



Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of the Town Council held on Tuesday 12 January 2021 via Zoom at 7.00pm.

Members Present: Councillors L Kirk (Mayor), K Green (Deputy Mayor), D Budd, D Cleaton, M Cotton, K Critchley, B Dean, B Ezzard, H Goodinge, Z Gover, V Green, M Humphries, S Kemp, M Russell, C Turner

Officers present: V Ricketts, Town Clerk; T Bailey, Committee Clerk

403. Apologies for absence

Resolved that the apology for absence, received from Councillor R Schofield, due to his attending the Purbeck Transport Action Group, be accepted.

404. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

405. Public participation time

The Clerk reported that she had received no questions or statements from the public ahead of the meeting and no members of the public were present.

406. Purbeck Local Plan Main Modifications Consultation

The Mayor invited Dr David Evans, Vice Chairman of the Wareham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, to present a response to the consultation as recommended by the Steering Group. Dr Evans outlined each element in full. With a minor change to a date, it was –

Resolved that the consultation submission, as attached to these minutes, be submitted as the formal consultation response from the Town Council.

407. Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Town Council was scheduled to be held at 7.00pm on 19 January 2021

Mayor..... Date.....

Wareham Town Council

12 January 2021

Purbeck Local Plan Main Modifications Consultation

1. The Purbeck Local Plan was submitted by Purbeck District Council for Examination in January 2019. Hearings were held between July and October 2019. Following the hearing sessions and a Post Hearing Note prepared by the Planning Inspector issued in January 2020, Dorset Council has prepared a schedule of proposed Main Modifications to the Purbeck Local Plan which are considered to be necessary to ensure that the plan is legally compliant and/or sound. These run to some 267 pages. The Council has also published an updated version of the proposed policies maps and updated versions of appraisals and supplementary evidence. The closing date for comments is 15 January 2021. This is not an opportunity to raise matters relating to other parts of the Plan that have already been considered by the Inspector during the Local Plan Examination. This report covers the main modifications as they effect the Parish of Wareham.
2. **Housing Requirement for Wareham. (Policy V1, H1 and H2).** The submitted plan proposed 300 new homes for the Wareham Neighbourhood Plan area including windfall. The modifications now proposed 207 new homes for Wareham on allocated sites. This reflects updated evidence on sources of housing land supply in Wareham (as referenced in the emerging Wareham Neighbourhood Plan). Windfall development (on unallocated sites in the Neighbourhood Plan are not included in this housing requirement. This is fully in accord with the submitted neighbourhood Plan currently awaiting its Regulation 16 consultation and Examination and it is recommended that **these modifications are therefore supported.**
3. **Green Belt. (Policy V2)** This Policy no longer proposes removing land from the Green Belt at Wareham as shown in the submitted Plan. This reflects the recognition that it is now possible to accommodate the housing requirement for Wareham within the existing settlement boundary, largely due to higher housing numbers being proposed for the middle School and Bonnets Lane housing sites. The Policies map is also amended by deleting the reference to removing land from the Green Belt west of Westminster Road. **It is recommended that these modifications are supported.**
4. **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Policy E1).** The submitted Plan did not fully comply with national policy for protected landscapes and the modification now proposes that “the Council attaches great weight to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The scale and extent of any development within these designated areas will be limited. Development, other than major development (where the NPPF provides guidance), will only be permitted in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Dorset AONB) where proposals would conserve or and enhance the natural beauty of the area...”.

This is a significant strengthening of the Local Plan policy and it **is recommended that it be supported.**

5. **Small sites policy (H8).** This policy as submitted would have allowed small developments of up to 30 dwellings adjoining settlements on unallocated sites. This policy proved to be very contentious and is now proposed to be amended to a hierarchy subject to criteria:
- i) 30 homes on any single small site adjoining a town;
 - ii) 20 homes on any single small site adjoining a key service village;
 - iii) 15 homes on any single small site adjoining a local service village;
 - iv) 5 homes on any single small site adjoining other villages with a settlement boundary.

In addition, this policy is now not to apply within the Green belt or within a Neighbourhood Plan area where small sites have been allocated to meet identified housing needs in a made neighbourhood plan (as at Wareham). **It is recommended that this modification be supported.**

6. **Employment Land (Policy EE).** The Submitted Plan identified Strategic Employment Sites (Dorset Innovation Park and Holton Heath Trading Park) and other identified employment sites (at Wareham only the Sandford lane Estate). The main modification to this policy adds in the northern part of Westminster Road (2.5Ha) and the southern part of Johns Road (0.5Ha). The justification for this change given in the text is to “safeguarded employment land at Wareham and Bere Regis reflecting local policies in emerging and made local policies in neighbourhood plans in these areas (also having regard to the respective land supplies and needs for new homes and employment land)”. These are relatively modest areas of land, particularly at Johns Road and it is unclear exactly why this modification has been proposed. The numbers employed on these sites are relatively small and they are rundown with many buildings no longer fit for purpose. In the longer term they may well be the most suitable land for additional housing beyond the Plan period, and if owners wish to change the use of this land it is hard to see what harm would be caused. NPPF para. 117 requires local planning authorities to “promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained” as it is at Wareham by AONB, Green Belt nature conservation and flooding designations. **It is therefore recommended that this modification is objected to for the reasons given.**
7. **Improving accessibility and transport (Policy I2).** A main modification adds to this policy states the following:

“Local vehicle parking provision

Local planning policies in neighbourhood plans relating to the provision of vehicle parking should support the general principles around delivering adequate parking in accordance with this policy and be consistent with national planning policy. Where

justified with robust local evidence, local policies in made neighbourhood plans may specify distinct local requirements for vehicle parking.”

This policy change provides discretion for neighbourhood plans to introduce, where justified, local requirements for vehicle parking. In the Wareham Neighbourhood Plan it is proposed that within the Conservation Area a stricter approach is taken to parking provision for new residential development. **It is therefore recommended that this modification be supported.**

8. **Wareham integrated health and social care (Policy I6).** This policy is proposed to be modified to reflect the need for appropriate mitigation to be secured to avoid adverse effects on habitat sites. **It is recommended that this modification be supported.**

9. **Policies Map – Protection of Local Green Space.** The modified policies map for Wareham does not include some significant local Green Spaces identified in the Neighbourhood Plan, for example the former middle School Playing fields or the allotments at Bestwall and Northmoor park. There is therefore a danger of confusion for the public and for decision takers about which Local Green Spaces are protected. It is therefore **recommended that this aspect of the Local Plan Policies Map for Wareham be objected to and that the Local Plan shows all the Local Green Spaces identified in the Wareham Neighbourhood Plan.**