

# **WEST DORSET, WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND LOCAL PLAN**

## **MATTER NO 9:**

## **PERIPHERAL WEYMOUTH LOCALITIES – POLICY SP10**

**ON BEHALF OF PERSIMMON HOMES SOUTH COAST**

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**9. MATTER 9 – PERIPHERAL WEYMOUTH LOCALITIES – POLICY SP10**

**9.1 Does LITT1 offer the best opportunity for accommodating future development needs and has the need to develop in the AONB being fully justified in accordance with the NPPF?**

9.1.1 Persimmon Homes have no comment on this question.

**9.2 Similarly, is redevelopment of LITT2 a sound proposal given its prominent siting in the landscape and its location in the AONB?**

9.2.1 Persimmon Homes have no comments on this question.

**9.3 How serious are the constraints identified by various parties to development at Chickerell?**

- 9.3.1 The allocation at Chickerell has been proposed in the Local Plan based on a rigorous and robust assessment of opportunities and constraints over many years. The allocation has been fully considered in the Sustainability Appraisal in which it is assessed more favourably than any other site in Chickerell, including the existing allocation. Furthermore, the Sustainability Appraisal (CD/SA1 June 2012) proposes that no mitigation is required and that the development would 'include provision of a network of green open spaces which will minimise the irreversible loss of soil quality and productive agricultural land'.
- 9.3.2 Land to the north and east of Chickerell was first proposed in the Halcrow Report. In response to the 3,000 dwelling urban extension to Dorchester and the 700 dwelling urban extension to Weymouth proposed in the draft of the Regional Spatial Strategy, West Dorset District Council appointed consultants to undertake a detailed study of the options available for these urban extensions. The Halcrow Report examined options at Chickerell and Littlemoor and concluded that there were no significant infrastructure constraints and that there was good prospect for an urban extension to integrate well with the existing settlement. The only constraint raised was the impact that development could have on the sensitive environmental areas at the Fleet and Chesil Beach.
- 9.3.3 During the preparation of the plan there has been widespread support for the development of Chickerell, various working groups have debated potential development options and an indicative layout was included in the consultation working groups in 2011. In autumn 2011 a report of the consultation on the Local Plan for West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland was produced which supported future development at Chickerell (page 57 of (CD/CON6)
- 9.3.4 The Pre-Submission Local Plan Report of Main Issues Raised and Proposed Changes (CD/CON70) provides support for the development of Chickerell. Concerns were expressed regarding any erosion of the open gap between Chickerell Village and Weymouth – which also forms an important wildlife route from The Fleet to Chaffeys Lake. This gap will be maintained as the development is not proposed in the gap. Whilst the development of greenfield sites will result in the loss of habitats and biodiversity, the development will include a network of green spaces that will link with the countryside.
- 9.3.5 As referred to above the Sustainability Appraisals that have accompanied each stage of the preparation of the plan has considered Chickerell in a positive way.

- 9.3.6 In respect of the proposed allocation at Policy CHIC 2 the Conservation Regulations Assessment –June 2012 CD/SA6 concluded that the Chickerell urban extension would be “unlikely to have any significant negative influence on European or Ramsar site”. The Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report – June 2013 (CD/SA7) also came to the same conclusion.
- 9.3.7 Land to the north and east of Chickerell has the potential to deliver around 850 new homes and therefore had the potential to make a significant contribution to the housing supply of the Housing Market Area and more particularly that of West Dorset, which is vital for the long term delivery of housing needs. It also provides a flexible solution to deliver community facilities, including the provision of land for a primary school, the provision of a local food store, should this not be forthcoming on the neighbouring site. Whilst Persimmon Homes have no objection to the inclusion of a local convenience retail store, this would be subject to commercial viability. It is not clear whether there is any evidence base to support the need for a local food store, in particular what scale was envisaged as it was understood that the area was well catered for in terms of supermarkets, being in the Weymouth catchment area. Consequently the requirement in policy needs to be justified.
- 9.3.8 The potential for improved library facilities should the Council require this is also included in Policy CHIC 2. However, we are aware that the library facility is now being managed by the Town Council and the community organisation who will be taking over responsibility for this local service from the County Council.
- 9.3.9 During the course of the preparation of the Local Plan Pegasus Planning Group has submitted the following documents to West Dorset District Council to promote the urban extension of Chickerell:-
- Landscape and Visual Appraisal - Pegasus Planning Group
  - Ecological Assessment (First Stage) -Pegasus Planning Group
  - Archaeology Desk Based – Pegasus Planning Group
  - Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 – PFA Consulting
  - Constraints Plan – PFA Consulting
  - Transport Strategy Plan – PFA Consulting
  - Concept Plan – Pegasus Planning Group

- 9.3.10 A revised initial Concept Plan was submitted in response to the consultation on the Pre-Submission Draft in July 2012 which included an amendment to the plan on page 193 of the Pre-submission Draft.
- 9.3.11 Persimmon Homes supports the identification and allocation of land to the east of Chickerell as part of the urban extension, which is consistent with national policy in the NPPF and is a sustainable option for the wider Weymouth urban area.
- 9.3.12 A number of detailed points have been raised in respect of the wording of the policy.
- 9.3.13 All of the constraints identified by respondents are either addressed within Policy CHIC 2 and/or are considered in a number of assessments (as highlighted above) which have been prepared on behalf of Persimmon Homes.
- 9.3.14 In all cases, the issue is not considered to cause a significant adverse impact. The following paragraphs summarise the policy response to these issues and the conclusions of the assessments.
- 9.3.15 A number of respondents have raised concerns with regard to an access point from the allocation to Mariners Way. However, as can be seen within the Local Plan (paras 10.6.3 and bullet point v of Policy CHIC 2) the only access points which are required are to the Chickerell Link Road, School Hill, Floods Yard and Chickerell Hill. The Transport Strategy Plan for Chickerell East (AD/WPCL10 January 2010) prepared by PFA Consulting also clearly shows that the land from the closed end of Mariners Way is not included in the proposed development area and so this would not be subject to any development (including that of a road access). Indeed, there is no proposal for access via Mariners Way to the allocation.
- 9.3.16 Similarly a number of respondents have identified that the land between the closed end of Mariners Way and the allocation site acts as a soakaway for rainwater. Once more, this parcel of land is not included in the allocated site and will continue to act as a soakaway. Furthermore, Policy CHIC 2 requires that areas prone to surface water flooding are kept free of built development and that a network of open green spaces for drainage purposes run through the development.

- 9.3.17 A Flood Risk Assessment for Chickerell East (AD/WPCL10 March 2010) has been prepared by PFA Consulting which concludes that “surface water discharges from the site will be the same or lower than the existing greenfield runoff, with discharge rates being attenuated, by several potential methods such as onsite tanks, culverts or off-line ponds”. Therefore, the policy makes ample provision for surface water management and the situation will either remain the same or improve as a result of the proposed development.
- 9.3.18 The visual and environmental impact has been also been raised by respondents. Policy CHIC 2 requires that strategic planning is carried out to reduce the impact of the development to longer views and that semi-natural green space is secured. A Landscape and Visual Appraisal for Chickerell East (AD/WPCL8 March 2010) has been prepared by Pegasus Group which concludes that by locating development below the ridge top and away from the north-eastern site area, “the characteristic openness of the ridge and its setting within the wider landscape would be maintained”. There is therefore no significant adverse impact of the development on the landscape.
- 9.3.19 The impact on wildlife and wildlife corridors is another constraint that has been identified by respondents. An Ecological Assessment for East Chickerell (AD/WPCL9 March 2010) has been prepared by Ecology Solutions which identifies that “the habitats within the site on the whole hold low ecological value being species poor and intensively managed for agricultural and grazing purposes”. However, it does also identify that there are some relatively higher value habitat features, many of which can be retained and enhanced. The result of this is that “there would be no significant adverse impacts on habitats within the site”. The report goes on to conclude that “there is no evidence to suggest that there would be any overriding ecological constraints in relation to the site”.
- 9.3.20 In summary, none of the identified constraints are significant; and where necessary mitigation is proposed. Persimmon Homes have supported the Council in allocating the site in the Local Plan and has provided evidence to justify the Policy.



#### 9.4 How will a masterplan for the area be developed and taken forward?

- 9.4.1 Policy CHIC 2 requires that the site will be developed in accordance with a masterplan prepared in conjunction with the local community, Chickerell Town Council and Dorset County Council and agreed by West Dorset District Council.
- 9.4.2 Persimmon Homes support in principle Policy CHIC 2, however, for practical reasons it is considered that the land to the north and the land to the east should form two separate allocations for the urban extension as both would come forward through separate planning applications and be the subject of separate masterplans, although the contiguous development will need to be addressed in each masterplan so that the area of the urban extension functions as a whole whilst relating to the existing settlement of Chickerell.
- 9.4.3 Both sites can come forward separately and at different times, neither is dependent on the other, nevertheless as both applications are prepared, technical discussions will take place with the developers of the site to the north to ensure the wider delivery of the urban extension, to ensure that the objectives of the Local Plan are achieved and that the two developers deliver complementary and appropriately phased developments including the appropriate community facilities.
- 9.4.4 A screening opinion was sought by White Young Green on behalf of C G Fry for the northern part of the urban extension and the Council have stated (3rd June 2014 in their letter to White Young Green that:

**“it is not essential for the eastern portion of the site to provide the school and local store in order for the northern section of the site alone to be developed. This is because the school and store would only be required should all 850 homes be delivered rather than the 350 homes which are proposed as part of this pre-application proposal. Since the proposed development is not an integral part of a more substantial development and may proceed independently, this EIA reply considers the proposal for the northern section of the site individually rather than CHIC 2 in its entirety.”**

- 9.4.5 A Direction from the Secretary of State concluded that the development proposed was not EIA development.
- 9.4.6 Pegasus has recently submitted a screening request to the Council for the eastern part of the proposed development site in Policy CHIC 2.

- 9.4.7 Pegasus prepared a Design Concept Plan (AD/WPCL8) in March 2010 for the eastern part of the allocation which responded to the Landscape and Visual Appraisal prepared by Pegasus and the requirements of Policy CHIC 2. A corresponding concept masterplan (contained in AD/WPCL3) has been prepared for the northern part of the allocation.
- 9.4.8 Furthermore, a number of assessments have been prepared for parts of the allocation. These are all available on the Council's website and provide a starting point for the development of the respective masterplans. The masterplans for the site will evolve through the preparation of the planning applications reflecting the technical studies, discussions with West Dorset District Council, Dorset County Council, the Town Council and public consultation. Pre-application consultation will take place with the community including local members and the Town Council.