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Pimperne Neighbourhood Plan Group

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Dear Sir/Madam

Land North East of Blandford and South East of Letton Park

I write in response to your current consultation on the Options Draft of the Pimperne Neighbourhood Plan and the Pimperne Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) – Options Stage Report. I act on behalf of the Davis Coats families.

You will recall that representatives of the Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan Group and I met with representatives of Pimperne Parish Council and your Group in October 2015, when we explained the then Davis Coats proposals for mixed-use development to the north of the By-pass (in Blandford Parish) and residential development to the east of the Bypass extending up to Letton Park in the north (partly in Blandford Parish and partly in Pimperne Parish). I recall giving a PowerPoint presentation.

Subsequently, an updated masterplan was prepared early this year, together with supporting background studies. That part of the masterplan falling within Blandford Parish has been incorporated as Policy 1 of the Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan, heading towards Examination soon. There was consultation on the Plan at both the Regulation 14 and 16 Stage. I note neighbouring parish councils, including Pimperne, were consulted.

The housing capacity for that part of the site in Blandford is referred to in the Plan as approximately 400. The remainder of the housing development in Pimperne Parish is approximately 250 dwellings.

Preparation of neighbourhood plans needs to be undertaken with regard to the development plan. A main plank of the current development plan is the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1, adopted in January of this year. You will be aware that as a result of the Local Plan Inspector's comments in 2015, particularly regarding housing provision, there will no longer be a Local Plan Part 2 but an immediate Review of the Local Plan, which has already commenced, and the Council currently has a Call for Sites exercise underway.

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The review of the Local Plan is, “*primarily in order to address the issues that arise from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for local planning authorities in Eastern Dorset*” (Inspector’s Final Report, p.6). In preparing for their Local Plan Part 1, North Dorset District Council had relied on outdated evidence (Housing Need and Demand report, June 2008), and not on the latest SHMA published in August 2015 (by GL Hearn).

The Eastern Dorset 2015 SHMA (North Dorset Summary, August 2015, GL Hearn) makes it clear that:

- “*Housing delivery in North Dorset has been below the housing target over the period 2006-2013, delivering only 73% of the housing target over this period*” (compared to 95% across Eastern Dorset as a whole);
- “*The housing market in North Dorset (as with all of the HMA authorities) has seen strong and steady increase in house prices and increasing affordability pressures through the pre-recession decade*”;
- The objectively assessed housing need in North Dorset is 330 dwellings per annum for the period 2013-2033 (6,600 new homes).

The current housing provision in the Local Plan Part 1 is 285 dwellings per annum over the period 2011-2031 (5,700 new homes), which means that there is an additional requirement for **900 dwellings** above current planned rates.

As it embarks on its Local Plan Review, North Dorset District Council is therefore faced with a significantly higher housing target and worsening housing affordability for its residents: it cannot afford to overlook any sustainable site with potential for housing development, if it is to meet its housing needs. Equally, neighbourhood plans need to assist, as the Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan is doing

Notwithstanding, Policy 1 of the Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan, my clients will also be submitting their proposals contained in their Masterplan to North Dorset as part of its Call for Sites exercise. I have also been asked to make representations on Pimperne’s Neighbourhood Plan process, firstly flagging Policy 1 of the Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan, the fact that our masterplan will be submitted to North Dorset next week before their Call for Sites deadline of 21 October and secondly making specific representations on your two consultations.

The first thing to point out is that your SEA appraises your current draft plan and its use of the North Dorset’s Local Plan as a starting point. Planning exists in a dynamic environment. Going forward there are three plans in various stages of preparation which affect my clients’ land. (The Blandford+ NP, the North Dorset’s Review of its Local Plan and your own emerging Plan). I believe your draft Plan needs to have better regard to these other Plans. It cannot be prepared in a vacuum. Dialogue is needed between the three plan-making bodies. As backdrop to this, all three bodies also need to be aware of the housing crisis that currently faces this country and this government’s determination to significantly improve the level of housing supply. (See the NPPF)

Currently neither your SEA nor your draft Neighbourhood Plan make reference to my clients' proposals, the Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan Policy 1 which abuts the Pimperne Parish boundary nor, our masterplan which includes land in Pimperne (attached)

Whilst the SEA refers to the Review of the North Dorset Local Plan, it currently works on the adopted Local Plan's housing figures, which the Local Plan Inspector found unrealistic hence the immediate review. Your Neighbourhood Plan also needs to take account of the Inspector's comments and plan alongside North Dorset District Council and Blandford+ for higher housing numbers to significantly boost housing supply.

We believe your Neighbourhood Plan overly focuses on the village of Pimperne and its rural hinterland. It fails to recognise that Blandford is classified a one of the four main towns in North Dorset to accommodate growth and an option to cater for that growth must be to the north east of the town, as favoured by Blandford+. Unfortunately current parish boundaries do not help with planning for Blandford. However, your Neighbourhood Plan cannot ignore this issue and pretend Blandford's needs are nothing to do with Pimperne. It must recognise that Blandford is a very close neighbour and it should work with other plan-making bodies to objectively plan for not only Pimperne's needs but Blandford's and North Dorset's too.

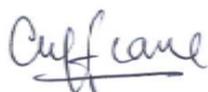
It is noted that the last bullet point of your draft Landscape Character Policy states that:

- *Development should not reduce the clear distinction between Blandford Forum / Letton Park and the village of Pimperne.*

You will note from my clients' proposals, as set out in the masterplan, that the proposed housing development respects the character of Letton Park and would not prejudice its distinctiveness.

It is against this backdrop that I also enclose a completed version of your Options Consultation questionnaire.

Yours faithfully



Cliff Lane
Director

cc. Davis Coats families

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Completed questionnaire
Masterplan