

**D W TAYLOR & SON LTD**  
**RESPONDENT ID No. 1598**  
**ISSUE NO. 7**

**NORTH DORSET LOCAL PLAN**

**EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC**  
**ISSUE 7**

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF**  
**D W TAYLOR & SON LTD**

**BY**  
**M. D. BROWN, FRICS, MRTPI**

This Statement is made on behalf of D W Taylor and Son in respect of Issue 7 and in particular question 7.3

### **Q 7.3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SITES IN BLANDFORD**

- 7.3.1 The business of Sibbett Gregory is mainly that of Commercial Agents and Surveyors. We are one of the largest local companies operating in this field (excluding regional companies). We advise commercial developers, and sell or lease commercial premises throughout Dorset and beyond. We have an extensive list of applicants for commercial premises of all types. We have an extensive knowledge of what is or is not available in the market place.
- 7.3.2 We have acted for D W Taylor and Son, the owners of land abutting Sunrise Business Park, north of Blandford Forum for many years. Sunrise BP is nearly fully developed and let. We have for a number of years been promoting an extension to Sunrise Business Park (DWT2a and b). We are aware from that exercise that there is a real shortage available development sites in the town.
- 7.3.3 The local planning authority claim a number of sites to be available for employment development but for a number of reasons many of these are not truly available or if they are the development potential is limited (the potential floor space is limited because there is only a small part of an identified site which remains undeveloped or the site is not strategically located). Often there is land within existing employment sites but some of these are not available because the owners wish to retain them in case they are required for their own strategic expansion.
- 7.3.4 My Company has had recent dealings with a significant Blandford based employer seeking a site of approx 10 acres to secure the Company's long term strategic growth in the town. The Company made clear that, if it was unable to secure a suitable site in Blandford, it was likely to move outside of the North Dorset District Council area. That would have consequences for the economy of the town and for existing employees.
- 7.3.5 This Company liaised closely with North Dorset District Council regarding its requirements. Neither the council nor the Company was able to identify a site of sufficient size from current employment land allocations.
- 7.3.6 Whilst my Company discussed the possibility of accommodating this requirement on land owned by D W Taylor & Son Limited (Michael Taylor) adjoining Sunrise Business Park, we understand that the Council suggested unallocated land immediately to the south of Sunrise and fronting the Blandford Bypass (A350). This land is also within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 7.3.7 This outcome clearly demonstrates the shortage employment sites to satisfy larger requirements.
- 7.3.8 A relocation of this company to the site suggested by North Dorset District Council would represent a further consolidation of the well established and successful Sunrise Business Park.
- 7.3.9 According to the submitted Local plan (LP1):-  
*"The 2012 Workspace Strategy Update showed that there was more than sufficient land already identified to meet these needs (of Blandford), although some of the 10*

hectares available in Blandford<sup>232</sup> has subsequently been granted consent for retail uses.” With respect, that is a distortion of the truth. The most recent land availability data obtained from Dorset County Council shows 10.3 hectares as allocated or having planning permission unexpired on just 6 sites (See Appendix DWT 3). However the planned or permitted floor space is shown to be 21,162 sq.m. That represents about 20% site coverage. In reality the available site area equates to at most 5 hectares.

- 7.3.10 LP1 states:- “8.27 The 2003 Local Plan allocated 5.1 hectares of employment land off Shaftesbury Lane, of which some 4.8 hectares remained in 2011. About 1.1 hectares of this site has subsequently been given planning permission for a ‘mixed use scheme, including an Asda supermarket and a petrol filling station. The remainder of this site will be brought forward for employment uses.” That statement is incorrect. The site area of the mixed use planning permission to ASDA was 3.64 hectares of which the superstore is shown on a site of 2.26 hectares, leaving a residual area of just 1.38 hectares including the access road to small business units. ( See DWT 4). The spreadsheet of currently available employment sites shows 3.92 hectares off Higher Shaftesbury Road , but that must include the retail site. The adjoining land is shown separately in the spreadsheet as having an area of 0.81 hectares unstarted.
- 7.3.11 LP1 continues:- “About 3 hectares of the mixed-use regeneration scheme for the Brewery site will provide a range of employment opportunities. A new brewery building (occupying 0.3 hectares) has recently been constructed and is now operational on the site.” The only part of the original consent currently being pursued is the residential element with a small amount of B1a floorspace. The bulk of the employment site comprises large modern industrial buildings which appear fully let. There is little or no scope for new employment floorspace. Indeed the planning application form in 2006 (application number 2/2006/1353 envisaged a reduction in employment floorspace from 37,086sq.m to 28,186sq.m. It is a travesty to suggest that this site is going to generate 3hectares of employment land.
- 7.3.12 LP1 goes on to say:- “Other smaller areas of undeveloped employment land exist at Blandford Heights.” There is some redevelopment taking place as and when there is demand but these are only small units. The employment land survey shows only 5 sites including the named sites in LP1. There are no sites suitable for larger growing businesses or for anything other than small enterprises wanting to set up.
- 7.3.13 LP1 concludes that “Together, these sites will provide a range and choice of sites to meet the town’s needs for employment land until 2026. The provision of this land will help to maintain and enhance the town’s employment base and give existing and new residents the opportunity to work locally, rather than having to commute to Poole or Bournemouth.” That is clearly not the case.
- 7.3.14 There is evidence that identified land is not available and not deliverable. The planning authority steadfastly ignores the land promoted on behalf of a developer who has shown that he can deliver.
- 7.3.15 LP1 states “All these sites (other than the Brewery site, which was recognised as having the potential for mixed use regeneration) were considered to be ‘fit for purpose’ in the Council’s Employment Land Review (ELR). That may be the case but

they do not “create jobs and prosperity, building on the country’s inherent strengths” to which The Government is committed in order to secure economic growth.

- 7.3.16 The NPPF states that “The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore, significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.” LP1 does not “do everything it can....” and it does not “encourage.....”
- 7.3.17 The local planning authority is not planning proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century. (Para. 20, NPPF). It is not identifying strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period. (para. 21)
- 7.3.18 There is an available and deliverable site owned by the respondent that will meet the needs of existing and incoming employers. This is the land to the north and east of the existing Sunrise Business Park.
- 7.3.19 In my view, balancing the issues identified in the National Planning Policy Framework, the allocation of the Respondent’s land is the most sustainable solution providing the employment floor space required to procure economic growth, creating jobs and prosperity in the Blandford area.
- 7.3.20 The sketch attached at DWT2b demonstrates the possible development of an area of approx 12.5 hectares. Making an allowance for strategic landscaping, the gross development area would be approx 10 hectares. This would have capacity for approximately 140 f/t employees per annum over a period of 15 years. The NPPF states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.
- 7.3.21 The Respondent’s land is highly accessible in the business context. It is accessible for the supply and delivery of goods and services directly from the main road network. The site is at a crossroads between the south-east Dorset conurbation / Bristol route and the West Country / London route. As such, it is accessible to the ports at Bristol, Poole and Weymouth, to markets in Avon, Midlands and London areas, as well as the Dorset market.
- 7.3.22 Although the site is at the edge of Blandford, it is, nevertheless, only 2.4km from the town centre of Blandford. A majority of the population of Blandford live within 2km of the site. It is within walking distance for many residents and within cycling distance of all residents of the town. Wilts & Dorset buses already operate in the area and it would not be difficult to extend their services to this site.
- 7.3.23 There is no risk of flooding to the site or of surface water run-off from impermeable surfaces causing flooding elsewhere. Surface water can be drained through the ground and can, if necessary, be contained on site at peak rainfall times
- 7.3.24 The site is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It is accepted that the NPPF states that planning permission should be refused for major developments in AONB’s except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest.

- 7.3.25 There is a need for additional employment land in order to achieve national and local policies to support economic growth. Additional employment in the town would provide a local alternative for residents who may otherwise commute to south east Dorset, Salisbury and Dorchester. The sites relied upon by the Local Planning Authority are totally inadequate. There are no more suitable sites within the urban area or outside the town.
- 7.3.26 The site is elevated and would be visible over a wide area. However, from the south and west the development would be viewed in the context of the existing Sunrise Business Park. Views from the north and east can be mitigated by substantial planting both within and beyond the boundaries of the site. The Respondents retain total control over land to the north and east.
- 7.3.27 The land is not of high agricultural quality and requires treatment to enhance its agricultural potential. Such treatment and the agricultural activity has impacted upon the bio-diversity of the land. Apart from the existing hedgerows there are few features of ecological value. The retention of existing hedges and their enhancement and the creation of blocks of trees in the north and east would significantly enhance the ecological potential of the site.
- 7.3.28 In summary, the site is suitable for employment use in terms of accessibility and ground conditions. Without mitigation, development of the site would be harmful to the character to the AONB, however, that impact can be mitigated within and beyond the site. In so doing, the bio-diversity of the site can be enhanced. Development for employment purposes would not cause any harm to the living environment of residents in Blandford or any of the other nearby settlements. The site is available and deliverable and can make a significant contribution to achieving economic growth.
- 7.3.29 On balance I consider that development for employment purposes on the respondents site would be sustainable.

## **PROPOSED CHANGES**

- 7.3.28 The submitted local plan is not sound. The employment policies are founded on seriously flawed data. They will not deliver sustainable economic growth. The Plan does not proactively meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century.
- 7.3.29 We suggest the following changes to the Local Plan:-

6.22 Each of the four main towns has at least one key strategic employment site. These

sites, which in April 2011 covered 32.8 hectares in total, are:

- Part of the Brewery site, Blandford St. Mary, 3 hectares; **Delete. Whilst this is an existing site there is in reality virtually nil capacity for additional employment floorspace.**
- Land off Shaftesbury Lane, Blandford Forum, 4.8 hectares; **Delete 4.8 and insert 1.9.**

6.23 The availability of more than sufficient employment land at the four main towns means that there is no need for additional employment land in the countryside.....**Delete. This is simply not true.**

Figure 6.1 – Need and Availability of Employment Land in North Dorset (in hectares) **Rework the table to insert correct up to date data.**

6.25 Three employment sites were identified as 'requiring further investigation'...

- The Brewery, Blandford. This site has planning permission for a mixed-use scheme including 195 homes, a new brewery complex and about 3 hectares of new / redeveloped B-Class employment land and buildings; **Delete reference to 3 hectares of new.... This part of the site comprises substantial existing industrial buildings which when inspected were fully occupied. The planning application form shows a reduction in employment floorspace.**

6.28 This approach could help to support businesses and encourage the provision of a wider range of jobs, but the Council will not permit inappropriate developments on employment sites, including: retail developments, other than those that are smallscale....

**Half of the previously available land has planning permission for retail use.**

6.31 The first stage of the Council's ELR<sup>149</sup> identified that the vast majority of employment sites met the needs of the market and were in sustainable locations. A number of sites were identified for review and some of these are now proposed for, or have been developed as mixed-use regeneration schemes, as explained above.

**Delete**

## **POLICY 11: THE ECONOMY...**

About 49.6 hectares of land will be developed primarily for employment uses in North Dorset between 2011 and 2026. This will include the development of the following key strategic sites primarily for employment uses:

f Part of the Brewery site, Blandford St. Mary (3 hectares); **Delete not deliverable**  
g Land off Shaftesbury Lane, Blandford Forum (4.8 hectares); **Change to 1.9 hectares to reflect the real position. Consequential changes to total district supply. Insert Land adjoining Sunrise Business Park (10 hectares)**

The 2012 Workspace Strategy Update showed that there was more than sufficient land already identified to meet these needs, although some of the 10 hectares available in Blandford<sup>232</sup> has subsequently been granted consent for retail uses.

**Correct / current data should be substituted.**

8.27 The 2003 Local Plan allocated 5.1 hectares of employment land off Shaftesbury Lane, of which some 4.8 hectares remained in 2011. About 1.1 hectares of this site has subsequently been given planning permission for a 'mixed use' scheme, including an Asda supermarket and a petrol filling station. **Delete 1.1, Insert 3.6.**

About 3 hectares of the mixed-use regeneration scheme for the Brewery site will provide a range of employment opportunities. **Delete The employment part of this development is fully occupied.**

Other smaller areas of undeveloped employment land exist at Blandford Heights. **Add these are not all currently available.**

8.28 Together, these sites will provide a range and choice of sites to meet the town's needs for employment land until 2026. The provision of this land will help to maintain and enhance the town's employment base and give existing and new residents the opportunity to work locally, rather than having to commute to Poole or Bournemouth. **This will only be true if an additional allocation of land capable of accommodating a range of unit sizes is made. Land adjoining Sunrise Business Park is recommended.**

8.31 In the event that existing buildings or other previously developed parts of Blandford Camp become available for non-military uses, the Council will investigate the possibility of using these areas for additional employment use in the longer term, if needed. **I would question the sustainability of this site for general employment uses because of remoteness from the town and access for business traffic .**

Figure 8.1 - Blandford Inset Diagram **Identify land north and east of site 10 for employment use.**

## **Appendices**

Appendix DWT2  
(a) Site location plan  
(b) Sketch layout

Appendix DWT3--Extracts from Employment Land Availability--Compiled by Dorset County Council as at December 2014

Appendix DWT4--Ordnance survey extract showing extent of planning permissions Land North of Shaftesbury Lane