

INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE WAREHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

EXAMINER: Bob Yuille MSc DipTP MRTPI

Mr. K. W. T. Critchley
Wareham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Sue Bellamy
Purbeck District Council

Examination Ref: 02/BY/WNP

22 July 2019

Dear Mr Critchley and Ms Bellamy

WAREHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN EXAMINATION

Further to my letter of 25 February 2019, I have identified a number of matters on which clarification from both Purbeck District Council and Wareham Town Council would assist me in my examination of the Wareham Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan). May I request the submission of responses to my questions below within **four** weeks of the date of this letter, although an earlier response would be most welcome.

Questions to Dorset Council (1-4)

1. The development plan for the area covered by the Plan, not including documents relating to waste and minerals, is the Purbeck Local Plan Part 1 (the Local Plan) adopted in 2012. Is that correct?
2. Policy E of the Local Plan seeks to safeguard employment sites across the District. Is this a strategic policy? If it is, would the proposal in the Plan (H5 and H6) to allocate housing on what are now employment sites be in general conformity with Policy E?
3. The Local Plan is currently under review. The Purbeck Local Plan 2019 (the emerging Local Plan) has reached an advanced stage and is now at examination. Is that correct?
4. Has there been any objection to the proposal in Policy V2 of the emerging Local Plan to delete land to the west of Westminster Road, Wareham from Green Belt?

Questions to Wareham Town Council (5-10)

5. Table 1 Summary of Potential Housing Delivery sets out an estimate of the number of dwellings that could be delivered by the various housing sites allocated in the Plan. Included in this are the sites West of Westminster Road (H4); at Westminster Road (H5); at Johns Road (H6).

One of these sites (H4) is, for reasons which I understand, not allocated in the Plan but is dependent on land in Green Belt being released through the emerging Local Plan. In an attempt to establish whether or not there is a reasonable prospect of this happening, I have asked Dorset Council whether there have been any objections to this proposal.

As to the remaining two sites (Sites H5 and H6), these are dependent on the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG). It has not proved possible to agree a Statement of Common Ground with the owner of this SANG regarding its provision. Indeed, the representatives of

that owner have pointed out that *'The provision of a SANG is a complex and expensive matter and insufficient evidence is currently available as to the ability of the proposed allocations H5 and H6 to make a significant financial contribution towards its delivery'*.

With these points in mind I would welcome the Town Council's comments on whether these sites are deliverable or developable in the meaning of those terms used in footnotes 11 and 12 to paragraph 47 of the National Planning Policy Framework and, in particular, whether sufficient SANG land can be procured or provided for these sites?

6. Policy E of the Purbeck Local Plan Part 1 seeks to safeguard employment sites across the District. Two of the housing sites (H5 and H6) proposed in the Plan are covered by this policy. Paragraph 3.4.11 of the Plan states that *"There is a defensible argument that policies on employment land safeguarding are non- strategic"*. Where is this argument set out?

7. Reference is made in the representations by Carter Jonas to a report and an updated report by Vail Williams on the long term future of Westminster Road Industrial Estate. Where will I find these reports?

8. The Habitats Regulation Assessment for the Wareham Neighbourhood Plan dated February 2019 recommends a number of changes to the policy and text of the Plan (see Section 6). Does the Town Council accept these recommendations? If so, what is the wording of these changes and has this wording been agreed with Natural England, Dorset Council and, where appropriate, the representatives of the owner of the proposed SANG?

9. Policy PC1 states categorically that the surface level crossing across the railway will be retained. Whilst this crossing is clearly an important footpath and cycle link, its retention is not supported by Dorset County Council, by Network Rail or by South Western Railway who variously argue that the use of the crossing is granted by way of a lease; that this lease will not be renewed because of the risk it poses to safety; that the crossing is not a permanent right of way as Policy PC1 infers; that the use of the crossing prevents the use of sidings to the east of Wareham Station; and that suitable alternative bridge based options are under discussion. With these points in mind, is the Parish Council in a position to say that this crossing will be retained rather than saying that the retention of this crossing will be supported?

I have read the Town Council's response to a number of these points on page 40 and 41 of the Consultation Statement and note that reference is made to legal advice indicating that this policy meets the Basic Conditions. Where will I find that advice?

10. Several of the Local Green Spaces proposed in Policy GS1 appear to be in Green Belt (site D, part of site H and sites L and M). In addition, sites H and O are Scheduled Monuments, sites L and M are in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and site N is in the curtilage of a listed building. Given that these sites are already protected by these designations, what additional local benefit would be gained by designating them as Local Green Spaces?

In the interests of transparency, may I prevail upon you to ensure a copy of this letter is placed on both the local authority and Town Council websites.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Your sincerely

Bob Yuille

Examiner