



TERENCE  
O'ROURKE

Mr S Boyt  
Planning Policy  
Dorset Council  
Westport House  
Worgret Road  
Wareham  
BH20 4PP

2 October 2019

Our ref: 236801/MM

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Mr Boyt

### **Arne Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Final Draft – Public Consultation**

Terence O'Rourke Ltd represents the Rempstone Estate, who has significant land interests within Arne Parish including land to the north of West Lane at the western end of Stoborough. We have reviewed the final draft Neighbourhood Plan on behalf of the Estate and wish to make the following observations / comments / objections.

#### *Executive summary*

Page 26 of the Arne Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement June 2019 reports that on the basis of household surveys undertaken within the parish, the proportion of residents favouring large scale development (defined by 92% at 10-40 houses) had increased from 31% in 2002 to 71% by November 2014. It also states that less than 5% of households favour larger development, which means that less than 29% of the parish support developments of less than 10 units.

With this in mind, paragraph 1.3 of the neighbourhood plan states that there is “an appetite for a limited amount of small scale housing development” within the parish. Whilst the evidence base suggests that this is factually correct, the evidence base clearly indicates that there is a much greater appetite for larger developments of between 10 and 40 units within the parish, a fact which is not reflected within the executive summary. We are therefore concerned that the thrust of the plan and indeed the policies within it are not evidence based because they do not accurately reflect the views of parish households.

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### *Section 1*

Paragraph 1.6 of the draft neighbourhood plan states that “other than in exceptional cases, future development should be infill within the existing settlement boundaries to support the unique character of the villages and protect the open countryside”. However, Purbeck District Council’s 2019 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment clearly shows that there are very few opportunities for infill development within the parish. The statement in paragraph 1.6 is therefore neither supported by the views of households nor the district council’s evidence base.

### *Section 3*

Paragraph 3.7 of the draft plan states that additional housing should meet the needs of local people who wish to remain in the area, and that affordability, especially for young people looking to establish homes and send their children to the local school, is a major focus. Whilst we do not have any issue with this objective, policy H11 of the draft Purbeck Local Plan 2019 (which is currently at examination) indicates that up to 40% affordable housing provision should be provided on-site for all sites of 10 or more homes, but that for developments of between 2 and 9 dwellings only 20% affordable housing needs to be provided. Such provision would be in the form of a financial contribution rather than on-site provision. Therefore, if the Purbeck Local Plan is found sound ahead of the adoption of the Arne Neighbourhood plan, the draft neighbourhood plan’s strategy of relying on developments of less than 6 units (policy 1) is unlikely to deliver the plan’s affordable housing objectives because there is no guarantee that the financial contributions given to Dorset Council for affordable housing would be spent on the delivery of affordable housing within Arne parish.

### *Section 6*

Paragraph 6.4 states that the vast majority (71%) of respondents to the parish survey indicated a preference for up to 30 homes over the lifetime of the neighbourhood plan, whereas the evidence base (page 26 of the consultation statement from June 2019) actually states that 71% of respondents indicated a preference for between 10 and 40 homes. This inconsistency needs to be addressed.

### *Section 7*

Paragraph 7.9 of the neighbourhood plan explains that any development of the sites alongside West Lane (including our client’s site) is strongly opposed by a significant number of residents due to the congested, barrow and un-paved nature of West Lane, exacerbated by its use as a link between Corfe Road and the bypass and strengthened by the use of West Lane as the main pick-up and drop-off area for the school. However, the emerging Purbeck Local Plan identifies both sites as available and suitable for development as small sites so there is clear conflict between the neighbourhood plan and the Purbeck Local



Plan concerning the principle of development on these sites. This conflict is reflected on map 3.

One of the basic conditions for a neighbourhood plan is that the plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the area. In August 2019, Purbeck District Council published a number of documents in conjunction with the local plan examination, one of which (SD91) confirmed that policy H8 (small sites policy) is a strategic policy and that as a consequence, there was a potential conflict between this policy and policy 4 of the Arne Neighbourhood Plan which also deals with small sites. Given that the district council has highlighted a potential conflict between the two plans, the neighbourhood plan needs to be amended.

### *Policy 1 – House types*

Policy 1 of the draft neighbourhood plan states that sites should:

- deliver a mix of home types, taking into account current evidence of local need
- mainly include affordable housing types, one and two bedroom open market homes and homes specifically designed for an ageing population such as sheltered housing and units designed for multigenerational living
- private garden space where feasible
- housing of a mix of sizes.

Whilst we support many of these objectives, we object to sites having to provide “mainly” affordable housing types, one and two bedroom units and homes specifically designed for an ageing population because:

1. the policies of the Purbeck Local Plan Part 1 (2012) state that the housing mix for a particular site is a matter for negotiation reflecting the findings of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment
2. the policies of the Purbeck Local Plan Part 1 (2012) do not contain any policies that require the provision of specialist housing for the elderly on any site
3. tables 28, 29 and 30 of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Update for Purbeck (October 2018) indicate that for any particular development in Purbeck, a maximum of 40% of open market units in a development should comprise 1 and 2 bedroom units
4. under policy H8 of the emerging Purbeck Local Plan, a development of more than 10 units only requires 40% affordable housing provision, whilst a development of between 2 and 9 units only requires 20% affordable provision in the form of a financial contribution, and neither 20% nor 40% can be considered “mainly”.

Policy 1 of the draft neighbourhood plan does not therefore accord with either the adopted Purbeck Local Plan Part 1 or strategic policy H8 of the emerging Purbeck Local Plan, and it therefore fails one of the basic conditions required of neighbourhood plans.



#### Paragraph 8.4.2

This paragraph reports that a clear majority of respondents indicated a preference for about 30 new homes over the lifetime of the neighbourhood plan, yet as indicated above, the evidence base states that 71% of respondents supported developments of between 10 and 40 dwellings. The reference to an upper limit of 30 dwellings is therefore not supported by the evidence base.

#### *Paragraph 8.4.3*

Paragraph 8.4.3 states that Natural England has advised Arne Parish Council that a limit of six homes per site would be appropriate to ensure that the individual and cumulative effect of the sites does not give rise to significant environment impacts, most notably to the European Heathlands. The paragraph continues to state that Natural England would also be concerned if the cumulative number of dwellings delivered through this policy was to exceed 30 within the plan period or 20 within the first five years of the plan being made.

No evidence to back up this statement has been provided and moreover, in Natural England's June 2019 response to Halsall Homes' planning application for 30 dwellings on land at Steppingstones Field south of West Lane, Natural England made no reference to a need to limit the scale of development at the site to six units. When referring to policy 4 of the Arne Neighbourhood Plan in their consultation response, all Natural England did was to refer to the fact that a "proportionate" development was likely to resolve concerns relating to impacts on internationally important heathlands and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

In short, there is no evidence to support a limit of six units per site within the Neighbourhood plan and all references should be removed.

#### *Policy 4 – Small sites*

Policy 4 states that future housing growth in Arne Parish will be limited to small-scale developments to meet local housing need. Whilst this is understood and accepted, we object to (a) the cap on supply from small sites exceeding 30 dwellings in total during the plan period, and no more than 20 dwellings in the first five years of the plan being made, and (b) a cap of six dwellings on any one site. The grounds for our objection are as follows.

Principally due to environmental designations and a prohibition on residential development within 400 metres of a Dorset heathland, a very large part of Purbeck District is unable to accommodate residential development. As a consequence, it is vital that sites which are able to support residential development in a sustainable manner are allowed to come forward.

Amended policy H8 of the emerging Purbeck Local Plan sets out the circumstances where applications for small sites will be permitted. Whilst this policy has yet to be found sound, it seeks to impose a limit of 15 dwellings on



individual sites in local service villages such as Stoborough, which is clearly greater than the limit of six units identified in the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

It is a requirement of neighbourhood plans to have regard to national policy. Paragraph 122 of the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) requires planning policies and decisions to support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account a variety of factors including:

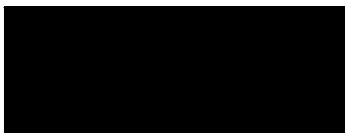
- the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it
- local market conditions and viability
- the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use
- the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and
- the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

In view of the housing crisis in the UK, the pressing need for housing in Purbeck and the general lack of available sites in Purbeck (and Stoborough), there is no planning, environmental or commercial justification, logic or evidence base behind limiting the capacity of development within the parish to 30 dwellings, or to restricting development to 20 dwellings within the first five years of the plan or to limiting the capacity of each site to six units. The policy also fails to take account of any of the factors listed as part of paragraph 122 of the NPPF, making it contrary to national policy, and is also in conflict with policy 6 where an upper limit of 10 sheltered housing units per site is suggested.

The policy needs to be amended through the removal of all arbitrary and un evidenced capacity restrictions.

As always, the Estate and ourselves remain open to a dialogue with the parish council and/or the neighbourhood plan steering group concerning the potential future development of their land to the north of West Lane, and we would be happy to meet at your convenience should you wish to suggest a suitable date and time.

Yours sincerely



**Martin Miller**  
Director