

RESPONSE TO EAST DORSET LOCAL PLAN REVIEW OPTIONS CONSULTATION

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to agree the Council's response to East Dorset District Council's Local Plan Review Options Consultation, closing on 3 September 2018.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. East Dorset District Council (EDDC) is undertaking a review of its Local Plan, to replace the Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy adopted in 2014. Simultaneously, a local plan review is being undertaken by Christchurch Borough Council. This will be subject to a separate report. The work for both plans has been undertaken jointly by Christchurch and East Dorset Councils.
- 2.2. The document currently being consulted on is an options document which sets out the major policy issues and a range of possible policy options for addressing them. It follows on from earlier consultations on the scope of the Local Plan review and a "call for sites" to ascertain developer and landowner interest in the area's future development. Significant work has already been done to provide an evidence base for the plan review. This includes a strategic Green Belt study, undertaken by Land Use Consultants. The South East Dorset Green Belt covers the southern and largest part of East Dorset district and contains most of the main settlements in the district. Beyond the Green Belt most of the district is within the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 2.3. The East Dorset plan states that objectively assessed housing need for the area is 8,840 dwellings. The options document provides for about 8,854 new homes between 2013 and 2033. This includes new housing land allocations for 2527 dwellings, at the following locations:
- Land Adjacent Main Settlements - Including Corfe Mullen, Ferndown, West Parley and Longham, Verwood and West Moors: 1,070 dwellings
 - Land Adjacent Rural Service Centres - of Alderholt, Cranborne, Sixpenny Handley, Sturminster Marshall: 1,405 dwellings
 - East Dorset Villages - including Wimborne St Giles, Edmondsham and Hinton Martell: 52 dwellings

3. ISSUES FOR NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Identification of land south of Alderholt as housing option

- 3.1. The East Dorset Local Plan Options document contains the draft Policy 5.28 which states that: "Land to the south and west of Alderholt is considered suitable for housing development to provide a minimum of 1000 dwellings."
- 3.2. Alderholt lies beyond the boundary of the South East Dorset Green Belt and around 2 miles to the west of Fordingbridge. It is relatively unconstrained by environmental

constraints, particularly to the south of the village. However, it is poorly served by the existing road network. The B3078, running through the north of the village, is the main through route. To the north east, the B3078 runs through Fordingbridge town centre to join with the A338.

- 3.3 This Council has commissioned consultants (SW Transport Planning Ltd.) to undertake a Traffic Study on the impact of development in Alderholt on Fordingbridge. The study concluded that:

“4.1 A development of circa 1,000 dwellings at Alderholt would be likely to generate around 500 vehicle movements per hour during peak periods and around 4,400 vehicle movements per day. It is assessed that 50% of these trips would be attracted to routes passing through Fordingbridge. A further 20% of trips would utilise the rural road network to the south of Alderholt.

4.2 The greatest impacts from the development will be in Fordingbridge, along the B3078 corridor through the town centre where an increase of 184 to 226 vehicle movements per hour is expected on High Street (and Provost Street) in the AM and PM peak periods respectively. This represents approximately a 60% increase over baseline flows in the AM and 30% in the PM. Traffic increases elsewhere are lower but will add to pressure to existing networks which already experience delays and congestion at peak times. Traffic flows on the current town centre diversion route from Normandy Way to Waverley Road are expected to increase by approximately 60 vehicle movements per hour in peak periods as a result of the Alderholt development proposals.

4.3 Due to the constrained nature of the town centre, the opportunities for highway capacity improvements are limited. Possible mitigation solutions for the town centre include the conversion of the High Street / Provost Street junction into a mini-roundabout and the use of peak period loading/waiting bans on High Street, Bridge Street and Salisbury Road. Better control and management of on-street parking along Normandy Way, Parsonage Park Drive, Burnham Road and Waverley Road should also be explored to help maintain traffic flow on these routes.

4.4 The rural road network to the south of Alderholt is expected to experience traffic increases of around 100 vehicles per hour on the northern section of Harbridge Drove and 80 vehicles per hour along the southern section (south of Kent Lane). Peak hour traffic flow increases on Kent Lane are estimated to be around 20 vehicle movements per hour. Whilst these flows are not expected to exceed highway capacity there are concerns about highway standards, particularly on the single-track sections of Kent Lane.

4.4.1 Potential mitigation solutions for the rural network include, speed reduction measures; improved street lighting, traffic signs or road markings; the use of high friction road surfacing materials, localised carriageway widening, footways and crossing facilities. At Kent Lane consideration should be given to localised carriageway straightening or widening, additional passing places, or verge widening to improve visibility, on order to safely accommodate the additional traffic flows.”

- 3.4 Para. 5.44.2.11 of the East Dorset options document states that “transport modelling work is currently being produced”. Work already undertaken on behalf of NFDC already indicates a significant traffic impact in Fordingbridge town centre arising from the significant expansion of Alderholt. Further traffic studies will be needed to explore the impacts of development, and identify appropriate mitigation measures. It is considered that, as a minimum, policies in the East Dorset Local Plan should include a

requirement for the development in Alderholt to contribute towards funding of traffic management measures in Fordingbridge and on affected rural roads in Hampshire to mitigate the impact of development. Development should only be considered acceptable if satisfactory measures to address the impact of these development proposals on communities and infrastructure within New Forest District can be identified, funded and implemented in association with the proposed development in Alderholt.

Duty to Co-operate

- 3.13 On 9th August this Council received a letter from East Dorset Council requesting this Council's assistance in meeting objectively assessed housing need with the minimum need for Green Belt release. (A similar letter was received regarding the Christchurch Local Plan, and this will be addressed in a separate report.) East Dorset ask whether this Authority have any non-Green Belt land within our administrative area which would be available and suitable to address unmet housing needs of East Dorset District as an alternative to the release of Green Belt land.
- 3.14 This Council is not in a position to assist the Dorset Councils in addressing housing shortfalls in neighbouring plan areas. In our Local Plan Review 2016-2036 Part One Planning Strategy, which will be submitted to the Secretary of State in the Autumn, we include proposals to develop 1525 homes on Green Belt land within our district. Without the release of Green Belt land this Council would be unable to meet objectively assessed housing need in our plan area. This Council is not in a position to make available non-Green Belt land to address shortfalls in provision in East Dorset District. This Council is likely to be unable to meet in full objectively assessed housing needs under the Government's revised standard methodology, introduced in the National Planning Policy Framework of July 2018, as a starting point for calculating this requirement.
- 3.15 In addition to the above, this Council consider it important that our Council's co-operate on cross-boundary issues relating to traffic impacts and impacts on European sites, including the New Forest and the Avon Valley. As East Dorset District Council's plan includes development within the catchment of the Hampshire Avon there is a need to work co-operatively to address the impact of phosphates on the River Avon SAC. Traffic-based air quality assessment work for NFDC and the New Forest National Park Authority identified the potential for in-combination effects (background growth plus local plan) on European sites in our local plan areas, and particularly on the New Forest. There is no indication in the plan that similar assessments have been carried out to rule out such effects.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Environmental implications include; the potential environmental impact of the plan on the internationally designated New Forest sites (SPA and SAC and Ramsar sites), and the River Avon SAC and traffic impacts on Fordingbridge and rural roads between Alderholt and A338 and A31.

5. FINANCIAL, EQUALITY & DIVERSITY and CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 It is recommended that New Forest District Council inform East Dorset Council that:

- i. it has concerns about the traffic impacts on Fordingbridge and rural roads in the district which will arise as a result of Draft Policy 5.28, which allocates land for a minimum of 1000 dwellings in Alderholt. It considers it essential that before progressing with these proposals East Dorset District Council discuss this matter further with Hampshire Authorities to ensure that traffic impacts on this district are addressed and minimised. The development should be required to fund or contribute to funding of appropriate mitigation measures and this will need to be taken into account when considering the viability of the development;
- ii. it will continue to work co-operatively with East Dorset District Council on cross-boundary issues, and in particular on highways and nature conservation matters;
- iii. in response to their letter of 9th August, East Dorset Council be informed that the Council is not in a position to assist East Dorset District Council in addressing housing need arising in East Dorset on non-Green Belt .

7. PORTFOLIO HOLDER ENDORSEMENT

I agree the recommendation set out in this report.

Signed: E J Heron

Date: 20 August 2018

Date notice of decision given: Monday, 20 August 2018

Last date for call-in: Tuesday, 28 August 2018

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