



**REPORT OF THE SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF ECONOMY AND PLANNING REVIEW PANEL AND PLANNING DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2002 AND ALSO OF THE MEETING OF THE HOUSING REVIEW PANEL HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2002**

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN FIRST ALTERATION – REVISED DEPOSIT (REPORT B)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The special joint meeting of the Economy and Planning Review Panel and the Planning Development Control Committee had before them the recommendations that the Cabinet were proposing to make to forthcoming meeting of the Council on proposed revisions to the Local Plan First Alteration. They were advised of the policies that had already been subject to consideration and consultation; updating that was necessary as some situations had evolved over recent months; and also of new proposals that had been put forward to the Cabinet by both the Economy & Planning and the Policy & Strategy and Health & Social Exclusion Portfolio Holders. Members' attention was also drawn to an issue relating to a footpath/cycleway link to the proposed Hythe rail station, which had been considered at their special joint meeting on 9 April 2002, but which had been omitted from the Cabinet consideration on 6 November 2002.

1.2 The Housing Review Panel had before them the relevant extracts which dealt with the affordable housing and care homes policies.

1.3 Set out below are the recommendations of the Cabinet followed, in each case, by the comments of the special joint meeting of the Economy & Planning Review Panel and Planning Development Control Committee and the Housing, Health and Social Exclusion Review Panel.

1.4 Members are reminded to bring with them the full set of local plan papers previously distributed.

**2. CONSIDERATION**

**2.1 Recommendation 1 - Housing Land Provision**

**Recommendation from Cabinet**

That the "baseline" Structure Plan housing requirement can be met without further allocations, but further sites need to be identified in total for some 124 dwellings for the "reserve provision";

## **Comments from Joint Meeting**

The special joint meeting welcomed the conclusion that the amount of development on small and windfall sites was leading to greater housing provision than the requirement in the structure plan, and that the additional number of dwellings needed to meet the “reserve provision” could therefore be reduced from 263 to 124. The Joint meeting supported the Cabinet recommendation.

## **2.2 Recommendation 2: Employment Provision**

### **Recommendation from Cabinet**

- (a) That no change be made in principle to the strategy for employment provision, other than the redesignation back to employment of the site at Shore Road, Hythe (Policy HD-7A). The reserve employment site at Ringwood should be retained; and
- (b) That the two options proposed by the Policy and Strategy Portfolio Holder and the Economy and Planning Portfolio Holder relating to the allocation of land at Gordleton Pit, as detailed in paragraphs 9.13 – 9.15 of Report A be considered.

### **Comment from Joint Meeting**

The special joint meeting was advised that Cabinet supported the redesignation of land at Shore Road Hythe back to employment use (Policy HD-7A). The reserve employment site at Ringwood should also be retained. These proposals were covered by recommendation 2(a). The Joint meeting supported recommendation 2(a).

The Cabinet had considered alternative proposals relating to Gordleton Pit. The Policy and Strategy Portfolio Holder had put forward a proposed policy which would allocate an additional part of the site for employment use. The Economy and Planning Portfolio Holder had proposed that the current policy, which prevented any further industrial development at this site, should be retained.

The majority of Members at the special joint meeting supported the view of the Economy and Planning Portfolio Holder, that this site was not appropriate for further industrial development; and that other, better industrial sites were available in the vicinity. Their concerns related particularly to highway safety and the disruption caused to local people.

Cllr Earwicker asked that it be recorded that he voted in favour of the view expressed by the meeting on this issue, while Councillors Catt and Scott asked that it be recorded that they voted against.

## **2.3 Recommendation 3: “Reserve Sites”, including Land South of the A31, East of Ringwood**

### **Recommendation from Cabinet**

That, in view of the updated housing land supply figures, it is no longer necessary to provide as much reserve housing provision therefore the site previously identified on land west of Nouale Lane, Ringwood, be deleted from the reserved sites for housing to meet Structure Plan requirements;

### **Comment from Joint Meeting**

The reduction in the amount of housing that needed to be identified as reserved provision meant that the reserved site at Nouale Lane, Ringwood could be deleted. This was welcomed by the special joint meeting.

## **2.4 Recommendation 4: Housing Densities**

### **Recommendation from Cabinet**

That no change be proposed to the recommendation contained in the original report considered by the Cabinet at their meeting on 15 April 2002;

### **Comments from Joint Meeting**

The Joint meeting supported the Cabinet recommendation.

## **2.5 Recommendation 5: Affordable Housing**

### **Recommendations from Cabinet**

That policies AH-1 and AH-2 (and related policies and text) be revised as shown in Attachment 1.7(a) subject also to the further changes set out in Attachment 1.7(b), page 21.

### **Comments from Joint Meeting**

The special joint meeting concluded that the proposal to introduce a requirement for 50% provision of affordable housing in rural areas (and Sandleheath), but requiring 35% in defined built up areas (excluding Sandleheath), would be confusing and unworkable. They supported the proposal put forward by the Economy and Planning Portfolio Holder to amend policy AH-2 to make the 35% affordable housing provision consistent across the District. The Joint meeting supported the Cabinet recommendation.

## **Comments from Housing, Health and Social Exclusion Review Panel**

The Housing Health and Social Exclusion Review Panel commented that the requirement for 50% provision of affordable housing provision had arisen as a result of an independent Housing Needs Assessment Survey that had shown that the type of property that was currently being built was not meeting the Housing need in the district. A higher percentage of affordable housing would help meet that need. If the 50% provision were not met then the Housing Needs Assessment Survey would need to be re-visited to consider if there were any other way of meeting the demonstrated need. Land availability for housing provision generally in the district was very scarce which in turn meant that an even lower amount of affordable housing was being provided.

The Panel did not support the recommendation put forward by the Economy and Planning Portfolio Holder to amend policy AH-2 to make the 35% affordable housing provision consistent across the District. The Panel supported the provision of 50% affordable housing in the rural areas and Sandleheath. The Tenants' representatives were also supportive of the 50% proposal.

## **2.6 Recommendation 6: Care Homes**

### **Recommendations from Cabinet**

That the policies relating to Care Homes be revised as set out in Attachment 1.11, page 26.

### **Comments from Joint Meeting**

The special joint meeting discussed this issue in detail. They recognised that there was a need for the provision of additional bed spaces in care homes in the District and also to maintain the viability of existing businesses. They were also anxious to resist the closure of existing care homes that were viable, as they provided a valuable service to their local communities. They were however anxious to ensure that there were adequate policies to safeguard sensitive sites in the New Forest. They did not wish to see people being attracted into the area to fill the additional care home beds provided. Members debated a number of alternative proposals and their consequent effects, but concluded that, on balance, the proposals which had been supported by Cabinet, and as set out as Attachment 1.11 to the Cabinet report, were acceptable.

### **Comments from Housing, Health and Social Exclusion Review Panel**

The Housing , Health and Social Exclusion Review Panel supported the recommendation of Cabinet in relation to Care Homes.

## **2.7 Recommendation 7: Nature Conservation**

### **Recommendation from Cabinet**

That the Nature Conservation Policies be revised as set out in the Annex 2 to Report A to the Cabinet pages 11-15 subject to the further changes set out in Attachment 1.4, page 17.

### **Comments from Joint meeting**

The Joint meeting supported the Cabinet recommendation.

## **2.8 Recommendation 8: Flooding and drainage**

### **Recommendation from Cabinet**

That the flooding and drainage policies be revised as set out in Annex 2, pages 22-24.

### **Comments from Joint meeting**

The Joint meeting supported the Cabinet recommendation.

## **2.9 Recommendation 9: Parking Standards**

### **Recommendation from Cabinet**

That the Parking Standards as set out in Annex 2, pages 83-93 be included in the Local Plan.

### **Comments from Joint meeting**

The Joint meeting supported the Cabinet recommendation.

## **2.10 Recommendation 10: Open Space**

### **Recommendation from Cabinet**

That the Open Space Policies be revised as set out in Annex 2, pages 32-34 subject to the further changes set out in Attachment 1.6, page 19.

### **Comment from Joint meeting**

The Joint meeting supported the Cabinet recommendation.

## **2.11 Recommendation 11: Safeguarding Consultation Zones**

### **Recommendation from Cabinet**

That the policies on Safeguarding Consultation Zones be revised as set out in Annex 2, pages 18-21 subject to the further changes set out in Attachment 1.5, page 18.

### **Comments from Joint meeting**

The Joint meeting supported the Cabinet recommendation.

## **2.12 Recommendation 12: The Furlong, Ringwood**

### **Recommendation from Cabinet**

That the policies on The Furlong, Ringwood be revised as set out in Attachment 1.2, page 15.

### **Comments from Joint Meeting**

It was noted that, although there had been some progress in resolving problems with the policies for the redevelopment of this site, which were reflected in the proposed amended policies, there was still some work to be done. The intention of the Economy and Planning Portfolio Holder to continue this process was welcomed. The proposed policy and revisions to the boundary of the site were set out in Attachment 1.2 to the Cabinet report. The Joint meeting supported the Cabinet recommendation.

## **2.13 Recommendation 13: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

### **Recommendation from Cabinet**

That the policies on the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty be revised as set out in Attachment 1.3, page 16.

### **Comments from Joint meeting**

The Joint meeting supported the Cabinet recommendation.

## **2.14 Recommendation 14: Calshot**

### **Recommendation from Cabinet**

That the new policy regarding the regeneration of Calshot, with associated allocations of land for residential development, as set out in Attachment 1.8, page 23 be included in the Local Plan.

### **Comment from Joint Meeting**

The special joint meeting concluded that, while further work remained to be done on this issue, this would be a good mechanism through which to elicit views. It was essential that a pro-active approach was taken to meeting the social needs of this area, and also that the issues were explored in a very sensitive manner.

### **Comments from Housing, Health and Social Exclusion Review Panel**

The Housing, Health and Social Exclusion Review Panel took the opportunity to comment on the proposal for Calshot.

The Panel supported the proposal to designate Calshot as a regeneration area. However, for regeneration to be successful there needed to be new business opportunities and infrastructure. The Panel were also of the view that the provision of affordable housing in this area should also be agreed at 50% .

## **2.15 Recommendation 15: Footpath at Brookley Road, Brockenhurst**

### **Recommendation from Cabinet**

That the proposed footpath at Brookley Road, Brockenhurst (see April Report: Annex 1, pages 96-7 and Annex 2, page 30 in Attachment 2) be deleted

### **Comments from Joint Panel**

Members questioned whether the safeguarding of the route of this footway should be retained to keep their options open. The local member advised them of the problems that this would create and of the opposition of local people to the provision of a footway in this position. The Joint meeting supported the Cabinet recommendation.

## **2.16 Recommendation 16: Affordable Housing on Farms**

### **Recommendation from Cabinet**

That the new policy regarding Affordable Housing on Farms as set out in Attachment 1.9, page 24 be included in the Local Plan.

### **Comments from Joint meeting**

The special joint meeting discussed the implications of this proposed policy in detail. They supported the aspirations of the Economy and Planning Portfolio Holder to secure additional affordable homes in rural areas, but were not satisfied that this was a soundly based mechanism. The Rural Exceptions policy and specific policy for the provision of homes for practising commoners already

provided a mechanism for homes to be provided where there was an established need, and other criteria on the suitability of the site were met. Members were concerned that the proposed policy may be used to undermine the tests which were applied to the Rural Exceptions policy. They also believed that homes that were built on farms could create conflicts which would endanger the viability of the farming unit; and would isolate the residents, particularly young mothers and teenagers, who may not have access to a car.

The special joint meeting opposed this policy on the grounds that:

- (i) it may be used to undermine the tests that are currently applied to the existing Rural Exceptions policy;
- (ii) it may create conflicts with the operation of the farm unit and thereby threaten its viability;
- (iii) the potential residents may be isolated, particularly young mothers and teenagers who may not have access to a car; and
- (iv) it would result in sporadic development in the countryside.

**Comments from Housing, Health and Social Exclusion Review Panel:**

The Housing, Health and Social Exclusion Review Panel did not support the proposal to secure additional affordable homes on farms areas. The Panel noted that the Rural Exceptions Policy and specific policy for the provision of homes for practising commoners already provided an appropriate mechanism where there was an established need.

Many people requiring social housing were already socially excluded through poverty. To provide affordable housing in areas where there was no infrastructure such as adequate transport, shops, schools, health care etc to support families was not appropriate.

**2.17 Recommendation 17: Access to the Coast**

**Recommendation from Cabinet**

That the revised policy regarding Access to the Coast set out in Attachment 1.10, page 25 be included in the Local Plan.

**Comments from Joint meeting**

The Joint meeting supported the Cabinet recommendation.

**2.18 Recommendation 18: Extensions to dwellings**

**Recommendation from Cabinet**

That the new text regarding extensions to dwellings in the New Forest and countryside as set out in Attachment 1.12, page 31 be included in the Local Plan.



## **Comments from Joint meeting**

While the special joint meeting supported the Cabinet recommendation, members opinions were evenly divided over whether there was a need for further ways of controlling the size of conservatories that might be permitted within the terms of this policy, to remain consistent with the aspirations of the policy that restricts the increases in size of dwellings in the countryside or New Forest.

The special joint meeting debated the proposed new policy which would introduce the ability for dwellings that were currently restricted to a 30% increase in size to have a conservatory in addition to any other extensions. Members welcomed the introduction of a degree of flexibility on this issue, but were concerned about the potential size of even an ordinary sized conservatory relative to, for example, a small dwelling. They debated a proposal to include a limit of 70 cubic metres on the size of conservatories but were concerned that this may still be disproportionate, and were also concerned about the potential for very substantial conservatories to be proposed for larger dwellings. The Panel Chairman concluded the discussion by stating that the differing views of the Panel members would be included in comments for further consideration by the Cabinet.

## **Economy and Planning Portfolio Holder Comments:**

In the light of the debate I heard at the Panel meeting, I recommend that the new text set out in Attachment 1:12 should be amended to read “in considering proposals for a conservatory not exceeding 20 square metres floor area, ...”. This will provide the limited flexibility sought by this alteration, while also tying the extent of additional floor area to that comparable to extensions envisaged by the General Permitted Development Order.

## **2.19 Recommendation 19: Essential accommodation for rural businesses**

### **Recommendation from Cabinet**

That the new text regarding essential accommodation for rural businesses in the New Forest and countryside as set out in Attachment 1.13, page 32 be included in the Local Plan.

### **Comments from Joint Meeting:**

The special joint meeting was supportive of the need to support rural businesses, such as establishments who were involved in the breeding and training of horses, where these would not have an adverse impact on the Forest. The practical difficulty arose in allowing accommodation where it was truly essential for the welfare of animals, where these did not fall within the definition of agriculture, while preventing the policy being used as an avenue to seek new dwellings the countryside. Members considered that the proposed policy could be strengthened by imposing the requirement that, in addition to the legal agreement that would prevent the new dwelling from being severed from the land which justified its building, the new dwelling should also revert to use by an agricultural worker, or former agricultural worker, should it no longer be needed for the horse related activity.

## **2.20 Recommendation 20: Milford-on-Sea**

### **Recommendation from Cabinet**

That the following new policy relating to the defined area of Milford on Sea be included in the plan:

- (a) development resulting in buildings of more than two storeys in height where they are to be used for residential purposes (including flats) will not be permitted; and
- (b) development for purposes other than residential (which includes flats) shall be no higher than the building which is to be replaced, except where there would be no harmful impact having regard to the character established by the heights of other buildings in the immediate locality.

### **Comments from Joint meeting**

The special joint meeting opposed the introduction of this policy on the grounds that there were no characteristics of Milford that distinguished it from other settlements in the District that could justify the imposition of the additional policy restrictions; and also that a high proportion of Milford was already protected by special designations such as Conservation Area and Area of Special Character.

The special joint meeting explored whether there were any distinguishing characteristics that would justify the introduction of the proposed new policy for Milford, as opposed to other areas of the District, and in particular other areas of the coast. They concluded that no distinguishing characteristics existed, and indeed, compared to other settlements, a higher proportion of Milford on Sea was already protected by special designations such as the conservation area and Areas of Special Character

## **2.21 Recommendation 21: Hythe Centre/Proposed Rail Station:**

### **Comments from Joint meeting**

The Cabinet are requested to amend the policy for this area set out in Annex 2, page 119 of the report considered on 15 April 2002. to retain the proposed footpath/cycleway to School Road, but delete the proposed footpath to New Road.

## **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Cabinet agree:

- 3.1 That the responses to the representations received at First Deposit Stage as set out in Attachment 2, Annex 1, as previously circulated, be agreed, subject to the further revisions that are required consequent to Cabinet's decisions regarding Recommendations 1 to 21;

- 3.2 That the Revised Alterations to the adopted New Forest District Local Plan, as set out in Attachment 2, Annexes 2 and 3, as previously circulated, be agreed, subject to the further revisions that are required consequent to Cabinet's decisions regarding Recommendations 1 to 21, and formally placed on deposit for public consultation.
- 3.3 That the Director of Environment Services be authorised to make any necessary further minor amendments, including consequential changes and further editing changes, in preparing the proposed alterations for publication.

**For Further Information:**

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**Background Papers:**

Published documents.