

**Issue 7
Blandford (Policy 16)
Written Representations**

**NORTH DORSET LOCAL PLAN PART 1
EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC**

ISSUE 7.1: DEVELOPMENT AT BLANDFORD ST. MARY

ISSUE 7.2: THE SETTING OF BLANDFORD ST. MARY

ISSUE 7.4: HIGHWAY SAFETY & INFRASTRUCTURE

ISSUE 7.5: INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY

FEBRUARY 2015

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement comprises a response to the issues identified by the Inspector for the Examination in Public (EIP) into the soundness of the North Dorset District Local Plan Part 1 (LP1). The response is submitted on behalf of Charles Church Developments Ltd (CCDL). The company has a legal interest in land identified for residential development within Policy 16 (b) of LP1, west of Blandford St. Mary, between Dorchester Hill and Fairmile Road. The site is identified on the plan reproduced in Appendix 1 to our Written Representations in respect of Issue 1.
- 1.2 In respect of Issue 7, we only wish to comment on the matters raised in the Inspector's Questions 7.1, 7.2, 7.4 & 7.5.

2.0 ISSUE 7.1: DEVELOPMENT AT BLANDFORD ST. MARY

- 2.1 CCDL intend constructing up to 60 dwellings on 2.16 hectares of land to the west of Blandford St. Mary. This will be in accordance with Policy 16 of Policy LP1. Figure 8.1, which precedes the policy, identifies the general location of the site; numbered 6. More specifically, the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) identified two areas of land for potential development in this area; between Dorchester Hill and Blandford St. Mary - of which the CCDL site forms a part - and land north of Fairmile Road and south of New Road. For ease of reference, the 2007 SHLAA map is reproduced as **Appendix 1** to these Written Representations. It is reference 2/03/0540 (re-referenced 2/04/0540 in the subsequent SHLAA).
- 2.2 When compared to the site plan contained in Appendix 1 of our response to Issue 1, the CCDL land comprises the northernmost of four fields. Its principal frontage is to Dorchester Hill. This will provide vehicular access to the site. The southern and western boundaries separate the CCDL land from the balance of the SHLAA site. The southern boundary, which extends westwards from the Dorchester Hill / Folly Lane junction, contains a number of mature trees, and will provide an excellent natural feature to the site. The western boundary, including that to Fairmile Road, comprises hedgerow - as does the small northern boundary. The site slopes gently upwards, from north to south, and is within an easy walking distance - less than 750 metres - from Blandford Town Centre.

- 2.3 CCDL are currently preparing a planning application for the development of their site with up to 60 dwellings. Prior to this a request for a Screening Opinion under the 2011 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations was submitted to North Dorset District Council (“the Council”) in April 2014. The Council’s Screening Opinion, issued in May 2014, advised the proposed application was not EIA development within the meaning of the Regulations. The Screening Request, and Screening Opinion, are reproduced respectively as **Appendices 2 & 3**. From these the Inspector will gain an appreciation of the characteristics of the site and the matters to be covered in preparing and submitting a planning application.
- 2.4 The intended submission of an application will bring forward a part of the Policy 16 site as a first phase of the development. Work is being undertaken to conclude the studies identified at the end of the Screening Opinion letter, following which an application will be submitted to the Council. It is currently proposed that this will be made in the spring of this year, and we will seek an agreement with the Council for a decision to be issued following receipt of the Inspector’s Report into LP1. Should planning permission be granted, construction will start following the discharge of the pre-commencement conditions.
- 2.5 It is therefore considered that a first phase to the implementation of Policy 16 can be delivered in an early period of LP1. CCDL therefore consider that the site is available, sustainable and deliverable.
- 3.0 ISSUE 7.2: THE SETTING OF BLANDFORD ST. MARY**
- 3.1 This issue is to be the subject of a Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) between CCDL and the Council.
- 4.0 ISSUE 7.4: HIGHWAY SAFETY & INFRASTRUCTURE**
- 4.1 Following the receipt of the Screening Opinion, and in the preparation of the planning application on the CCDL site, a Transport Assessment has been drafted. This demonstrates that there will be no materially adverse impact from the proposed development, subject to the following mitigation:

- The construction of an access junction into the site from Dorchester Hill will create a safer environment for pedestrians through reducing vehicle speeds. In addition, a potential build-out serving a north eastern pedestrian access will further reduce vehicle speeds.
 - A contribution can be made towards improvements to pedestrian infrastructure in the local area. This could include the provision of a crossing point at the junction of West Street and the spur of Dorchester Hill leading to Bournemouth Road. The mini roundabout junction of West Street and Bournemouth Road could also benefit from the provision of tactile paving.
 - A contribution will be made towards improvements to bus stops. To increase accessibility and to improve the desirability of using bus services towards Poole and Weymouth, it will be proposed that the Old Ford bus stop on Bournemouth Road is located 40 metres to the West, between West Street and the spur of Dorchester Hill. This would allow for the provision of a shelter (including timetable display) and a raised platform within highway land.
 - A residential Travel Plan will be prepared to encourage residents to make smarter travel choices and reduce vehicular trips.
- 4.2 The scoping study that has led to these recommendations was discussed with the Highway Authority, Dorset County Council, and no adverse issues were raised in respect of off-site infrastructure.
- 4.3 The growth associated with the proposed development can therefore be accommodated satisfactorily, insofar as it relates to the site to be developed by CCDL within the Policy 16 area. Highway safety will be maintained and there will be appropriate infrastructure improvements.

5.0 INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY

- 5.1 This issue questions whether the infrastructure requirements listed in Policy 16 are justified and deliverable. The infrastructure requirements are set out in Paragraphs P - X of the policy.

- 5.2 In advance of submitting a planning application, CCDL has had discussions with the Council, the outcome of which highlighted the following detailed infrastructure requirements arising from the development of the site, for which contributions may be required:
- A community hall.
 - New doctors surgery
 - Additional education facilities.
 - Provision of green open space, including a maintenance contribution.
 - On site play space.
- 5.3 The Council also requested a potential contribution towards community projects identified by the Council following further engagement. In addition, development of the site will require the planning obligations outlined in Section 4 of these Written Representations.
- 5.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out, in Paragraphs 203 - 206, the criteria for seeking planning obligations. They need to be necessary to make the development acceptable; directly related to the development; and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind. Further advice is set out in the Planning Practice Guidance (Planning Obligations, Paragraphs 001 - 023). The test of soundness for LP1 is whether, or not, these criteria are met.
- 5.5 The Council's Consultation Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), October 2012 (COD 002) classified infrastructure through four categories of significance; Critical, Essential, Necessary and Desirable. Paragraph 4.1 of COD 002 defined each of these. The 'Desirable' category was described as; "... *helping meet community aspirations.*" Appendix A then listed elements of infrastructure, and assigned a significance to each.
- 5.6 It is submitted that the items of infrastructure in the 'Desirable' category fail to meet the criteria of the NPPF. It is not appropriate for development to finance community aspirations if the items of infrastructure that are not necessary to make the development acceptable.

5.7 The Submission IDP (SUDO 20) reduces the categories of significance to three. These are set out in Paragraph 4.1:

- Critical for the implementation of development without detrimental impact;
- Essential in relation to delivering LP1 growth objectives; and
- Required to meet community needs and aspirations.

5.8 As set out in Footnote 12 of the Infrastructure Background Paper (INF 002), the ‘Required’ category combines the former COD 002 categories of ‘Necessary’ and ‘Desirable’. This therefore causes confusion in that infrastructure items that are stated to be ‘Required’ include items that are merely aspirational - and not meeting the acceptable criteria set out in the NPPF. Also, some ‘Desirable’ items have even been re-classified as ‘Essential’.

5.9 Appendix A of SUDO 20 again lists elements of infrastructure, and assigned a significance to each. The following schedule sets out those infrastructure items that are stated to be ‘Required’ or even ‘Essential’, but were previously described in COD 002 as being ‘Desirable’; i.e. aspirational only.

Infrastructure Element	SUDO 20 Category	COD 002 Category
Cycling Network	Essential	Desirable
Walking Facilities	Essential	Desirable
Airfield Capacity	Required	Desirable
Public Art	Required	Desirable
Roundabout Features	Required	Desirable
Pre-School Facilities	Essential	Desirable
Art Galleries	Required	Desirable
Art Centres	Required	Desirable
Museums	Required	Desirable
Tourist Information Centre	Required	Desirable
Places of Worship	Essential	Desirable

5.10 These eleven infrastructure items may not therefore necessarily be needed to enable development to become acceptable. The criteria of the NPPF are not met.

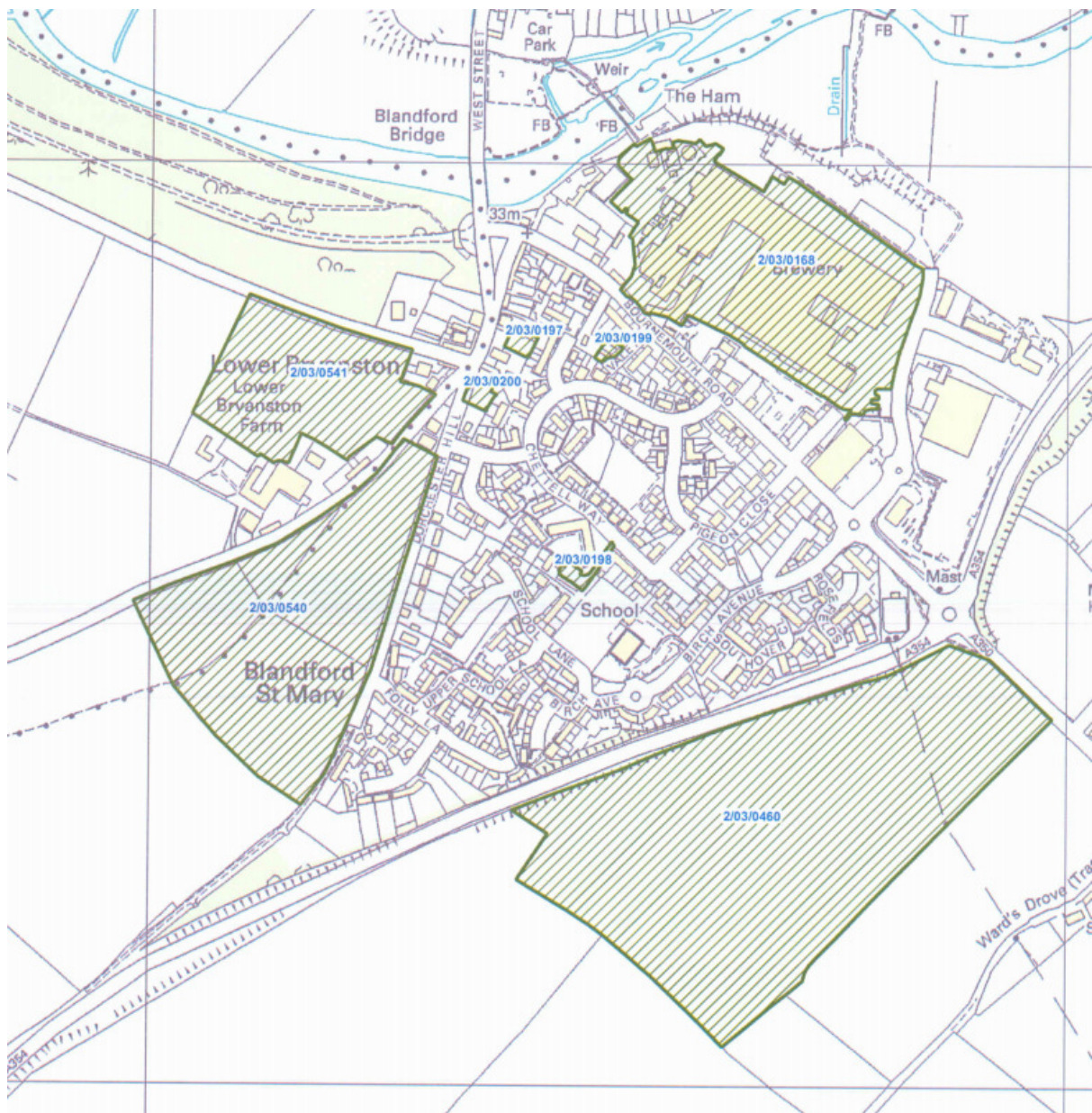
- 5.11 The Policy 16 infrastructure list is not exclusive. The first sentence under the title 'Infrastructure' refers to infrastructure to include Items P - X. It is therefore possible that additional infrastructure, including any of the eleven items in our schedule, could also be sought from development - when it is not required to do so.
- 5.12 The link between some of the items within Policy 16, and the development proposed at Blandford St. Mary and other areas of Blandford, also appears somewhat tenuous. For example, whilst it is appropriate for development at Blandford St. Mary to contribute to a neighbourhood hall at the settlement, the policy also requires an additional contribution to the refurbishment of the Corn Exchange. This is considered to be an onerous requirement that fails to meet the criteria of the NPPF.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The infrastructure requirements of Policy 16 are considered to be unduly onerous. It is also possible that planning obligations may be sought that are aspirational only - and not essential to the development as proposed.
- 6.2 It is considered that the policy could be made sound by referring to the required infrastructure being in accordance with that listed in the IDP, subject to the IDP items being modified to exclude elements that were previously considered to be desirable or aspirational.

APPENDIX 1

SHLAA MAP



APPENDIX 2

EIA SCREENING REQUEST

Your Ref:
Our Ref: PA/TP.10901/3
Please quote our reference in replying

11th April 2014

The Development Services Manager
North Dorset District Council
Planning Department
'Nordon'
Salisbury Road
Blandford Forum
Dorset, DT11 7LL

Dear Sir

**TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990; PLANNING & COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004;
TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (ENGLAND & WALES) REGULATIONS 2011.
REQUEST FOR SCREENING OPINION IN RESPECT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT DORCHESTER HILL, BLANFORD ST. MARY, DORSET**

I am instructed by Charles Church Developments Ltd. to submit to you a request for a Screening Opinion under the above mentioned Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations. This is in respect of a planning application for the construction of up to 60 dwellings on approximately 2.16 hectares of land to the west of Dorchester Hill and south of Fairmile Road, Blandford St. Mary, as identified on the attached Ordnance Survey Location Plan. The dwellings will be a combination of open market and 'affordable' housing.

1. CONTACT DETAILS OF THE DEVELOPER

The contact details are as follows:

Charles Church Developments Ltd.
Park View House
100 Wickham Road
Fareham
Hampshire, PO16 7HT

FAO Paul Bedford

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2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROJECT

The planning application proposes residential development by way of an urban extension to the west of Blandford St. Mary. The main characteristics of the project are as follows:

Reasons for proposing the project: to comply with Policy 16 of the Pre-Submission North Dorset Local Plan Part 1, 2011-2026; so as to assist in the delivery of market and affordable housing in that period.

A plan showing the boundaries of the site: see the Ordnance Survey Plan that accompanies this letter. The site boundaries are edged red.

The physical form of the development: it is proposed that the application will be accompanied by details showing a residential development comprising predominantly two storey housing. The general extent of the development is shown on the Layout Plan (Ref: 13020 - Dwg. No. 01) attached to this letter. There will be a range of development densities. The highest will be to the north of the site, but decreasing towards the southern boundary. The site layout also shows an access to develop land with houses on an adjoining site to the west that falls outside of the applicants' control. This will however be excluded from the application.

In addition to the residential development, the application will include the provision of public open space. Within the residential area, the open space will be in the form of a grassed and wooded area adjacent to the site access so as to enhance visual amenity.

Description of the main processes: the main process associated with the development will be the construction of the dwellings. This will involve the delivery of construction materials to the site; both for the dwellings and the associated site infrastructure.

New access arrangements or changes to the road layout: it is proposed to construct one point of access to Dorchester Hill. This will be used by vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. After entering the site from Dorchester Hill, there will be a small network of internal roads in a predominantly north-east to south-west direction. Each dwelling will have its own access to this road network.

A work program for the construction, operation and commissioning phases of the development: the current program is based on a commencement of construction in 2016. The development is likely to occur over a two or three year period.

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Resources used in construction and operation (materials, water, energy etc.): the resources for the construction program will be sand, cement, aggregates, electricity and water. For the operation of the development, the resources will comprise electricity, water and gas.

The relationship with other existing / planned projects: none, apart from the potential future development of a small number of dwellings beyond the western boundary.

Information about alternatives being considered: there are no current alternatives.

Information about mitigation measures: Any items of mitigation are likely to relate to impacts away from the site. The mitigation will be through the collection of finance pursuant to Section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990; or through the future implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy. The contributions will fall into four main categories:

1. Education.
2. Community Facilities / Leisure.
3. Outdoor Sports.
4. Highway Enhancement / Cycleways.

Other activities required as a consequence of the project (e.g. water supply, power etc.): the scheme requires service and utility connections.

Details of any other permits required: the scheme requires a Section 106 Agreement, a Section 278 Agreement, a Section 38 Agreement; and Building Regulation approval.

3. LOCATION OF THE PROJECT

Photographs of the site and surroundings areas are reproduced as **Annexe 1** to this letter. The adjacent land uses comprise:

- To the north - a small number of residential properties leading to Blandford St. Mary, with Blandford Forum beyond.
- To the east - a larger residential estate to the east of Dorchester Hill.
- To the south - arable farm land.
- To the west - Lower Bryanston Farm and Lower Bryanston Cottages.

Currently, the site is used for the grazing of horses. It comprises two farm fields. Approximately mid way through the site, on the eastern side, there is a large group of mature trees. These are proposed to be retained and will form the southern boundary to the open space. There is a further mature row of trees to the south of the site. These give a natural back drop to the development, with the open farmland beyond.

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Development Services Manager
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The boundaries of the site all have mature hedgerows. With the exception of the construction of the access to Dorchester Hill, these are proposed to be retained. At a future date, a small area of hedgerow on the western boundary may be removed to enable the residential development of land owned by a third party.

The location of the project is consistent with the Local Plan Proposals Map and Policy 16, which states:

“... .. In addition to infilling and redevelopment within the settlement boundary, Blandford’s housing needs will be met through:

- g mixed use regeneration of the Brewery site; and*
- h the development of land to the west of Blandford Forum; and*
- i the development of land to the west of Blandford St Mary.”*

4. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POTENTIAL IMPACT

The impacts on people: it is considered that the proposed development will not cause any adverse harm to residential amenity. The proposed development, and the access to it, has appropriate distances from existing residential properties. The provision of an element of the development as ‘affordable housing’ will assist in meeting demonstrable local need for housing of this type.

The landscape and visual impact on the character of the area: the planning application will be accompanied by a landscape and visual assessment that will evaluate the effects of the proposed development in relation to (1) the landscape character of the site; (2) the setting of Blandford St. Mary; and (3) the nearby Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the boundary of which runs west of Fairmile Road.

The site currently comprises a triangular area of open land between the built up area east of Dorchester Hill, and the extensive building complex of Lower Bryanston Farm. The existing tree belt on the southern boundary, the central tree belt and the perimeter hedgerows, mean that visually the site is well defined and relatively self contained. The landform slopes northwards towards the existing urban area and thus away from the wider countryside. The hedgerows to the east and west together with the mature tree belts restrict immediate views into the land. Parts of the site are visible in longer distance views from the west, including from Bridleway E5/4 near Lower Bryanston Farm, and from New Road to the north-west. However, in these more elevated positions, the site sits lower down in front of existing housing development. Small scale hedge removal on the eastern boundary will be required to create the main vehicular access into the site. The layout will be evolved alongside a landscape strategy, and the predicted visual effects of the development on visual amenity are predicted to be low to moderately low.

Continued

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The development offers an opportunity to round off the settlement at this point without detriment of the wider and more elevated landscape to the south west.

The impact on the environment: a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) will be prepared and submitted with the planning application. The main purpose of the FRA is to provide sufficient flood risk information in order to demonstrate that the development would be safe for its lifetime, taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and where possible, reduce flood risk overall. The planning application will also be accompanied by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment. This will evaluate the impact on trees in relation to the construction of the proposed dwellings and the access road.

The transport impact: there will be an increase in person trips associated with the proposed development. The planning application will be accompanied by a Transport Assessment (TA) and Travel Plan (TP). The TA will set out the transport issues relating to the proposed development. It will identify the anticipated transport impacts of the scheme and, where appropriate, suitable mitigation measures to deal with the impacts and to improve accessibility. The purpose of the TP is to provide a package of site-specific initiatives aimed at improving the availability and choice of travel modes to and from the development.

5. REQUEST FOR SCREENING OPINION

Taking into account the matters set out in this letter, I would be grateful for your response to this request for a screening opinion in accordance with the EIA Regulations.

Yours faithfully

Peter Atfield BTP MRTPI
Director, Town Planning
Direct Tel: 01202 550100 Mobile: 07836 202442
Direct Fax: 01202 550022 E-mail: peter.atfield@goadsby.com

ANNEXE 1

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA



1. The site in the middle distance, beyond the cottages.



2. This picture is slightly enlarged from Photograph 1, showing the treed southern boundary and the 'landmark' white rendered house on Dorchester Hill.



3. Dorchester Hill looking south.



4. Dorchester Hill looking south, again showing the 'landmark' white rendered house.



5. Adjoining land viewed from Fairmile Road, with the group of trees in the centre of the application site in the distance.



6. Fairmile Road looking south.



7. Fairmile Road looking north, with Lower Bryanston Cottages to the left.



8. The junctions of Dorchester Hill, Fairmile Road and New Road.

APPENDIX 3

EIA SCREENING OPINION

Our Ref: 2/2014/0427/PLNG
Case Officer: Stephen Clark
Direct Line: 01258 484202
Email: devcontrol@north-dorset.gov.uk

Date: 02-May-2014

Mr P Atfield,
Goadsby
99 Holdenhurst Road
Bournemouth
Dorset
BH8 8DY

Dear Sir,

Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011


APPLICATION NUMBER: 2/2014/0427/PLNG
PROPOSAL: Request for EIA Screening Opinion for up to 60 No. dwellings on 2.16 ha of land.
LOCATION: Land At E388234 N105579, Dorchester Hill, Blandford St Mary, Dorset


I refer to your request for a screening opinion under Regulation 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011, received on the 14th April 2014. This response is based on the information submitted and an officer assessment of the site, the surrounding area and planning constraints.


The development proposed includes the erection of 60 dwellings on a site of approximately 2.16 hectares situated to the west of Dorchester Hill and south of Fairmile Road, Blandford St. Mary. The development falls within the description as at paragraph 10 (b) of Schedule 2 to the 2011 Regulations. Since the proposal exceeds the threshold of 0.5 hectares, the proposal is considered to be 'Schedule 2 development' within the meaning of the 2011 Regulations.


This screening opinion is given having regard to the description of your proposal as set out in your letter dated 11 April 2014. This has been considered against the selection criteria for screening Schedule 2 development as set out in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations 2011 with particular regard to the characteristics of the development, location of the development, and characteristics of the potential impact.


Summary opinion: Environmental Impact Assessment not required.



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In considering the characteristics of development the Council has screened the proposed development on the basis of up to 60 additional dwellings. Clarification is given as the proposal includes associated vehicular access from Dorchester Hill and shows a link within the development to allow for further growth potential to additional land to the south west. A larger development could potentially result in a different EIA screening opinion from the Local Planning Authority. Given that the land to the south west is within separate ownership and the LPA has not been contacted about its development it is considered reasonable to determine this EIA Screening Opinion on the basis of the 60 dwellings currently proposed without consideration for cumulation of other development.

The site is located outside of the settlement boundary of the town of Blandford Forum and Blandford St Mary and is therefore considered open countryside. The site is on the fringe of the existing urban area of Blandford St Mary. The general site characteristics include an agricultural use, mature boundary hedgerows, a small group of trees that separate the two fields and sloping ground which is higher to the south western extent of the site.

The planning constraints to development include its principle contrary to policy, its edge of settlement and countryside location, localised landscape impact on the public right of way network, wider landscape impact on the AONB, impact on the character of the nearby conservation area, transport issues, drainage issues and potential impact on flood risk, loss of habitat and biodiversity as well as archaeological impact.

The proposed development would be located on the edge of the existing urban area and would be limited in terms of overall house numbers. Localised views of the development would be possible from Dorchester Hill, Blandford St Mary and the designated conservation area but the site would benefit from high hedgerow screening and would be set against a back drop of rolling countryside. Due to the sloping nature of the site the development would be viewed as a foreground to existing development when viewed from the local rights of way network and Dorset AONB to the north west. Vantage points from the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB would be at distance and limited to views of the roofscape.

Given the above, the proposal is not considered to be of more than local importance in terms of its landscape and visual impact. It is noted in your letter that a future application would be accompanied by a landscape and visual assessment, a Flood Risk Assessment, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Transport Assessment and Travel Plan. Taking into account the overall amount of development, the size of the site and its relationship with existing urban form it is not considered to present the potential for unusually complex and potentially hazardous environmental impacts. It is considered that the main environmental issues can be adequately addressed through the submission of supporting documentation.

As no mention has been made in the current submission it should be noted that a constraint to the site is its location within a site of local archaeological importance. Any future application will be required to consider the potential impact on archaeology. The sites current use in agriculture with its mature boundary hedgerows and small coppice of trees also renders it likely to provide suitable habitat

for protected species. The impact of the development upon protected species and their habitat will need detailed consideration.

It is the opinion of the Council having taken into account the selection criteria in Schedule 3 to the 2011 Regulations as well as the nature, size and location of development that it is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects that would require the submission of an Environmental Statement. For the reasons detailed above, I therefore consider that the proposed development described in your screening request is not EIA development within the meaning of the 2011 Regulations.

I consider that the application should be accompanied by the following studies:

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
Flood Risk Assessment
Arboricultural Impact Assessment
Transport Assessment and Travel Plan
Ecological Assessment and Biodiversity Mitigation Plan
Impacts upon designated and non-designated heritage assets
Design & Access Statement
Archaeological Assessment
Existing Ground Conditions

Yours faithfully

John Hammond
Development Services Manager