

SUBJECT : BLANDFORD PLUS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (2011-2033)

Ref 1 : Blandford+Neighbourhood Plan (2011-2033) BASIC CONDITIONS STATEMENT , dated January 2019 .

Ref 2 : Barry Watson response to Scoping reference 2/2018/1386/SCOEIA to your Oliver Rendle of NDDC , dated 1st Nov 2018 .

INTRODUCTION :

This is a response from Barry Watson of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] from this address which is situated within the area defined as PIMPERNE Parish , and concerns the Blandford+Neighbourhood Plan (BNP) issued January 2019 , whereupon I wish to OBJECT to various line items listed under 4 General Conformity with Strategic Policies of the Development Plan given on page 13 , particularly that stated under B2 in Table B - Land North & East of Blandford Forum - which is particular to that allocating virgin white land for ‘ approximately four hundred (400)’ homes over and above the commitments and local Plan allocations given under item 4.3 of the “ General Conformity with the Strategic Policies Development Plan “ .

[clarification / unclear : it is duly noted this approximate number of 400 homes has changed from that of ref 2 , the scoping document ; this mentioned 700 homes ! Now , is it that the 400 homes refers to a Phase 1 Development , whilst the 700 homes is referenced to a total Phase 1 + Phase 2 ? This latter larger area encroaches onto PIMPERNE lands ! Is that the correct interpretation ?]

Why am I responding to reject the BNP document yet again ?

I know it is the process of democracy , but physiologically , it is well know that the more times you ask the same question one obtains the desired answer ! [ref , Mrs May and her EU solution to the Withdrawal Agreement - may be a bad example , but you know what I mean]. This should not be the situation faced by the electorate .

BACKGROUND :

This is my opinion response to comment on the policy concerning the proposed development of up to 400 dwellings , plus various other Community inspired buildings , as an input to the BNP , which is primarily proposed on land situated to the north and south of the A354 Salisbury Rd and substantially beyond the existing Blandford Bypass . It is noteworthy this proposed application is , in varying degree , one of at least eight(8) other proposed development areas around Blandford .

Furthermore , one understands these policies form a ‘ complex ‘ planning parametric equation with composite parameters to include , Blandford Town Centre Planning ; Employment attracting substantial and sustainable viable business’ ; Secondary Education School Plus Community Facility ; Health Provision ; Green Infrastructure Network ; Green Areas ; Managing Design in Conservation Area - open spaces ; Tourism ; Road Infrastructure (A 354 & A 350 in particular) ; Land Availability ; Population Control with increased people movements ; Vehicle Movement Topology ; Increased population density , yet Maintaining the Special Heritage ; Landscaping Characteristics and Challenges ; NOT to Develop outside the the Bypass Boundary ;

Limit / Maintain the Boundary of Blandford / Pimperne to Respect the important aspects of AONB : limit ribbon-Development and boundary-creep.

One question coming to the mind of a plain-vanilla citizen is , how many times does one have to object to such policy directives - one trusts we have reached a final decision point ?

Then , Why? does one need all these homes is a very good question ; is it a case of the numbers-game to satisfy your untrustworthy political masters?

Show us the comprehensive justification - continuous - assessment , from a bona-fide independent referenced source on this subject ,please ?

The BIGGER PICTURE :

At this point , let's look at the bigger picture of what some people wish to inflict upon this beautiful country area of Dorset within the Blandford , Shaftesbury , Gillingham corridor , and where these towns are situated with respect to transport logistics and commuter routing .

Clearly , all are poorly served by the existing road network , yes , poorly served need be emphasised .

Take for example , the great highway - the A350 - has been described as an untied shoelace meandering , vectorially , North / South through the countryside !

Too many , this A350 is one of the worst 'highways ' within the whole of the U.K.road system ; a dreadful long stretch of narrow road , particularly the country-lane stretch between Shaftesbury and Blandford , which is characterised by its mean width and inordinate number of unwanted bends , announced and punctuated by the word "SLOW " !

Why do we tolerate this situation in 2019 ; it is not 1919 , to give perspective ?

Guys , this A350 is your impression , erroneously , of a modern auto-route with large numbers of 50 ton trucks using this the only arterial road connecting between the M4 Motorway to the Bournemouth - Poole metropolplex on the south coast . Additionally , summer beach-seeking traffic and tourist add to the congestion .

Ridiculous many agree , but Planners and Politicians have neglected this fact every time . Now the situation is CRITICAL , please act .

RAIL CONNECTIONS ?

Another thought , where is the Railway connection to the " rest-of-the-world " ?

What happened to the rail connectivity ; if you are to policy increase significantly the local commuter-type populations - because that is exactly what you are creating - yes , dormitory towns - why isn't a light rail network not included in the big-picture , like the very effective and strategic S-BAHN , common in many areas of Germany ?

Surely , important features like this must form part of the economic parametric equation alluded to above .

It is noteworthy that the ' whole -run ' from Poole to Sherborne , the track -bed exists .

Whilst on the subject of transportation , one can virtually forget BUSES as they non-existent - do not contribute - they are ' lip-service ' .

EMPLOYMENT: ATTRACTING APPROPRIATE COMPANIES .

And , Blandford - its existing people - it's track-record - it's qualified employment status

?

What have the Planners and local Politicians created , thus far , out of Blandford to achieve performance , satisfaction and success for their population ?
Where are the historic valued investments building Commerce and Industry highlighted ?
How have they succeeded and what prospects are in the pipeline ?
Everyone needs to know these facts to sustain a substantial growth of employed persons !
It is known as sustainability .

Blandford Town Council And Services - not politically motivated - any new long-term investments ?

Just pause a moment , take a look at what you have received - where is the presence of large value-add contribution / profitable FTSE 100 / 250 , or DOW Companies to create sustainability / growth continuity to the infrastructure ?

I heard they laid off this Enterprise Manager ?

A good start !

Where are the modern visionary innovations / start-ups / midsized Corporations ?

Looking hard . But not in Blandford , nor Shaftesbury , nor Gillingham .

How pleased is the town council with their resulting performance to attract these corporations over the years ?

There is a reality ; to me it appears disappointing , leading to a degree of disapproval and despondency in this regard , unless someone can inform me otherwise .

Now , we live in changing times with investment money getting tighter - ref the Brexit era , but we shall need entrepreneurialism to show and shine through in times of austerity . Seriously , think what are the benefits to the indigenous population of Blandford - there are few , as outlined .

This withstanding , one can think of a few beneficiaries - those to make narrow business / financial gains . Again , all there is , is the Landowner , the middle-man , the facilitator like Savills , and thereafter , the Developer , like a Wyatt , a Bovis , etc to benefit - not many others , if the truth be known .

BACK to HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS :

Whilst one cannot disagree there is some genuine demand for housing in the U.K. , those with greater knowledge than I , like people with the CPRE (Council for the Preservation of Rural England) / AONB (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) for Cranbourne Chase , have understood the big-picture and researched the local North Dorset District Council's (NDDC) objective five-year housing supply for controlling planning applications .

It is noteworthy from one ' modern ' idea , that a number of these proposed new dwellings need not be built , offsetting if one engages in re-use - call it repurposing , ' adaptable-reuse ' , or simply good old fashion ' conversion - whatever label , finding new uses for outdated commercial buildings is one of the strongest trends ' in town ' right now . Driven on the pull-side by the so-called UK's housing shortage - mostly politically motivated - and the push-side by the availability of unloved and unwanted office buildings , the surge to convert is responsible for a significant slice of the UK's new housing stock , accounting for an estimated 45,000 new homes in the last three years ! This is only a starter . Centre Point and the infamous Hoover Building in London , and the old Blandford Brewery are good examples . Just think about candidate unused office

buildings in the Dorset area ? Cynics would say this is only small-beer , but it is a contribution .

LOCALLY :

Accordingly , one is reliably informed about the objective five-year (5) Housing Land Supply , that this local measurement is in short-fall , which is quoted as 3.42 years of resource . To put some numbers to this short-fall , given the difference between an obligation to build 2219 dwellings (five year plan) compared to the predicted supply of only 1551 dwellings , CPRE researched this problem concluding there is no deficit !

Wow! In fact , it is evident there is a potential exceedance to provide a sufficient number of dwellings , not just for 3.4 years , but out to a conservative 6.48 years !!!

NDDC , please check other calculations .

Perhaps , the recent Forum Focus article should be re-worded to be ‘ Town outskirts plan should take a backward step ‘ , meaning people / authorities should reject this somewhat juvenile BNP plan in its entirety ?

So , just think - does Blandford really need these additional 400 (or 700) homes , at this particular proposed site ?

Hence , from the outset , there is clearly little scope for justification of the development , so , on this basis the ASSESSORS / EXAMINERS should reject this BNP proposal .

In a further big-picture , what are the Blandford strategic planners , in their entirety , attempting to achieve ; aggregated , this sort of increase of the total Blandford population to create a ‘ capital city of mid-Dorset ‘ , if all proposed scheme’s proceed ?

I jest !

To move on , there are many parameters in this planning process , so I mention just a few for consideration :

Firstly , ‘ movements ‘ - as the examiners know very well , statistically , those additional persons from 400/ 700 houses implies an increase of 1600 / 2800 movements per day for just this cohort !

What do the real people of Blandford say at such an influx , particularly , and in total for all proposed scheme’s under consideration ?

Why , Blandford itself does not call for such a large number of additional dwellings - who benefits ?

Next , SUSTAINABILITY ? - correct if I’m in error , but there is little mention of the strong meaning word ‘ sustainability ‘ : the part of the equation to support all these newcomers , locally , in well-paid positions , with a good proportion of professionals . There is the requirement to highlight a comprehensive and well balanced local economy , with commensurate industrial / commercial / financial plan to attract high performance , higher tech type companies , as alluded to above , as a starter to this area .

There is little , or no evidence of this initiative here , nor elsewhere !

Then , the ROAD NETWORK and the proposed new ROUNDABOUT on the A350 Blandford Bypass ; Why ?

This is a ludicrous and crazy idea which surely could not be perceived acceptable to HIGHWAYS , nor EXAMINERS , even when they were experiencing there worst of all

dreams !

Remember , the fundamental idea of a bypass concept is for low-resistance / low impedance flow on a highway connection , in this case between the M4 corridor to the distant north , connecting efficiently with the Poole / Bournemouth Metroplex in the south - this ‘ trunk ‘ road need be enhanced to remain unfettered , unblocked , for now and evermore to cater for its predicted increased long-distance heavy vehicle traffic flow . Any thought of potential congestion should be minimised , and not enhanced via this unwanted road-about design and development .

Makes sense ?

Hence the idea of adding a road-about and other complications is not good policy and is clearly , unwanted . In essence all round about - a wonderful British invention - are an imposition to traffic flow and pollution and should be removed - not added !

PROPOSED SITE SITUATION :

It is stated , the site in north of Black Lane statement is mis-leading : the consortium really means it is either side of the A354 /A350 , Letton Park / Leyton Close for this development , with extensive building on the wrong side of the Blandford Bypass , which detracts from the unwanted ribbon-Development between Blandford and the village of Pimperne .

NEVER is this an intended requirement , as explained by the CPRE , AONB , and the issued Pimperne + Neighbourhood Plan for many reasons , not least of which is the significant increased traffic density , degraded environment and an increase in unwanted pollution .

The Pimperne people will be objecting to this BNP plan independently .

VISUAL ASPECTS of the proposed housing development .

Already this whole eastern aspect of Blandford is poorly planned in the rolling and beautiful Dorset countryside .

Take a look for yourself and get the perspective .

Here i refer to the distant visual aspect when looking from the slightly elevated B3082 Wimborne Road driving in the Blandford direction approaching the ‘ Two-Gates ‘ roundabout . Currently , a ‘ blot-on-the-landscape ‘ exists - horrible - only to be made worse by an additional super-imposition of 400 /700 dwellings (and other buildings not spoken about in this poorly proposed plan .

Unfortunately , the resultant view - in my opinion is an escarpment similar and typical to that seen in the degradation of the worst examples viewed in the Upper South Wales mining valley's of the Rhondda and Rhymney !

Don't add and degrade to this important visual aspect .

IN SUMMARY :

A re-think of this new Blandford development plan (BNP) requires serious attention and rigorous scrutiny by critical experienced examiners / planners to apply intelligent thought and application of common sense processes to achieve a total clear perspective of this scope published in the development proposal .

One trusts the decision-making process to be executed by the examiners takes commensurate account of previous long-standing agreements ?

Furthermore , although the road map ahead is unclear and quite unpredictable , Blandford , at this juncture needs strong leadership to create a happy , prosperous and an attractive integrated town-scape for any future population to enjoy , to be satisfied and be proud of .

Trust this rendering in response to the BNP is understood ?

Finally , my recommendation to the decision-maker on the team is to withdraw at this juncture before any more resource is expended .

Mr Examiner , many people urge you to REJECT this poorly conceived and ill thought out plan for additional housing on land to the north and east of Blandford Forum .

Enjoy assessing .

Please confirm receipt of this email .

Here's to a visionary conclusion by the Examiners .

Thanks.

Barry Watson

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