

**For office use only**

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Representation # \_\_\_\_\_



# North Dorset Local Plan Part 1

## Pre-submission Consultation 29 November 2013 to 24 January 2014

Regulation 19 of Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012)

### Response Form

**For each representation you wish to make a separate response form will need to be completed.**

This is a formal consultation on the legal compliance and soundness of the Local Plan before it is submitted to the Secretary of State for examination by an Inspector. For advice on how to respond to the consultation and fill in this form please see the 'Guidance Notes for Making Representations' that can be found on the Council's website at [www.dorsetforyou.com/planning/north-dorset/planning-policy](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/planning/north-dorset/planning-policy)

**Please return completed forms to:**

Email: [planningpolicy@north-dorset.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@north-dorset.gov.uk)

Post: Planning Policy, North Dorset District Council, Nordon, Salisbury Road, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 7LL

Alternatively you can submit your comments online at: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/NorthDorsetLocalPlan](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NorthDorsetLocalPlan)

**Deadline: 5pm on 24 January 2014. Representations received after this time may not be accepted.**

### Part A – Personal details

This part of the form must be completed by all people making representations as **anonymous comments cannot be accepted**. Representations cannot be treated in confidence as Regulation 22 of the Town and County Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 requires copies of all representations to be made publically available. By submitting this response form on the pre-submission North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 you consent to your information being disclosed to third parties for this purpose, but signatures, private telephone numbers and e-mail addresses or private addresses will not be visible on our web site, although they will be shown on paper copies that will be sent to the Inspector and available for inspection.

\*If an agent is appointed, please complete only the Title, Name and Organisation boxes to the personal details but complete the full contact details of the agent. All correspondence will be sent to the agent.

Personal Details (if applicable)*	Agent's Details (if applicable)*
Title	Mr
First Name	David
Last Name	Seaton
Job Title (where relevant)	Managing Director
Organisation (where relevant)	Shaftesbury LVA LLP and Land Value Alliances
Address	PCL Planning Ltd
Postcode	First Floor, 3 Silverdown Office Park, Fairoak Close, Clyst Honiton, Exeter. Devon.
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## Part B – Representation

The North Dorset Local Plan 2011 to 2026 Part 1 and its supporting documents have been published in order for representations to be made prior to submission to the Secretary of State for examination. The purpose of the examination is to consider whether the Local Plan complies with the **legal requirements** and is **'sound'**.

If you are seeking to make a representation on the **way** in which documents have been prepared it is likely that your comments or objections will relate to a matter of **legal compliance**.

If you are seeking to make representations on the **content** of the documents it is likely that your comments or objections relate to the **soundness** of the plans and whether it is justified, effective or consistent with national policy.

Further information on the matter of legal compliance and the issue of soundness can be found in the 'Guidance Notes for Making Representations'.

If you need help completing the response form please see a member of the Planning Policy Team at one of the consultation exhibitions or call 01258 484201.

### 1. Please select which document you are commenting on:

- North Dorset Local Plan 2011 to 2026 Part 1 (please complete Questions 2 to 9)
- Final Sustainability Appraisal Report (please complete Questions 2 and 10)
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (please complete Questions 2 and 10)

### 2. Please state the part of that document you are commenting on:

Paragraph number:	Policy/site: Draft Policies 2, 6 and 18	Policies map:
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### 3. Do you consider the Local Plan to be legally compliant and prepared in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate, legal and procedural requirements?

- Yes  No

### 4. Do you consider the Local Plan to be 'sound'?

- Yes  No

### 5. If you consider the Local Plan to be unsound please specify your reason(s) by ticking the box(es) that apply below

- It has not been positively prepared
- It is not justified
- It is not effective
- It is not consistent with national policy

6. Please give specific details of why you consider the Local Plan has not been prepared in accordance with the Duty to Co-operate, legal or procedural requirement or why you consider the plan to be **unsound**. Alternatively, if you wish to support any aspects of the plan please also use this box to set out your comments.

Please see attached letter, dated 24<sup>th</sup> January 2014, Reference DS/PCL/1416.

*Continue on a separate sheet if necessary*

7. What change(s) do you consider are necessary to ensure that the Local Plan is legally compliant and **sound**? It would be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

Please see attached letter, dated 24<sup>th</sup> January 2014, Reference DS/PCL/1416.

*Continue on a separate sheet if necessary*

8. If your representation is seeking a change, do you consider it necessary to participate in the oral part of the examination?

No, I do not wish to participate in the oral examination

Yes, I would like to participate in the oral examination

**9. If you wish to participate in the oral part of the examination please outline why you consider that to be necessary.** Please note that the Inspector determines who is heard at the examination.

PCL Planning Ltd seek to participate in the oral part of the examination to fully present and discuss the content of the written representations submitted.

**10. Please outline your comments on the Final Sustainability Appraisal Report or Habitats Regulations Assessment.** Comments are not confined to 'soundness' issues, but respondents can express their opinions on the above documents and use it as a reference point on the 'soundness' of the Local Plan.

**11. Do you wish to be notified of any of the following?** Please tick all that apply. We will contact you using the details you have given above.

- That the Local Plan Part 1 has been submitted for independent examination
- The publication of the recommendations of any person appointed to carry out an independent examination of the Local Plan Part 1
- The adoption of the Local Plan Part 1.

Signature: David Seaton (submitted electronically)

Date: 24.01.2014

*If submitting the form electronically, no signature is required.*

**Our Ref** DS/PCL/1416  
**Date** 24<sup>th</sup> January 2014



Planning Policy (North Dorset),  
North Dorset District Council,  
Nordon,  
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Dear Sirs,

**DRAFT NORTH DORSET LOCAL PLAN – 2011 TO 2026 PART 1 -  
PRE-SUBMISSION PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

I write with regard to the above public consultation on the draft North Dorset Local Plan and I thank you for the opportunity to comment. We act on behalf of Shaftesbury LVA LLP and Land Value Alliances and seek to make Representations.

As you will be aware, PCL Planning Ltd previously made representations on the Public Consultation on Key Issues for the Revision of the Draft New Plan for North Dorset which ran from October 2012 to December 2012 (our reference DS/PCL/1245b; letter dated 20<sup>th</sup> December 2012). Within this letter we raised substantial concerns regarding the overall planned provision for housing over the proposed plan period (2011 to 2016).

We remain concerned that these substantial concerns have not been properly addressed and we, therefore, make these updated representations.

**Levels of housing provision within the District**

We are concerned that the draft North Dorset Local Plan does not provide for a sufficient supply of new homes within the District.

Policy 6 Housing Distribution seeks to ensure at least 4,200 net additional homes will be provided in North Dorset between 2011 and 2026 at an average annual rate of about 280 dwellings per annum.

The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) is clear in its advice that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should deliver a wide choice of high

quality homes and "boost significantly the supply of housing" (paragraph 47). To do this, the Framework states that LPAs should:

*"use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in this Framework, including identifying key sites which are critical to the delivery of the housing strategy over the plan period".*

Further, paragraph 182 of the Framework identifies that to be found sound plans will need to be:

- **Positively prepared** and based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements including unmet requirements in neighboring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development
- **Justified** i.e. that the plan is the most appropriate strategy when considered against reasonable alternatives based on proportionate evidence
- **Effective** i.e. that the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working
- **Consistent with national policy** including the policies contained in the Framework

Having regard to the above guidance within the Framework, it is appropriate to have regard to the evidence base to the draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) when assessing housing requirement since this represents the most up to date, robust and tested evidence base available. The draft RSS made provision for 7,000 net additional dwellings in North Dorset over the period 2006 – 2026, at an average annual rate of 350 dwellings per annum. Therefore, in accordance with the emerging RSS, over the plan period 2011 – 2026, 5,250 new dwellings should be provided on a district wide basis.

LPAs in the Dorset sub region commissioned a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) in 2008. That SHMA identified the total net annual housing need in North Dorset to be 399 dwellings per annum (paragraph 8.27 of the North Dorset HNDS, SHMA 2008). 399 dwellings per annum would equate to 5,985 dwellings over the plan period which is broadly consistent with the emerging RSS.

However, the SHMA has since been 'updated', culminating in an updated SHMA dated January 2012 (SHMA 2012). In short the Council are now proceeding on the basis of a reduced housing requirement. The North Dorset SHMA Summary Report (2012) states at paragraph 5.10 that:

***"Trend-based data suggests household growth of around 273 per annum for the period from 2011 to 2031 and so a housing delivery figure (on the basis of this figure) might be around 280 per annum (to take account of a small vacancy rate)".***

It is surprising that the Council have been able to demonstrate that the overall need for housing has fallen since the examination of the emerging RSS and the preparation of the Council's own SHMA (2008).

However, paragraph 1.4 of the SHMA Update states that:

*"A key part of the process was to update household survey data used in the original SHMA report. There have been a number of changes recorded both locally and nationally which will impact on local housing requirements. These include a large increase in the size of the private rented sector, a decrease in the propensity for households to move and decreases in property prices. These have all been factored in to the updating of survey data and the outputs derived from the information base with key sources of information used including ONS/CLG population/household projections, data from the English Housing Survey and Council records".*

It is contended that there are a number of reasons why it is inappropriate to rely on the trend-based population projections of the recent past and therefore inappropriate to rely on the updated SHMA to provide the evidence base for future housing growth in the District.

It has long been recognised that the planning context at both the national and local level during the preceding decade up to 2011 has constrained the supply of deliverable housing land and contributed towards the lowest levels of post-war housing delivery.

This has been compounded by the economic market circumstances arising out of the recession with the house building industry one of the first to experience its impacts. The consequences of these economic circumstances was to further

suppress housing delivery as the industry was affected by a combination of market collapse and a severe squeeze in funding by lending institutions.

In light of the above, it is considered inappropriate to base future planning on the SHMA Update which was informed by changes arising from a severe economic downturn across the country. It is likely that the suppression of housing delivery has acted as a brake on the formation of new households. As paragraph 1.4 observes a large increase in the private rented sector. It is likely that this is a direct result of the economic downturn forcing those who might otherwise seek to purchase a home and set up a new household, to defer doing so in favour of living in the District. This will impact upon the statistics relating to household formation and headship rates since sharers who are unable, or unwilling, to afford to set up their own households, both reduce the rates of household formation and increase the higher occupancy levels of shared accommodation.

Paragraph 1.4 also observes a decrease in the propensity for households to move and notes a decrease in property prices. Updating data on these issues is clearly highly likely to be skewed negatively in a period of economic downturn.

The advice set out in paragraph 158 of the Framework is of particular relevance in relation to contextual considerations:

*"Each local planning authority should ensure that the Local Plan is based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects for the area. Local Planning authorities should ensure that their assessment of and strategies for housing, employment and other uses are integrated, and that they **take full account of relevant market and economic signals**" (own bold).*

There would appear to be a distinct lack of regard for this evidential requirement in the Council's approach to the assessment of housing requirements. The Framework is clear in its aim that LPAs should boost significantly the supply of housing. This should be done by taking a broader view of the evidence base, not updating the evidence during an economic down turn but viewing housing building as securing positive economic advantages and investment in an area.



In our view, the plan should be prepared to meet the higher figure (of 5,250 as supported by the draft RSS and the SHMA) over the plan period.

This is further compounded by the evidence within the SHMA Update which states that to meet existing affordable housing needs alone, the Council would need to secure 387 units of affordable housing per annum if all needs are to be met (in the five year period from 2011 to 2016).

Further, the matter of general housing provision over the period 2006 to 2013 (which formed part of the plan period for the draft RSS) also needs to be considered. The emerging RSS advised a provision of 2,450 new homes over this period however, the Council's AMR 2013 demonstrates that 1653 new net additional dwellings have been provided. There has therefore been a shortfall to date of some 797 dwellings which should be planned for, to be provided in the next five years.

### **Distribution of new housing provision**

Draft Policy 2: Core Spatial Strategy seeks to focus the majority of housing growth and other development at the main towns in the District, Blandford (Forum and St Mary), Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton. Within the publication for Public Consultation on Key Issues for the Revision of the Draft New Plan (October 2012), the Council sought to allocate 27% of the total housing requirement in Shaftesbury as a main settlement. PCL Planning agrees in general with the Council's approach to directing the majority of housing growth at the main settlements as the most sustainable approach for the District, in particular directing 27% growth at Shaftesbury. However, the draft North Dorset Local Plan proposes an allocation of 1,140 dwellings set against proposed District total of 4,200. As set out above, PCL Planning considers that this settlement should be allocated a higher number of dwellings (1,890 dwellings being 27% of an increased overall housing requirement of 7,000 dwellings).

### **Shaftesbury - A New Proposed Allocation**

Draft Policy 18 relates to Shaftesbury and sets out the broad approach to development within the settlement. Shaftesbury is viewed as supporting Gillingham in serving the needs of the northern part of the District and the parts of Wiltshire immediately east of the town. The key spatial aspects of the

approach relate to a) focussing development to the east of settlement; b) ensuring good public transport links and pedestrian and cycle permeability between future development and the existing built-up area and c) securing good access to public facilities. PCL Planning is in broad agreement with this general spatial strategy.

It is noted, however, that Draft Policy 2 relates to the overall Core Spatial Strategy and states that the settlement boundaries for the main towns in the North Dorset District will be retained and will continue to be used for development management purposes. These boundaries will not be revised until the site allocations process within the later Part 2 of the Local Plan. However, given the increased housing numbers needed to significantly boost the supply of housing within the District, PCL Planning considers that this would unnecessarily delay the incorporation of sustainable housing sites into the Development Plan process.

PCL Planning recommend the Council reconsider this approach. We propose a site be considered and incorporated into the settlement boundary of Shaftesbury as an appropriate site allocation for potential development. **The site lies just south of Salisbury Road and east of Higher Blandford Road (OS Grid reference ST 87427 22430)** (shown edged red on the attached Location plan).

As the Council will be aware, the site lies to the south of a large site already committed for housing development which was originally granted outline planning permission by the Secretary of State in 2007 under references APP/N1215/1191202 and APP/N1215/1191206. Furthermore, to the east of the site, land has been designated in the draft plan for employment use. These sites contribute in large part to the overall spatial strategy for Shaftesbury focussing development towards the east of the town.

In our opinion, the above proposed site has the potential for a broad range of development proposals which would support the role, function and identity of the town. The potential options include:

- The development of the site for entirely residential purposes (Use Class C3) (circa 120 units).
- A mixed use development potentially comprising a mix of residential (Use Class C3) and retail (Use Class A1);

- A mixed use development comprising a mix of residential development (Use Class C3) and a community facility (Use Class D1) such as a potential education facility.

**Sustainable, accessible location** – As noted above, the site lies in close proximity to a much larger site committed for further residential development to the north which was allowed at appeal. In assessing the above referenced appeal proposals, the Inspector noted the accessibility credentials of Shaftesbury, stating at paragraph 152:

*"Shaftesbury residents have the lowest propensity in the District to commute by car and the highest to walk and cycle. There is a high degree of accordance in the evidence that the subject development would due to its location be accessible to the services and facilities in Shaftesbury Town Centre and to other employment zones in the town by foot and by cycle, and these circumstances are supported by the high existing level, in relative terms, of commuting by these modes".*

This was also observed by NDDC at these appeals who at paragraph 89 of the Inspector's Report acknowledged:

*"The application sites are well located in relation to existing and future planned employment sites, local town centre and supermarket shopping, schools and medical facilities and an appropriate range of other facilities by walking and cycling, with benefits from permeable links by these modes. The proposals would confer additional benefits in terms of bus provision, including an enhanced link to the nearest railway station in Gillingham".*

**Transport/Highway implications** – The site is bounded to the west by the B3081 Higher Blandford Road and to the north by the A30 Salisbury Road. Access to the highway network from the site is clearly feasible.

**Flood Risk** – According to the Environment Agency's website, the site does not lie within an area at risk of flooding. Any detailed scheme would be carefully designed to incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Techniques.

**Landscape** – The site does not lie within any nationally or locally designated area of landscape value. As noted above, the site is bounded to the north and

east by existing highways with residential built form beyond, whilst to the east, the site is bounded in part by an agricultural machinery business. Furthermore, the remaining land to the west is allocated for development for employment purposes within the draft Local Plan. The site is, therefore, effectively enclosed on three sides by existing development with further development allocated to the east. The topography of the site is relatively flat and any proposed development would be viewed within the context of the existing and proposed surrounding development at Shaftesbury. On the basis that the proposed development would be suitably designed to respect and reflect the character of the area, it is considered that the introduction of development within this site would not appear visually intrusive or prominent and would not have an adverse impact upon the character of the area or the wider locality. It is noted that the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) lies to the east of Shaftesbury. However, in the above referenced appeal decision, the Inspector noted at paragraph 164 that:

*"the proposed development whilst resulting in a noticeable extension to Shaftesbury, would be closely identified with the existing built-up area and would have no material effect on the natural beauty of the AONB, its general sense of remoteness, or on views into or out of the designated area".*

Paragraph 8.98 of the draft North Dorset Local Plan states:

*"it has long been recognised that the potential for expansion at Shaftesbury is limited by environment (mainly landscape and biodiversity) constraints and the limited number of potentially developable sites where the town could expand further. It is important that the remaining development opportunities are taken forward in ways which support the role, function and identity of the town, particularly in the light of the proposed expansion of nearby Gillingham".*

The footnote to this paragraph further clarifies that the process for the identification of potential development sites across the District is set out in the Market Town Site Selection Paper. Amongst other evidence referenced within this Paper and used to identify sites, the Council used the 2010 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) to identify further site allocations for potential development. The above referenced site was not

originally put forward in the Council's 2010 SHLAA but representations advocating its inclusion have since been made in October 2013. For sites to be included in the SHLAA, they must be suitable for residential development, development should be likely to be achievable with the land likely to be available. As can be noted from the above representations, the site complies with all these criteria.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the SHLAA relates solely to identification of housing land, as stated above, PCL Planning consider that the site has the potential to provide for the above mixed use development options which would support the role and function of the wider settlement with potential retail or education facilities within the site, serving the needs of the future population arising from the planned housing growth in this part of Shaftesbury.

PCL Planning would advocate the preparation of a development brief for the site which would help to guide the effective development of the site, complementing planned development in this part of Shaftesbury and providing greater policy certainty for future developers of the site.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information regarding the above site. I look forward to the opportunity to participate in any future consultation periods and the future Examination in Public of the local plan.

Yours sincerely,



David Seaton, BA (Hons) MRTPI  
**For PCL Planning Ltd**  
**e: [d.seaton@pclplanning.co.uk](mailto:d.seaton@pclplanning.co.uk)**

Location Plan - Land East of Higher Blandford Road, Shaftesbury (OS Grid reference ST 97427 22430)

