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| Representation # _____ | |



North Dorset Local Plan Part 1

Pre-submission Consultation 29 November 2013 to 24 January 2014

Regulation 19 of Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012)

Response Form

For each representation you wish to make a separate response form will need to be completed.

This is a formal consultation on the legal compliance and soundness of the Local Plan before it is submitted to the Secretary of State for examination by an Inspector. For advice on how to respond to the consultation and fill in this form please see the 'Guidance Notes for Making Representations' that can be found on the Council's website at www.dorsetforyou.com/planning/north-dorset/planning-policy

Please return completed forms to:

Email: planningpolicy@north-dorset.gov.uk

Post: Planning Policy, North Dorset District Council, Nordon, Salisbury Road, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 7LL

Alternatively you can submit your comments online at: www.surveymonkey.com/s/NorthDorsetLocalPlan

Deadline: 5pm on 24 January 2014. Representations received after this time may not be accepted.

Part A – Personal details

This part of the form must be completed by all people making representations as **anonymous comments cannot be accepted**. Representations cannot be treated in confidence as Regulation 22 of the Town and County Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 requires copies of all representations to be made publically available. By submitting this response form on the pre-submission North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 you consent to your information being disclosed to third parties for this purpose, but signatures, private telephone numbers and e-mail addresses or private addresses will not be visible on our web site, although they will be shown on paper copies that will be sent to the Inspector and available for inspection.

*If an agent is appointed, please complete only the Title, Name and Organisation boxes to the personal details but complete the full contact details of the agent. All correspondence will be sent to the agent.

| Personal Details (if applicable)* | | Agent's Details (if applicable)* |
|-----------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|
| Title | Mr | |
| First Name | Paul | |
| Last Name | Smith | |
| Job Title (where relevant) | | |
| Organisation (where relevant) | | |
| Address | | |
| Postcode | | |
| Tel. No. | | |
| Email Address | | |

Part B – Representation

The North Dorset Local Plan 2011 to 2026 Part 1 and its supporting documents have been published in order for representations to be made prior to submission to the Secretary of State for examination. The purpose of the examination is to consider whether the Local Plan complies with the **legal requirements** and is **'sound'**.

If you are seeking to make a representation on the **way** in which documents have been prepared it is likely that your comments or objections will relate to a matter of **legal compliance**.

If you are seeking to make representations on the **content** of the documents it is likely that your comments or objections relate to the **soundness** of the plans and whether it is justified, effective or consistent with national policy.

Further information on the matter of legal compliance and the issue of soundness can be found in the 'Guidance Notes for Making Representations'.

If you need help completing the response form please see a member of the Planning Policy Team at one of the consultation exhibitions or call 01258 484201.

1. Please select which document you are commenting on:

North Dorset Local Plan 2011 to 2026 Part 1 (please complete Questions 2 to 9)

2. Please state the part of that document you are commenting on:

General Comments

3. Do you consider the Local Plan to be legally compliant and prepared in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate, legal and procedural requirements?

No comment

4. Do you consider the Local Plan to be 'sound'?

No

5. If you consider the Local Plan to be unsound please specify your reason(s) by ticking the box(es) that apply below

It has not been positively prepared

It is not justified

It is not effective

ALL THE ABOVE

6. Please give specific details of why you consider the Local Plan has not been prepared in accordance with the Duty to Co-operate, legal or procedural requirement or why you consider the plan to be unsound. Alternatively, if you wish to support any aspects of the plan please also use this box to set out your comments.

Preamble

I am reasonably familiar with Shaftesbury, less so with Blandford but I know Gillingham inside out and back to front so my comments where specific refer to Gillingham although the principles apply to the other towns.

I am not commenting on the 'soundness' of national policy. The tribalism of party politics and the short-termism of frequent general elections are twin evils that can never result in 'sound' policy.

Statement

The NDDC plan to 2026 is not sound and should not be approved. We are still living with the disastrous consequences of the 2011 local plan. Fundamentally the two plans are identical but with the 2026 plan being on a much grander scale. The 2011 plan made provision for houses, a primary school and employment land in Gillingham. We got all three – nearly 800 houses, a school and employment land which mostly remains just that – acres of empty and derelict land. I refer primarily to Kingsmead 'Business' Park but also note the continued dereliction at the former Rover garage in the town centre. Why would any business want to set up in North Dorset (see Appendix)? We got a proliferation of traffic lights and traffic levels that brings the town to a standstill morning and evening. Usually from the Station Road traffic lights back to Sydenham's and that's one mile! The B3081 between Gillingham and Shaftesbury has become the busiest, most unpleasant and dangerous road in North Dorset. I speak as a cyclist, a motorist and an observer of the weekly edition of 'Another car over the hedge'. Towns cannot continue to grow without a corresponding improvement in local infrastructure, but this is precisely what NDDC are proposing.

If the 2011 plan was to help the town thrive, it has had the opposite effect. Town centre shops fall into one of four categories, the first three being roughly the same:

- a. estate agents,
- b. charity shops,
- c. empty shops (including the former Co-op supermarket, driven out of business by absurd planning laws that allowed an unsustainable fourth supermarket to move into the former 'Focus' building) or
- d. local trader heroically battling against all the odds.

One can stand and view a scene of utter desolation as the tumbleweed blows past!

The problem is that Gillingham is in North Dorset – a very beautiful and rural part of Southern England. It is difficult to get here from other parts of the country. There is no industry here other than farming. The biggest employer, Sigma Aldrich, is currently selling off assets and mostly closing down. What if Dextra pulls out for any reason? The town is in direct competition with two other

towns of similar size in North Dorset (Shaftesbury and Blandford) both of which are considerably more attractive than Gillingham. Forty five minutes to the west is the manufacturing town of Yeovil. A similar distance to the east is the cathedral city of Salisbury and to the south, the conurbation of Poole and Bournemouth. A town the size that Gillingham has become has no reason to exist here. Making it ever bigger with no provision for local infrastructure improvements and no realistic prospects of employment growth, can only make the problems ever larger and more intractable. If Gillingham is ever to thrive, then it needs a solution that is imaginative and free of political interference. By simply serving up more of the same disastrous policies, NDDC proves that it is not capable of solving anything. In their hands it will become nothing more than a dormitory town – as now, only bigger.

Additional observations on NDDCs recent record

- All the recent developments in Gillingham are unattractive and completely lack architectural merit. For particular note is the Ham Farm estate where most of the rendered houses are faded, streaked and/or green with mould. Although less than 10 years old it looks, in parts, decidedly shabby and run-down.
- Sewage spewing out of King John Road man-holes every time there's a heavy downpour.
- Footpaths promised to Milton, Thorngrove and Cole Street Lane. Two built, the latter forgotten.
- Maple Road, Shaftesbury recently built but to a standard incapable of accepting refuse collection vehicles. Reportedly the inhabitants have to carry their waste to where it can be collected. Inevitably there are those who won't making it an unpleasant place.
- The Christy's Lane relief road that should have been built by the developers of The Maltings as part of the planning agreement, but hasn't and probably never will.
- The Shaftesbury town centre improvement project that cost a fortune, dragged on forever, is still incomplete and has achieved precisely nothing.
- Constant squabbling with Shaftesbury town council. It has been in the local paper every week for ages – who is responsible for this memorial? that piece of land? the swimming pool? etc. It is deeply tiresome.

Appendix on regional transport infrastructure

Admittedly not all the problems are of NDDCs making. If I was a business man looking to set up or relocate a business, North Dorset would be very low on my list of locations. All businesses need reliable access to the rest of the country and this area simply does not have such. The A303 reached full capacity decades ago, that the A350 through Dorset is classified as a primary route is a joke, and the railway was strangled in the 1960's and remains single line and also runs at full capacity.

In a recent article, local MP, Bob Walter, claimed that he was ready to get the A303 'dualled' throughout its length. A populist statement that is more than a little disingenuous. Politicians have been incompetently flapping around for half a century trying to resolve the Stonehenge problem. Why does he think that the problems can now just go away? However by not focussing on Stonehenge and taking a more systemic view of the routes of Hampshire, Dorset and South Wilts, a

credible alternative readily appears.

The same is true of the railway. It is unlikely that the line will be redoubled purely to support a growing Gillingham. But by taking in an overview of the entire South West it seems incredibly myopic that it hasn't been done years ago. Whenever it rains, Cowley Bridge Junction to the north of Exeter floods and all of Devon and Cornwall is cut off from the rest of the network. Millions of pounds every year are spent on maintaining the Dawlish to Teignmouth section. And yet every time the waves get up, trains stop because their electrical systems are incompatible with sea water. Barnstaple is a town twice the size of Penzance yet when comparing the stations and the service the two towns get, the good burghers of Barnstaple must be thoroughly embarrassed. Just beyond are the sizable towns of Bideford and Ilfracombe. When viewed as part of a whole system, re-doubling the Salisbury – Exeter line makes sense. At the same time the line to Barnstaple gets re-doubled so that North Devon can have fast and direct rail services to London. The line to Plymouth via Okehampton and Tavistock gets re-opened adding two important commuter towns to the network and the people of Cornwall and Plymouth can have a rail service even when it is wet and windy. It's a scheme that will help bring vitality to the entire South West, not least North Dorset. These are the issues that need addressing long before more houses are built. If NDDC are truly interested in the viability of its towns they should be putting every effort into getting the regional and local infrastructure fixed. It will be the foundation on which to build.

7. What change(s) do you consider are necessary to ensure that the Local Plan is legally compliant and sound? It would be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

No Comments

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary

8. If your representation is seeking a change, do you consider it necessary to participate in the oral part of the examination?

No, I do not wish to participate in the oral examination

9. If you wish to participate in the oral part of the examination please outline why you consider that to be necessary. Please note that the Inspector determines who is heard at the examination.

10. Please outline your comments on the Final Sustainability Appraisal Report or Habitats Regulations Assessment. Comments are not confined to 'soundness' issues, but respondents can express their opinions on the above documents and use it as a reference point on the 'soundness' of the Local Plan.

11. Do you wish to be notified of any of the following? *Please tick all that apply. We will contact you using the details you have given above.*

- That the Local Plan Part 1 has been submitted for independent examination
- The publication of the recommendations of any person appointed to carry out an independent examination of the Local Plan Part 1
- The adoption of the Local Plan Part 1.

ALL THE ABOVE, PLEASE.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

If submitting the form electronically, no signature is required.