



BLANDFORD PLUS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (2016 – 2031) WITHDRAWAL STATEMENT

May 2018

Following a six-week period of consultation held between February and March 2016, Blandford Plus (comprising Blandford Forum Town Council, Blandford St. Mary Parish Council and Bryanston Parish Council) submitted its Neighbourhood Plan to North Dorset District Council in July 2016.

An independent examination of the Neighbourhood Plan, supporting documentation and representations received during the consultation was carried out by Deborah McCann BSc MRICS MRTPI Dip Arch Con Dip LD in early 2017, followed by a public hearing on 10 April 2017.

The examiner's final report (19 July 2017) found that the Neighbourhood Plan met the Basic Conditions as set out in Section 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 subject to two major modifications; these being the deletion of Policy 1 (Land to the North & East of Blandford Forum: proposals for 400 houses; a two form entry primary school; a community hub comprising a new general practice surgery and a community centre, and new business uses as an extension to the Sunrise Business Park) and deletion of Policy 10.4 (Designation of Crown Meadows as a 'Local Green Space').

On 31 July 2017, North Dorset District Council (NDDC) announced that its 5 Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS) had fallen short to 3.42 years, thus rendering the North Dorset Local Plan 'Out of Date'. Because of this reduced supply, NDDC is now obliged to apply the national 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' which could potentially allow more development to take place, in areas that are not considered 'in line' with either the Local Plan or the Neighbourhood Plan.

Having considered the examiner's findings, Blandford Plus decided not to accept the modifications and therefore not to proceed to referendum, as per Section 17A(5a) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) & Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2016. Blandford Plus believes that the shortfall in the 5YHLS would have made a significant and material difference to the way in which Policy 1 of the Neighbourhood Plan was considered by the examiner, had she been aware.

Blandford Plus wrote to the Secretary of State on 5 September 2017 requesting that he intervene on behalf of Blandford Plus Neighbourhood Plan under the broader provisions of his planning powers. This request was accepted, and a report was commissioned by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in November 2017.

The report 'Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan Options for Moving Forward' recommended that, given the importance of Policy 1 to the Neighbourhood Plan, the best way forward would be to withdraw and modify the current Neighbourhood Plan, in parallel to making representations on the Issues and Options paper published by NDDC, and liaising with prospective developers.

Blandford Plus carried out an extensive review of the Neighbourhood Plan in January 2018 and concluded that, in the absence of an 'in date' Local Plan, a close and joint working relationship with NDDC would be essential to:

- Develop a new and more comprehensive Neighbourhood Plan that can allocate sites for development (housing, infrastructure and employment).
- Continue the work carried out by NDDC in its 'Issues & Options' Review
- Significantly reduce the lead time to adoption required for the Local Plan Review
- Ensure Blandford gets the essential infrastructure it requires e.g. to address Dorset County Council's urgent requirement for a new 2FE Primary School
- Redress the 5YHLS shortfall
- Identify and remedy the lack of employment land in Blandford
- Strengthen the planning strategy for Blandford, protecting the town and surrounds from unsuitable planning applications.
- Ensure Blandford is not impacted by possible delays in the Local Plan Review during the transition to a Unitary Authority.

DCLG has supported this approach through the offer of a new 'My Community' grant, and through the offer of technical support.

Blandford Plus met with North Dorset District Council on 5 April 2018. It was agreed at this meeting that the new Neighbourhood Plan will be used as the vehicle for continuing the work carried out by NDDC in its 'Issues & Options' Review, for allocating sites for development, and for reviewing the settlement boundary for Blandford Forum.

In light of the above, and with agreement from NDDC to a joint working approach through the new Blandford Plus Neighbourhood Plan (version 2) Blandford Forum Town Council, Blandford St. Mary Parish Council and Bryanston Parish Council have voted to withdraw the current version of Blandford Plus Neighbourhood Plan (2015 – 2031). A formal notice from Blandford Forum Town Council (as the Qualifying Body) to North Dorset District Council is appended to this notice.

Sally Gardner
Facilitator to Blandford Plus

16th May 2018



BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

Mr Edward Gerry
Planning Policy Team Leader
North Dorset District Council

Your Ref:

Our Ref: B+ NP

Date: 16 May 2018

BY EMAIL

Dear Ed,

Withdrawal of Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2015 - 2031

I wish to notify you that resolutions were passed at the Blandford Forum Town Council meeting held on the 14th May, at the Bryanston Parish Meeting held on the 9th May and via an email vote from Blandford St. Mary Councillors to withdraw the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2015 – 2031.

Blandford Plus looks forward to continuing the work with NDDC and with Locality to develop the new version of the plan, Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan (version 2).

Yours sincerely

Sally Gardner
Project Co-ordinator
Facilitator to Blandford Plus