

CEDC Core Strategy Examination in Public

Matters and Issues number 1

Overall Strategy

Key issues/settlement hierarchy/quantum and location of development/green belt/flood risk

With regard to item 2, which refers to a robust Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Colehill Parish Council does not believe sufficient attention has been given to the essential infrastructure that will be required to support the proposed developments, particularly those at WMC5 (Cranborne Road/Burts Hill) and WMC6 (South Leigh Road adjacent to Parmiter).

Schooling

Colehill Parish currently has 6 schools which includes one heavily oversubscribed Middle School, St Michael's, and one Special Needs School, Beaucroft which is operating at capacity. Numerous questions have been raised with the Local Authority regarding future school provision and it is of increasing concern that it appears additional school places will be provided on a "demand" basis.

It is proposed within the Core Strategy that a replacement school for Wimborne First School will be developed at WMC5. The plans show that the new school will provide one additional class intake for each year, accommodating approximately 30 extra places in each year group, a total of 120 pupils. Wimborne First School is already oversubscribed with many local children having to attend school out of catchment. Colehill Parish Council is justifiably concerned that the new school will not come on stream until the development is well underway and a significant number of the new homes are sold. Colehill Parish Council believes that a new school should be given priority and open to coincide with the new residents moving in to the new settlement.

A new school is proposed at WMC6 but it is accepted that this will be a replacement school for Hayeswood School in Colehill, not an additional school. The Core Strategy indicates that this school may not come on stream until the end of the development period, which could be as late as 2030. This is simply unacceptable should the development at WMC6 go ahead as set out in the Core Strategy.

With almost 1000 new homes proposed at WMC5 and WMC6, a significant number of which will be for affordable and social housing, it must be assumed that these new settlements

will be made up of families with school-age children. It is anticipated that these two developments will result in a 37% increase in the housing and population of Colehill but little thought has been given to the resulting increase in traffic movements that will ensue, particularly at peak times when children are being delivered to and collected from school. The re-siting of both first schools will result in a significant criss-crossing of the conurbation and many children who currently walk to school will be transported by car because of the increase in distance. Of particular concern is the proposed new school at WMC6, which will necessitate many children having to negotiate the extremely busy Leigh Road to get to school. Children currently attending Hayeswood, to the North of the Leigh Road, will almost certainly be taken to school by car because of the danger of crossing the Leigh Road. Colehill Parish Council believes that the only measure that will mitigate this will be the provision of an underpass or a foot bridge over the Leigh Road, neither of which has been considered within the Core Strategy.

Colehill Parish Council is also gravely concerned about the upper school provision for pupils in both Colehill and Wimborne. The replacement QE School at Pamphill, which opened in November 2011, is already at capacity. A significant number of students that attend the school are from out of catchment being bussed in from Verwood, West Moors, Cranborne and other villages to the North and East of the area. Whilst there has been discussion relating to the provision of a new school at Verwood to accommodate these pupils, its development appears to be dependent on creating a critical mass within the existing upper school system before a new school will be considered. It is of serious concern that this approach appears to be endorsed by the leader of Dorset County Council and the earliest date for a new school to open will be 2030, at the end of the Core Strategy development period. In the meantime, the upper school children moving into the New Neighbourhoods will struggle to find places in local schools and will have to go out of catchment, resulting in even more traffic movements on already congested roads to transport them to school.

Healthcare

Lack of consideration has also been given to the provision of health services, in particular doctors and dentists. There are no doctors or dental surgeries in Colehill. All residents have to rely on the services provided in Wimborne and whilst Colehill Parish Council acknowledges the excellence of the service that the General Practitioners provide, it is becoming increasingly difficult to get an appointment with a GP. This situation will be further exacerbated should the proposed developments for Colehill and Wimborne go ahead resulting in a 46% combined increase in population. The situation with dental surgeries is under even greater pressure with many residents using services well outside the conurbation. The existing practices within Wimborne will not be able to provide adequate cover for the New Neighbourhoods and priority must be given to provide medical and dental facilities in Colehill.

Of major concern to Colehill Parish Council is the lack of consultation with the Local Health Authority. Whilst it is acknowledged that the Clinical Commissioning Groups only became operational in April 2013, it is of grave concern that they seem to have had little or no input in the future healthcare provision and even more worrying that they had no idea of the

scale of proposed development within Colehill and Wimborne. Colehill Parish Council believes that this must be addressed as a matter of priority.

Transport and Travel

Traffic and Transport are an area where Colehill Parish Council believes local knowledge and experience has been disregarded during both the consultation process and in drawing up the Core Strategy. It is expected that the combined developments will result in an additional 3650 private vehicles using the existing road system: there are no proposals within the Core Strategy to significantly improve this road system. The re-siting of two schools plus lack of healthcare provision in Colehill will result in 1000's of additional journeys being made on a daily basis on roads that are creaking under the strain of current traffic flows. Colehill Parish Council is also concerned at the lack of priority given to public transport and with the number of elderly residents growing and the number of young people increasing, particularly teenaged, a good public transport system has to be an essential part of any future development.

Youth Provision

Colehill Parish Council is also concerned about the lack of provision for young people within the Core Strategy. There is no proposal to provide any youth club facilities for the young people of Colehill and Wimborne. With the increasing number of youngsters that will certainly move into the New Neighbourhoods, priority must be given to providing facilities to meet the demands for good quality social, mental and physical health care for the youth of Colehill and Wimborne.

Greenbelt and Flood Risk

Colehill Parish Council recognises that some development on Green Belt can be justified if no alternative sites can be found within the urban areas. However, Colehill Parish Council is of the opinion that too many alternative sites (SHLAA) have been disregarded by the District Council because of their "remoteness" to the main conurbation of Wimborne.

Colehill Parish Council does not believe the changes to the Green Belt boundary at WMC5, Cranborne Road/Burts Hill, can be justified. The loss of this valuable piece of Green Belt on the Northern approaches to the historic market town of Wimborne, will cause considerable harm to the rural landscape and will be irrevocable.

Colehill Parish Council is concerned about the flood risk that the proposed development at WMC5 could pose. It can find little evidence that Strategic Flood Risks have been carried out in an area that lies within a Flood Zone 1. The River Allen frequently flows in full spate and certainly the last two winters of 2012/2013 have seen adjacent fields inundated for weeks. The development proposed at WMC5 can only further exacerbate this situation and with the effects of climate change, which could result in a 10% increase in peak river flow within the next 10 – 15 years according to the SFRA, serious and lengthy periods of flooding could become a regular occurrence. Wimborne town itself experiences regular flooding episodes

and it is not unusual to see premises with sandbag barriers, particularly those along West Borough which leads to the Cranborne Road.

The River Allen is a chalk stream and is home to many rare species such as the white-clawed crayfish and according to The Dorset Wildlife Trust, holds some of the largest population in Dorset of rare wildlife. The proposed development at WMC5 puts this unique habitat at risk from pollution not only during the long construction period but also by additional run-off from the New Neighbourhood. The fields and meadows either side of the Cranborne Road, which currently act as flood plain for the River Allen, will be covered in new dwellings and hard materials. With rainfall predicted to increase due to climate change, the pluvial flooding alone could cause severe problems for residents in the New Neighbourhood and for the existing residents in the Burts Hill and Walford area.

With regard to item 3, which refers to the settlement hierarchy, Colehill Parish Council believes that the designation of Furzehill and Colehill as appropriate for development is not justified and not appropriate. It is the opinion of Colehill Parish Council that the proposed developments at WMC5 and WMC6 are not based on robust evidence that takes in to account local need. Colehill Parish Council believes that the scale of the proposed developments is based on the lamentable record of the District Council to provide suitable housing to meet the needs of the District. With almost 50% of development planned in the Core Strategy for East Dorset being within the two neighbourhoods of Colehill and Wimborne, Colehill Parish Council is of the opinion that the developments are not justified, are not appropriate and are wholly disproportionate.

With regard to item 8, which refers to housing located outside the urban areas/in the green belt, it is the opinion of Colehill Parish Council that the developments cannot be justified. East Dorset District Council identified many alternate sites in the SHLAA but the vast majority of these were rejected as being too far from the main settlement at Wimborne. Colehill Parish Council believes that many of these sites, identified in the SHLAA, should be reconsidered for development. The sites are located within the existing Colehill Parish, would allow for easier integration of new residents with the existing Colehill community and would not impact on pristine Green Belt land, particularly that at WMC5.