

04 SPATIAL POLICY AND RESEARCH ANALYSIS





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Introduction

This section of the document summarises relevant planning policy. It also includes a review of a recently published best practice document produced by the TCPA relating to urban extensions.

Key national planning policies and guidance:

PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development

Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) - Delivering Sustainable Development - establishes the overarching national planning policies for the delivery of sustainable development through the UK planning system. It states that sustainable development is the core principle underpinning planning. More specifically it identifies that planning should facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban and rural development by, inter alia,

“ensuring that development supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services for all members of the community.” (paragraph 5)

PPS1 adds that planning has a key role to play in the creation of sustainable communities which will stand the test of time, where people want to live and which will enable people to meet their aspirations and potential.

PPG2 – Green Belt

Current national policy for Green Belts is set out in PPG2 which states “the fundamental aim of Green Belt Policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness”... It sets out five purposes of including land in Green Belts:

- *“To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas*
- *To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another*
- *To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment*
- *To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns*
- *To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land”*

Much of the area around the three settlements are covered by Green Belt Policy.

PPS3 – Housing

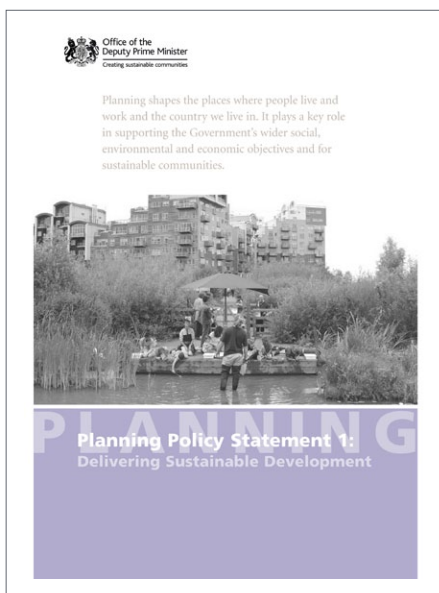
The Government’s housing policy is set out in Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) - Housing. PPS3 sets the policy context to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent home, which they can afford, in a community where they want to live.

To achieve this, the Government is seeking:

- *To achieve a wide choice of high quality homes, both affordable and market housing, to address the requirements of the community.*
- *To widen opportunities for home ownership and ensure high quality housing for those who cannot afford market housing, in particular those who are vulnerable or in need.*
- *To improve affordability across the housing market, including by increasing the supply of housing.*
- *To create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities in all areas, both urban and rural.*

More specifically, PPS3 sets out policy objectives to provide the context for planning for housing through development plans and planning decisions. The specific outcomes that the planning system should deliver are:

- *High quality housing that is well-designed and built to a high standard.*
- *A mix of housing, both market and affordable, particularly in terms of tenure and price, to support a wide variety of households in all areas, both urban and rural.*
- *A sufficient quantity of housing taking into account need and demand and seeking to improve choice.*
- *Housing developments in suitable locations, which offer a good range of community facilities and with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure.*



- *A flexible, responsive supply of land – managed in a way that makes efficient and effective use of land, including re-use of previously-developed land, where appropriate.*

PPS3 also sets out the strategy for the planned location of new housing which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. This should take into account a number of factors including:

- *The spatial vision for the local area (having regard to relevant documents such as the Sustainable Community Strategy) and objectives set out in the relevant Regional Spatial Strategy.*
- *Evidence of current and future levels of need and demand for housing as well as the availability of suitable, viable sites for housing development.*
- *The contribution to be made to cutting carbon emissions from focusing new development in locations with good public transport accessibility and/or by means other than the private car and where it can readily and viably draw its energy supply from decentralised energy supply systems based on renewable and low-carbon forms of energy supply, or where there is clear potential for this to be realised.*
- *Any physical, environmental, land ownership, land-use, investment constraints or risks associated with broad locations or specific sites, such as physical access restrictions, contamination, stability, flood risk, the need to protect natural resources eg water and biodiversity and complex land ownership issues.*
- *Options for accommodating new housing growth (or renewal of existing housing stock), taking into account opportunities for, and constraints on, development. Options may include, for example, re-use of vacant and derelict sites or industrial and commercial sites for providing housing as part of mixed-use town centre development, additional housing in established residential areas, large scale*

redevelopment and re-design of existing areas, expansion of existing settlements through urban extensions and creation of new freestanding settlements.

- *Accessibility of proposed development to existing local community facilities, infrastructure and services, including public transport. The location of housing should facilitate the creation of communities of sufficient size and mix to justify the development of, and sustain, community facilities, infrastructure and services.*

Key Regional Policy

Regional Planning Guidance 10

Current regional planning guidance for the South West is provided in RPG10 (2001) which extends to 2016 and, until it is formally replaced, beyond.

Policy SS1 established the spatial strategy for the region which is based upon its sub-division into four sub-regions which RPG10 clarifies will continue to be the main focus for growth in the South West. The Bournemouth/Poole conurbation falls within the South East sub-region.

Policy SS2 goes further and seeks to focus development at what it terms Principal Urban Areas (PUA's), on the basis that these are the locations that offer the best opportunities to accommodate the majority of development in a sustainable way. RPG10 is clear that the aim should be to concentrate most development at the PUA's, either within the urban areas or in the form of planned urban extensions in sustainable locations. In achieving the latter, Policy SS2 states that local authorities should critically review the Green Belt to examine whether boundary alterations are needed to allow for long term sustainable development needs. In some cases it may be necessary to remove land from the Green Belt for development if, on balance, this would provide the most sustainable solution for accommodating future development requirements

With specific regard to the Bournemouth/Poole area, RPG 10 recognises that the Bournemouth/Poole conurbation is a major centre for employment, service, shopping, cultural and education facilities. It also refers to the area's recent economic and population growth and questions whether these levels of growth can be sustained.

It states that future physical development should be focused within the built up area, although a review of Green Belt boundaries, to identify opportunities for sustainable development, should be undertaken. To achieve sustainable development, Policy SS13 requires that Local authorities, developers, infrastructure and transport providers and other agencies should work together to achieve the following:

- Further economic expansion of the area, in particular by attracting and fostering high skill employment and by investing to improve educational and training levels given the constraints on physical expansion;
- Conservation and enhancement of the important national and international environmental designations;
- An improved public transport system;
- More efficient use of land and buildings within the existing urban areas through conversion, appropriate redevelopment and significantly increased residential and building densities;
- A review of the Green Belt;
- Continued development of Bournemouth International Airport as an important airport for the region and as a site for airport-related development;
- Continued development of the port of Poole, including the improvement of regional and local transport links.

EAST DORSET HOUSING OPTIONS

The South West Plan: Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)

As stated earlier in this report, the RSS reached an advanced stage (Proposed Modifications) in July 2008. However, the Secretary of State (SoS) revoked all RSS documents in July 2010 (under s79(6) of the Local Democracy Economic Development and Consultation Act 2009) and they no longer form part of the development plan for the purposes of s38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. In the longer term, the legal basis for RSSs will be abolished through the "Localism Bill".

However, it is important to note that when revoking the RSS, the SoS stated that evidence that informed the preparation of the RSS may still be a material consideration.

Regional Economic Strategy

The Regional Economic Strategy (RES), produced by the South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA), provides a shared vision for the development of the region's economy. It concentrates on those issues which are directly related to improving the economy and ensuring that more people can participate in that economy. The RES supports the delivery of clear and agreed visions for communities.

The RES refers to the importance of the aerospace and defence industries to the economies in cities and counties within the South West region, including Dorset and the critical need to maintain competitive advantage through application of new technologies and highly advanced engineering through the supply chain.

Regional Housing Strategy

The Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) states that the main agencies will work together to improve the quality of the monitoring information available on the provision of affordable housing, and will expect authorities which have consistently under delivered against agreed overall planning totals from RPG10 to improve their performance. Its main priorities include improving the balance of housing markets and reducing homelessness



REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY FOR SOUTH WEST ENGLAND 2006 - 2015

RES

through increasing the provision of houses, tackling affordability concerns and a spatial distribution that seeks to deliver sustainable communities in both urban and rural areas.

The RES and RHS are closely related throughout as the link between lower than average wage rates in the South West, and much higher than average house prices, greatly exacerbates the lack of market access opportunities for low to moderate income households in the region.

Local policy

Joint Replacement Structure Plan (2001)

The Joint Replacement Structure Plan was adopted in 2001 and covers the period to 2011 and the geographical area of Dorset County and the Unitary Authorities of Poole and Bournemouth. This document is now almost 10 years old and the weight given to it is increasingly limited.

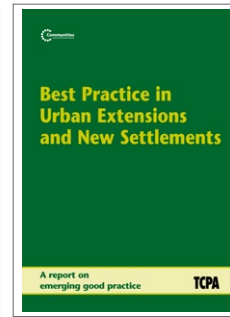
Local Plan

The East Dorset Local Plan was adopted on 11th January 2002. It provides planning policy for the whole district up to the year 2011 although the Secretary of State 'saved' the relevant policies in the plan in 2007 under the provision of the 2004 Planning Act with the effect that they will be replaced by a new "Core Strategy" as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF).

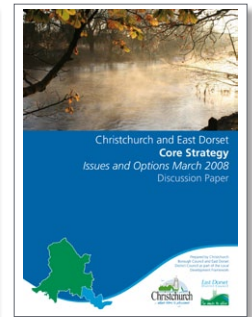
The Local Plan contains general policies that aim to protect and minimise the adverse impacts arising from new developments on landscape and environmentally sensitive areas, particularly the heathlands and local nature reserves. The Local Plan also contains policies to protect the district's aquatic environments and requires development to be sited and designed to protect or enhance the



PPS 3



TCPA



Core Strategy

visual and physical quality and natural history interest of rivers or their tributaries, including the Allen and the Stour and their landscape settings. There is also a policy presumption in favour of protecting the Green Belt and the designated Conservation Areas within the district.

The policies specific to Wimborne Minster, Ferndown and West Parley and Corfe Mullen hone in on localised issues. For Corfe Mullen, the lack of a commercial centre is identified, and policy restricts commercial uses on land other than the area around the Village Hall, Albert Road Junction, Windgreen Garage site and the Hillview Post Office to avoid further scattering.

Policies for Ferndown and West Parley are principally development proposals and are now largely out of date and no longer relevant. In addition, there are policies requiring improvements to the cycle network and the preservation of the local environment.

In Wimborne Minster, the plan seeks to conserve the heritage and environment of the town, retaining the characteristic mix of uses, including housing, in the town centre. With regard to Colehill, the local plan aims to protect the character of the settlement and the restriction of any outward expansion onto the slopes of the ridge where urban development would be prominent.

Emerging LDF – Core Strategy

In accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), East Dorset District Council has started to produce their Local Development Framework. The Core Strategy is the key document in relation to the LDF. To ensure holistic planning, East Dorset District Council (EDDC) is working in partnership with Christchurch Borough Council to produce a Joint Core Strategy.

The Core Strategy is currently emerging. A formal six week "Issues and Options" consultation was completed in May 2008. This stage of the process set out to understand opinions on the general planning principles for growth in East

Dorset. The timetable for the production of the Core Strategy is set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS) which was adopted in March 2007. This timeline has slipped somewhat due to firstly, delays in the RSS process and secondly its revocation. Due to this the next stage of the process will comprise the "Options for Consideration" consultation stage which is now timetabled for autumn 2010 and to which this report will feed into.

Best Practice

Best Practice in Urban Extensions and New Settlements

There are a large number of best practice documents covering issues such as design, sustainability etc. and this report does not seek to list or repeat these. However, one particular document is of particular importance. In 2007, the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) produced a document entitled 'Best Practice in Urban Extensions and New Settlements'. This study seeks to establish good practice in developing new settlements and urban extensions in the UK by drawing lessons from recently developed examples which have been successfully brought through the planning system and which have used innovative approaches to providing good quality development.

The report highlighted that:

- Major new urban extensions should be identified at the regional or sub-regional level, not nationally;
- There is a long lead-time for developments of strategic scale, with time horizons often extending over 20 years and therefore beyond development plan periods;
- Urban extensions or new towns are best achieved by comprehensive land assembly and by capture of a major proportion of the land values created in the grant of planning permission;
- Implementation requires a highly focussed and motivated team;
- The project needs cross-party support as implementation will last longer than several electoral cycles;

- Significant investment is required early on to prepare and plan the location and to create the infrastructure.

Summary

There is a significant number of planning policies, documents and strategies at both a national, regional and local level, relevant to East Dorset and this report has merely highlighted the key documents and due regard will be paid to them and the principles that they establish.

Furthermore, there has already been a significant amount of work and stakeholder consultation undertaken by East Dorset District Council (EDDC). In addition, as part of this report, we have held meetings with technical officers at EDDC and the relevant Parish and Town Councils. A key outcome of these meetings was that there is no straightforward solution to accommodating future housing in the District and that all the potential locations identified have their own particular opportunities and constraints. However, there was consensus between all parties that if the development is to come forward, then it will be in the interest of the local communities to ensure that new development is masterplanned holistically to allow the necessary infrastructure to be provided.

One of the key aims of the Core Strategy is to ensure that the new neighbourhoods are planned in the right way. This report forms a vital component of the evidence base underpinning the Core Strategy's long term plan for East Dorset.

The holistic long-term approach to new neighbourhoods is supported by best practice guidance produced by the Government and organisations such as TCPA. We do not seek to re-test this in too much further detail in this study.