



Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Examination

MATTER 5: STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS: EAST DORSET

Statement by Christchurch and East Dorset Councils



Prepared by Christchurch Borough Council and
East Dorset District Council

August 2013

1 Issue 1: RA1 Bailie Gate Employment Allocation

Response to Issue

Issue 1: RA1 Bailie Gate Employment Allocation

- Is this a sustainable allocation which will meet local employment needs?
- Has the environmental impact of the allocation, particularly on adjacent lakes, been taken into account?

1.1 Bailie Gate is a small employment site on the edge of Sturminster Marshall identified in Policy KS1 as a Rural Service Centre. This site was once part of a substantial Cheese factory. In recent years there has been a significant amount of new development on the site and there is continued demand.

1.2 The proposed site has been identified to meet the employment needs of SE Dorset and the District in general, but in particular the needs of the more rural area. It provides employment opportunities where rural companies can access their markets. The site lies on a regular bus route linking Blandford to Poole and is close to the A31 Trunk Road and the A350.

1.3 The proposal does not affect any protected wildlife sites. However some wildlife and conservation bodies have expressed concern about impacts on the nearby lakes. To mitigate potential harm, the Pre-Submission Policy RA1 strengthened the pre-requisites to include a Sustainable Drainage System to ensure no harm to the surrounding water courses and lakes, as well as addressing the potential for surface water flooding.

1.4 A Development Brief will need to be agreed with the Council and this will deal with detailed matters of delivery, such as layout, landscape buffers and other requirements. No objections to the revised Policy RA1 were received from the statutory bodies. The environmental impact of the allocation has been taken into account and any possible impact will be mitigated through the Development Brief and Sustainable Drainage System.

2 Issue 2: WMC7 Leigh Park

Response to Issue

Issue 2: WMC7 Leigh Park

- Is the failure to seek housing for local needs justified and sustainable?

2.1 Options for Consideration Policy WMC2 proposed up to 50 homes along with improved open space. The Town Council as landowner along with many respondents supported the provision of affordable housing on the site. The site was subsequently removed from the Core Strategy following the Pre-Submission consultation, at the request of the Town Council.

2.2 The Town Council has since resolved that a third of the site can be used for future housing development. The District Council continues to consider the site is suitable for housing if the landowner is willing. It can provide much needed housing close to the town centre and local amenities including affordable housing in an area of extreme need.

3 Issue 3: FWP6 East of New Road West Parley

Response to Issue

Issue 3: FWP6 East of New Road, West Parley:

- Is a convenience foodstore of the size proposed supported by robust and up to date evidence?
- Does the policy provide a clear strategy for development?

3.1 The Retail Report of 2008 (ED40.1) supported the provision of a new foodstore of about 3,000 sqm gross, equating to between 1,500-2,000 sqm net. The updated report of 2012 (ED41) suggested a supermarket of 800 - 900 sqm net in West Parley could be provided.

3.2 The policy aims to support the economic growth of West Parley, and defines the appropriate size for the projected foodstore based on the up to date evidence of 2012. Since the 2012 Report, there has been new evidence provided by Wyatt Homes that identified the acceptability of a larger convenience store in this location of up to 1,500 sqm net, based on site - specific evidence and on that basis the Council would be willing to accept a Main Modification to reflect these further updated figures.

3.3 FWP6 does provide a clear strategy for development. The Policy is underpinned by detailed evidence set out in the New Neighbourhood Masterplan Reports. The Council has been in negotiation with the prospective developer of the site about the residential, retail and open space/SANG elements of the scheme and to date there are no insurmountable delivery issues. The developer is in discussion with retail operators and has signed a Statement of Common Ground with Natural England to deliver a SANG. The owners of the land allocated for community use have confirmed their desire to see a church built on part of the site, and the Parish Council have approached the Council to discuss the location of any allotments and open space delivered as part of the development.

3.4 The South East Dorset Transport Study has informed the transport strategy included in the Local Transport Plan 2011-2026. The likely general transport impacts on West Parley from this and other proposed development around the area have been assessed by Dorset County Council to inform the masterplanning process for the new neighbourhoods around Parley Cross (ED67). This established that the introduction of new link roads through the proposed development sites could allow the removal of several traffic movements and associated carriageway space at the existing junction and improve the public realm and pedestrian accessibility. The results of the modelling conclude that the layouts for the auxiliary signal junctions required to connect the development link roads to the highway network at Christchurch Road and New Road (S) can operate within acceptable performance criteria. On this basis a preliminary highway layout for improvements to Parley Cross has been prepared which takes advantage of the predicted reductions in carriageway space to provide improvements for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.

3.5 Transport planners will work closely with the developers and their consultants to assess and reduce the traffic impacts of the proposed development. Financial contributions will be expected to mitigate the impact of development. Improvements will be required to walking and cycling links, junction improvements and public transport measures for existing

and new residents. In order to serve the new development and reduce congestion the developers of both sites will be expected to enable the provision of link roads as part of their development.

3.6 This site is located in a sustainable location within walking and cycling distance of the various facilities on New Road. The development will also be designed to maximise internal permeability and provide good sustainable access to the local centre.

4 Issue 4: FWP7 West of New Road West Parley

Response to Issue

Issue 4: FWP7, West of New Road, West Parley

- Does the allocation address the need to sustain and enhance the significance of the heritage asset at Dudsbury Hill Fort?

4.1 After consultation with English Heritage, an Historic Landscape Assessment has been prepared to assess the impact of policy FWP7 on the integrity of Dudsbury Hill Fort heritage asset.

4.2 The Assessment concludes that the allocation would result in development which would be too close to the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument, and that a wider buffer of 100m should be created to mitigate the impact. It also concludes that the Link Road should be constructed, either by bunding and planting, or in a cutting with landscaping.

4.3 In discussions with English Heritage it has been concluded that the proposed residential development should be set further away from the boundary of the SAM than indicated in the above Report.

4.4 The Council therefore suggest that the Proposals Map be amended as a Main Modification to re-align the residential development to ensure that it does not impact on the setting of the Ancient Monument, by increasing the area of open space/SANG around the Hill Fort. Additional wording is suggested:

4.5 **Bullet 4: The design and setting of the road will need to comply with the requirements of the Historic Landscape Assessment by means of bunding and planting or setting the road in a cutting with appropriate planting.**

4.6 Natural England and the prospective developer are in the process of agreeing a SANG strategy. This will occupy a dual function of providing a suitable setting for the SAM in a natural open landscape, as well as mitigating the impacts on heathland. The prospective developer's ecologists have carried out a preliminary ecological appraisal of the site, which has been submitted to Natural England for comment.

5 Issue 5: VTSW5 North Eastern Verwood

Response to Issue

Issue 5: VTSW5 North Eastern Verwood

- Should the housing allocation for 50 dwellings, proposed in an earlier version of the plan, be reinstated?

5.1 The site known as VTSW5 was not considered as an Option Site in the Core Strategy Options for Consideration consultation. This was because the Council's Area of Search for possible residential development concentrated on its western and southern boundaries where there were larger areas with potential for development.

5.2 Following representations in response to the Consultation it was suggested that the site be included as a strategic allocation. The Council assessed it and agreed. This action was partially based on the comments of the Inspector for the East Dorset Local Plan (October 2000). He commented that 'I accept that the woodland edge would make an excellent, defensible boundary for the green belt, if it had to be moved.....Views out from the site to the surrounding countryside are non-existent. The woodland would make a very good new edge to the town here. That said, I do not consider that at the present time there are exceptional circumstances to justify its removal from the green belt. Certainly there is no reason to allocate it for housing. It may be that, at a future date, there is a need to consider some modest expansion of the town. In that case I have no doubt that this site would be one of those that would warrant further consideration.'

5.3 Broadway Malyan published the East Dorset New Neighbourhoods Stage 1 Baseline Report (additional sites) in January 2012 (ED65). The Report concluded that there were no physical objections to the site's development, although it did not fair well from an accessibility point of view.

5.4 Pre-Submission Policy VTSW5 identified land to the north east of Verwood for about 50 homes along with a SANG strategy in accordance with the provisions of Policy ME3. Guidance from Natural England regarding the size threshold for sites requiring a SANG then changed to reflect the adopted Purbeck Core Strategy. Natural England considered that because of the site's location it was unlikely that a SANG could be delivered other than directly by the development itself, and that the Council and Natural England would need to be convinced that this could be delivered to mitigate possible harm from development on the Ebblake Bog SPA from the volume and quality of water run off. As the developer could not secure the land necessary to deliver this mitigation the Council de-allocated the site, as it was uncertain whether the impacts could be mitigated. Subsequently, the developer has agreed a mitigation strategy with Natural England which secures the delivery of a SANG and drainage works (Feb 2013). An outline planning application for residential development has since been registered.

5.5 The Councils' response to Matter 1, Issue 4, sets out why there is no need to allocate further strategic housing sites to meet the demonstrable needs. The Councils consider it is therefore unnecessary to reinstate the allocation. The Council consider that this site should only be re-instated if the Inspector determines there is a housing shortfall.

5.6 The masterplanning report recognised that the site was remote from the town's facilities. The developer will need to provide the necessary transport improvements to make the development sustainable as it is located beyond the recommended average walking distance to most local services.

5.7 Employment opportunities may be available at the Ebblake Industrial Estate which is within walking distance of the site. It is within a reasonable cycling distance of Verwood town centre where residents can access local food shopping, schools and some further employment opportunities. Residents will be drawn further afield to Ringwood and Bournemouth and these trips could be made using the existing bus service. Average current traffic speeds in the vicinity of the site access are higher than the speed limit. Site specific agreements to provide the following are being explored:

- improved cycle link towards the town centre,
- improvements to the bus stops in the vicinity of the site, and
- speed management measures on the Ringwood Road.

5.8 In addition, the developer has already agreed to pay the South East Dorset Transport Contributions tariff which will contribute towards other transport schemes in the local area, for example the off road cycle route to Ringwood and improvements towards the Bakers Hanging junction on the B3081 towards Ringwood. A residential Travel Plan will also be provided.

6 Issue 6: VTSW6 Woolsbridge Employment Allocation

Response to Issue

Issue 6: VTSW6 Woolsbridge Employment Allocation

- Is the location and size of this allocation justified?

6.1 The need for new employment land is set out in policy KS5 and addressed in Matter 1, Issue 6. The justification to remove land from the Green Belt to accommodate employment needs is dealt with in Matter 1, Issue 9.

6.2 The site primarily performs the Green Belt functions of checking urban sprawl and safeguarding the countryside. It lies in the gap between St Leonards and Three Legged Cross which is about 2.6km wide, with the land between the existing estate and St Leonards being about 0.9km. The strategic allocation would see this reduced by about 200m. The scale and location of the strategic allocation is not considered significantly detrimental to the integrity of the settlement gaps. The enlargement of the industrial estate will increase the capacity for sustainable transport provision, to be supported by a Travel Plan. The site is well located to serve centres of existing population in Verwood, Three Legged Cross, West Moors, Ferndown, and St Leonards in East Dorset, and Ringwood over the border in Hampshire to the east. There have been problems in the past from pollution associated with surface water run-off and its impact on the Moors River SSSI. The proposal provides the opportunity to deliver sustainable solutions to prevent future occurrences. The sustainable benefits arising from the proposal associated with transport and drainage, along with the demonstrable need for employment land provide the special circumstances to justify amending the Green Belt boundaries in this location.

6.3 The existing Woolsbridge Industrial Estate is the second largest in East Dorset and the land proposed for the extension is largely owned and controlled by the owner/operator of the existing estate. The expansion of the estate provides an opportunity to support economic growth by increasing the choice of employment location. The Council has been in negotiation with the landowner regarding the relocation of a local employer to this site to allow for their business to expand as there is a shortage of suitable employment land in the local area.

7 Issue 7: WMC5 Cranborne Road New Neighbourhood

Response to Issue

Issue 7: WMC5 Cranborne Road New Neighbourhood

- Is the location and scale of this housing allocation justified by robust evidence

7.1 The justification for the scale and broad location of the residential allocations in East Dorset are set out in the Council's response to the Inspector's Matters and Issues 1.

7.2 Masterplan Reports have been prepared with the aim of identifying the potential capacity of sustainable locations for high quality, sustainable residential developments, fully integrated into the local character and townscape pattern without having a detrimental impact on the surrounding countryside and Green Belt (ED62-ED66).

7.3 These considered a significant number of environmental and physical constraints on development across the settlements under consideration, including evidence from earlier studies undertaken as part of the RSS process such as the Green Belt Review referenced in the SE Dorset SED04 Development Options Report (OD23).

7.4 The Green Belt Review specifically assessed the impact of Green Belt release on north Wimborne and concluded there would be some encroachment of urban presence in to previously open countryside but the setting of the historic town would not be compromised providing mitigation was achieved thorough design and landscaping of any new development.

7.5 The masterplan assessments went on to look at a landscape appraisal, ecology, historic environment, noise and vibration, odour, flood risk and drainage, infrastructure, transportation analysis, and an urban character study across the areas of search and the first Report (ED62) concludes with a section on 'identified land for consideration'. This assessment discounts a significant proportion of the original area of search for a variety of reasons and focuses on the areas now allocated.

7.6 The Report concludes that for WMC5 there was capacity for approx 547 dwellings at 20dph, with following infrastructure requirements:

- A local centre close to the existing urban area and at the centre of the new development. This could include a first school and health centre.
- Landscaped areas set around the edge of the development to soften the transition between town and country and to protect the ridgeline.
- SANGs provided in the wider area to the north and west.
- Key vehicular links into the site from Cranborne Road and Burt's Hill.
- A strong green link running through and connecting the sites.
- Development fronting onto the River Allen corridor and green space.
- Possible Combined Heat and Power plant.

7.7 The East Dorset New Neighbourhoods Masterplan Report Final Report 2012 (ED64) looked in more detail at the implications of the proposed development areas on adjacent settlements, and the most appropriate form of development to ensure they have minimal impact on the character of the area. The document goes on to develop a series of key concept diagrams which illustrate the key design principles.

7.8 The South East Dorset Transport Study has informed the transport strategy included in the Local Transport Plan 2011-2026. The likely general transport impacts on Wimborne from this and other proposed developments around the town have also been assessed by Dorset County Council transport officers to inform the Core Strategy. A more detailed assessment of the impacts will also be undertaken by each of the Wimborne sites' developers' as and when development proposals come forward.

7.9 The proposals include a mix of uses, with a local shop(s) and new school which should reduce vehicular trips to Wimborne town centre. The development will be designed to maximise internal permeability and provide good sustainable access to the town centre. Improvements will be required to walking and cycling links, junction improvements and public transport measures for the town's existing and new residents.

7.10 The Wimborne Transport Model (ED53) has been produced including a SATURN transport model for Wimborne, Colehill and the adjacent A31 and a more detailed Paramics transport model. The SATURN model has identified points on the network which will experience increased congestion as a result of the additional traffic generated by development, but it is anticipated that these effects can be successfully mitigated.

7.11 The Council recognises that this is a significant proposal on the edge of historic Wimborne, but due to its location and landscape setting it gives the opportunity to realise a high quality scheme which will provide much-needed affordable and open market housing in a sustainable location, as well as providing an extended school to meet future needs.

7.12 The prospective developer of the site, Bloor Homes, have indicated that they will shortly submit a planning application for the strategic allocation.