

Overall Strategy

Quantum and Location of Development.

The full scale of residential development proposed for Wimborne/Colehill within the Core Strategy 15 year planning period amounts to 2447 new dwellings (1260 non-urban from SD28 chapter 8 + 1187 urban from ED33 appendices C and D). This is not only grossly disproportionate within the District as a whole (47.5% of the District's total requirement for new housing) but is also grossly excessive for the two Settlements (a 40% increase in households, 47% increase in the combined populations, plus an additional 3650 or more private vehicles). Only 720 (30%) of the new dwellings are required to meet local need (ED29, page 24, table 7.4), with the remaining 1727 required to meet the District's wider need.

Given that the New Neighbourhoods have been sited as close to Wimborne as possible in order to take advantage of the town's existing facilities, and setting aside parish boundaries, the implications for Wimborne are even more dramatic: a 66% increase in new households and an 82% increase in the footfall population.

This unprecedented scale of development, allied to the reduction in employment opportunities through the change of use of the Stone Lane Industrial Estate and Long Close Farm buildings from commercial to residential, will fundamentally change the character of this historic market town. Currently 35% of the working population of Wimborne work in the town with 30% travelling to work in the Bournemouth/Poole area. In the future Wimborne will become a dormitory town supporting the economies of the conurbations to the south. This fundamentally contravenes a basic principle of the NPPF – to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns – and runs counter to aspects of the Core Strategy Vision.

This strategy of planned Urban Extensions (so called New Neighbourhoods), allied to the presumption in favour of sustainable development (KS13), places a burden of responsibility on the District Council to provide the evidence to show that a development of this magnitude within a 15 year period is not only deliverable but also sustainable.

The Council has failed to do so. Key studies to this effect (site specific flood risk assessments, groundwater source hydrological analyses and risk assessments, up to date transport modelling and traffic mitigation measures) are yet to be carried out. The Sustainability Assessment (SD16), which purports to show that the developments proposed for Wimborne/Colehill meet all the Sustainability Objectives, is no more than a table of subjective judgements which have not been assessed objectively; moreover the SA deals only with the New Neighbourhoods and ignores the impact of the urban developments which account for nearly half the total of new dwellings.

Question 2 - Infrastructure.

Planned development on this scale also demands that the consequential infrastructure requirements should be planned for and a timetable for realistic implementation established with the service providers. This has not been done.

- Education; while new first schools and extensions to existing middle schools are planned, no provision is made for increased upper school numbers until the end of the planning period. In the 15 year interim the QE2 school in Wimborne, and Ferndown Upper School, are to be

overloaded deliberately in order to create the critical mass required to justify the need for the new upper school to be built at Verwood (see Viewpoint, July 2013, page 4, Exclusive Interview with Councillors Flower and Coombs). This is a novel approach to educational planning, to say the least, and hardly accords with the NPPF para 72.

- Medical; while there has been some limited dialogue with the relevant health authorities, the outcome appears to be a reliance on an extension, necessarily limited by spatial constraints, to the Quarterjack Surgery in Wimborne and the hope that this will be sufficient to cater for the additional 6200+ residents in Wimborne and Colehill.
- Traffic; the Wimborne Transport Model Study Summary Report (Doc Ref: DC5182_J006_02 Rev0 dated 17 Jan 11), which was not available for public scrutiny during the Statutory Consultation and at this time of writing is not included in the EinP library, is based on already out of date data and assumptions. Notwithstanding, it reveals not only an increase of 45% in general traffic around the town but also that two thirds of the 21 key junctions studied will be at, near, or over their capacity or of serious concern. Moreover, the model used, Saturn, does not measure the worst case. The report states that mitigation measures will be required to overcome these problems and ease traffic flow. The further studies required to this effect are being left to the individual developers, in conjunction with the Highways Authority (DCC); this is hardly a suitable approach given that the road system is by definition interdependent, and urban extensions on one edge of the town will inevitably affect traffic flow patterns all around the town. Such a piecemeal approach risks masking the full effects of the Wimborne/Colehill development proposals when considered holistically.

The following actions are required:

- The Sustainability Assessment (SD16) should embrace the totality of the development proposals, not just the New Neighbourhoods, and should be subject to an independent and objective assessment.
- Transport and Traffic. The DCC Transportation Modelling Team should rebase the Wimborne Saturn Model to 2013, taking into account the latest National Transport Model, the revised Core Strategy development proposals (including the establishment of two new first schools in WMCs 5 and 6, extensions to the middle schools in Colehill, and the relocation of part of the EDDC offices from Furzehill to the Allendale Centre in Wimborne), as well as the revised Hamburger junction at Canford Bottom and recent alterations to Wimborne Town Centre Square. Also, the earlier studies into possible mitigation measures at key junctions, important new evidence referred to for the first time in FD5 pages 15 and 16, should be made available for public scrutiny.
- Adequate provision for school places, at all three levels, should be preplanned and included in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- Robust plans should be drawn up to ensure medical facilities are adequate to cater for the increased population.

Question 3 - Hierarchy of Settlements.

The Settlement Hierarchy is a rational way of determining where and in what proportions the new residential developments should be sited; however, perversely, it acts as an inhibitor to developments, particularly smaller scale, further down the hierarchical ladder. As a consequence development is focussed almost exclusively on the major townships through urban extensions, and other areas with potential for development are excluded on the grounds that they are too remote from the town centres. This is particularly true of Wimborne/Colehill, with the result that Wimborne will be swamped, as

described above, while other potentially suitable sites within the Colehill area of search have been discounted. Moreover, consideration of Alternative Sites as required in the Statement of Community Involvement (SD25, figures 7 and 8) was withdrawn from the decision making process at the Council's discretion immediately after the Statutory Consultation, and without public consultation.

Colehill has excellent first and middle schools, a well used community/sports hall, and a successful library now partly run on a voluntary basis. Colehill also lies closer to the major employment centres at Ferndown and Bournemouth Industrial estates which are to be expanded, and has good road links to the A31(T) and other Prime Transport Corridors (SD28, KS9). All that is lacking are medical facilities and a recognised retail shopping centre. The Core Strategy provides a unique opportunity to overcome these deficiencies thus assisting Colehill to develop into a more rounded Settlement. The Colehill Parish Council should be afforded the opportunity to draw up a Local Neighbourhood Plan under the auspices of the Localism Act to determine the siting of the new residential developments and the facilities required to support them. This would ease some of the excess pressure on Wimborne and also engage local people in the exercise thereby helping to overcome the considerable local opposition, as expressed in the Statutory Consultation responses, to some of the currently selected sites (WMC5, for example).