and one of the Colehill First schools (probably Hayeswood).

This will of course leave four existing schools in Colehill of which two are expected to be expanded to accommodate extra children from both Colehill and Wimborne.

These proposals will lead to a huge increase in school delivery traffic and the attendant parking problems where there is already a problem and potential road danger. In addition there will be school traffic criss-crossing the two conurbations adding to the overload on mainly minor roads.

A significant percentage of the new homes will produce children of senior school age with only the one suitable school in the area, that being Queen Elizabeth School, which is already said to be at capacity. We are told that a new school is envisaged at Verwood. This would accommodate senior children from that area and remove the need for bussing them to Queen Elizabeth School. That new school however is not yet in the planning stage and we are advised that new school places will be 'demand led'. Presumably schools will have to be full to bursting before a new one is onto the drawing board.

### Medical Facilities

There are no doctors or dentists and there is no hospital or other medical facility in Colehill even though Colehill is the larger population. All such facilities are in Wimborne and they are good but they are not capable of taking on the potential for a 35% increase (or more) on their books. Certainly the WMC5 site would allow its new residents to access facilities in Wimborne with some ease but it would mean that coupled with the new housing proposals at WMC6 new medical facilities would become a necessity within Colehill. There are no such plans within the Core Strategy and our enquiries of the local NHS Board indicate that they are unaware of the development proposals and their impact. This would also impact upon the need for improved transport services and the additional load on the local roads.

### Conclusions of the Colehill Parish Council

A Parish Plan for Colehill was drawn up in 2008. In that document residents of Colehill clearly recognised the need for affordable housing in the area. It also recognised that some

development within the area would be needed but that any invasion of the Green Belt should be avoided as much as is possible and that the nature of the area should not change.

Colehill Parish Council does not argue with the District Council regarding the number of homes required for the District, nor with the number of homes that should be of an affordable type. What it does take issue with is why so many of the homes are needed to be on the doorstep of Colehill and Wimborne. It is a disproportionate application leading to a huge increase in local population.

There have been alternative sites in the Wimborne and Colehill area identified by the District Council and all having been dismissed, it seems, because of the distance from central Wimborne perhaps with one exception and that being the area of land to the North of Leigh Road and adjacent to the Vineries. That seems to have been discarded because of a desire to retain a green belt separation between Wimborne and Colehill. However the District Council, by its own admission has looked on the area of Wimborne and Colehill as one and in so doing it certainly is not worried about separation at the Cranborne Road/Burts Hill site.

The distance issue from central Wimborne is also, in our view, something of a red herring. Colehill has managed 'at a distance' for over 100 years. New development in Colehill has also brought in new residents who have not worried about the distance issue and Colehill remains one of the local areas considered to be desirable to live in.

Colehill Parish Council would invite the Inspector to take the view that it is possible to reach a more equitable solution by allowing a re-examination of sites and allowing the Parish Council and local residents to develop a **Local Neighbourhood Plan**. A redistribution of a significant part of development from the site at WMC5, using some reasonable planning for some alternative sites, could make WMC5 to be within acceptable margins retained to the east side of Cranborne Road and avoiding inherent problems that exist with present proposals.