

## **West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan Examination**

### **Examination Statement of Grainger plc (part of the North Dorchester Consortium)**

#### **MATTER 13: Eastern Localities of West Dorset Dorchester (DOR 1-11); Crossways (CRS 1)**

##### *Dorchester*

- 13.1 *Paragraph 11.1.5 [CD/SP1] highlights problems with meeting housing and employment needs in Dorchester towards the end of the plan period. Does the Plan identify sufficient land reserves to provide flexibility?*
- 13.1.1 No.
- 13.1.2 There is a need for additional housing and employment within the District, and Dorchester is the main suitable / sustainable town location for achieving this.
- 13.1.3 We do not agree that there is no easily deliverable site for major growth at the town.
- 13.1.4 Through extensive representations, including evidence documents submitted throughout the plan preparation process, Grainger plc and the wider North Dorchester Consortium have identified the suitability, availability and deliverability of a first phase of development land at North Dorchester to meet needs for housing and employment.
- 13.1.5 Given the lead in times for strategic scale development it is necessary to start planning now for the phased, long-term expansion of the county town, with growth at North Dorchester providing a logical, sustainable direction for the future development of the town. It is proposed that a first phase be brought forward in the current plan period (comprising around 1,500 homes and 7 hectares of employment).
- 13.1.6 Through our submitted evidence documents Grainger plc and the wider North Dorchester Consortium has substantiated the technical capability for development delivery at this location. A positive approach is required from the local planning authority to embrace the opportunity that is available at this locality to meet development needs in a timely and sustainable manner.
- 13.1.7 The deliverability evidence documentation prepared by the North Dorchester Consortium that has been submitted principally comprises:

- *A Vision for Sustainable Growth at North Dorchester*, a master plan concept / vision document prepared for the North Dorchester Consortium by Terence O'Rourke, dated October 2013. This identifies the land area involved and wider opportunities available as part of a comprehensive approach, including the creation of an extensive country park adjoining the town.
- *A Review of West Dorset District Council's Historic Environment Assessment*, prepared for the North Dorchester Consortium by CgMs Consulting, October 2013
- *Critique of Council Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, prepared for the North Dorchester Consortium by Pegasus Group, October 2013
- *Transport Sustainability and Accessibility Comparison and Traffic Modelling*, prepared for the North Dorchester Consortium by PFA Consulting, July 2012

13.1.8 We understand that these documents, which were submitted in response to the late summer 2013 modifications to the Plan, have been sent to the Inspector and that the planning authorities are making them available to interested third parties.

13.1.9 The advantages of developing at North Dorchester include:

- The potential to create a self contained satellite neighbourhood within close proximity of the town centre
- The opportunity to access and enhance the riverside meadow and showground by creating a major country parkland
- Limited site constraints and a single control of land ownership via the consortium
- Potential for a phased approach providing certainty for the future, and
- A comprehensive approach to growth that maintains the environmental qualities of Dorchester.

13.2 *Is the area around Trinity Street an appropriate location for any future expansion of the main shopping area (DOR5)?*

13.3 *Do concerns identified in relation to sites at St George's Road (DOR7 and DOR8) and off Alington Avenue (DOR9) undermine the likelihood that these sites will come forward?*

13.4 *Do proposals for a park and ride site and trunk road service area south of the Stadium Roundabout (DOR10) represent the best option for providing these facilities given the sensitive nature of the location?*

13.2.1 No comment.

## Crossways

13.5 *Is Crossways an appropriate location to provide a significant level of housing to help meet some of the needs of Dorchester?*

13.5.1 A strategy that directs major housing growth to a location within the Dorchester travel to work area that is not at the county town itself will increase commuting pressures. A development focus at Crossways will result in additional out commuting to Dorchester.

13.5.2 The evidence document *Transport Sustainability and Accessibility Comparison and Traffic Modelling*, prepared for the North Dorchester Consortium by PFA Consulting in July 2012 and re-submitted in response to the late summer 2013 modifications to the Plan, identifies that:

“3.26 Crossways is a village, which by definition is not generally considered a logical and suitable sustainable development location for strategic-scale residential and employment development proposals. The proposed development at Crossways would rely on the provision of new facilities to attain the minimum degree of settlement sustainability, and residents would still need to make longer journeys to Dorchester to access higher order facilities.”

“4.11 The high levels of self-containment experienced at Dorchester can be furthered through development of the town at North Dorchester. However the proposed development at Crossways would only further exacerbate commuting and the imbalance between jobs and homes in Dorchester.”

“5.36 The relative remoteness of Crossways means that the rural roads upon which it relies to link to the strategic highway network will be subject to substantial increase in traffic impact...these rural roads are not conducive to such increases in traffic and the consequential impacts on local residents and the environment within their villages.”

13.6 *There is potential for the proposed scale of development (in relation to both the original and alternative proposals) to adversely affect sites of international importance to birds. Can adequate mitigation measures be put in place to minimise the detrimental impact of human intrusion?*

13.6.1 The greater the scale of development at Crossways the greater the potential to adversely affect sites of international importance to birds.

13.6.2 It is noted that mitigation measures are unlikely to be necessary if development is alternatively located where the majority of need occurs, at the more sustainable settlement of Dorchester itself.

13.7 *Are there adequate measures in place to ensure services and facilities and improvements to essential infrastructure will be delivered to minimise the impact of development?*

13.7.1 The proposed development at Crossways would rely on the provision of new facilities to attain the minimum degree of settlement sustainability, and residents would still need to make longer journeys to Dorchester to access higher order facilities.

13.7.2 It is more appropriate for growth to be directed to the more sustainable settlement of Dorchester itself.

13.7.3 Transport consultant PFA Consulting has identified that the rural roads upon which development at Crossways will rely to link to wider destinations will be subject to substantial increase in traffic impact. These rural roads are not conducive to such increases in traffic and the consequential impacts on local residents and the environment within their villages.

13.8 *The recommended changes to the Plan identify the southern area of the settlement as the preferred location for development. Is this the most appropriate area given the various constraints and issues affecting the settlement?*

13.8.1 It is more appropriate for growth to be directed to the more sustainable settlement of Dorchester, except for a more modest level of housing required for the specific needs of the village itself.