

Bournemouth and Poole HMA sub-regional strategy



The selection of strategic Greenfield development areas or Bournemouth and Poole HMA sub-regional strategy

In Bournemouth we wish to see:

RSS containing:

- the proposals put forward in the 4/4 authority's advice for the South East Dorset JSA

Key points:

- The Green Belt in Bournemouth fulfils the criteria for inclusion of land with a Green Belt
- This conclusion was independently supported by Colin Buchanan and Partners in work undertaken for the Regional Assembly
- The Green Belt in Bournemouth is a vital resource that will be used to mitigate against the potential negative aspects of further concentrating development within the existing built up area
- The Green Belt will also provide the location of 'mitigation' sites required by the Dorset Heathlands Interim Mitigation Strategy

In setting out policies and proposals for the HMA sub region, does the draft RSS adequately deal with the following questions:

g) Are the proposed modifications to the Green Belt adequately justified?

- 1.1 In accordance with national guidance (PPS3) and regional guidance (RPG10), the S4(4) authorities advised the RPB that the priority for accommodating new development in South East Dorset should take the form of previously developed land and buildings within the existing built-up area, before consideration was given to release of green-field sites in the Green Belt. The urban potential analysis undertaken by the local authorities identified the amount of development that could realistically be accommodated on previously developed land (see South East Dorset, Development Options, SED04, Section 2)
- 1.2 The second stage in exploring development options was to consider the scope for planned strategic extensions on the periphery of the urban area. Because the inner boundary of the South East Dorset Green Belt was drawn very tightly against the existing built-up area, inevitably any extension would be within the Green Belt. The S4(4) authorities and district councils adopted a systematic and technical approach to identifying the most sustainable locations where urban extensions might be sought (see South East Dorset , Development Options, SED04, Section 3).

- 1.3 It is important to note that green belt designation was not considered to be an over riding constraint in the technical exercise of identifying refined areas of search for development. However, once identified, the impact of releasing land for development at these locations was considered against the purposes of the Green Belt. This consideration is summarised in the above referenced report, South East Dorset, Development Options (SED04), Table 8, page 46.
- 1.4 Within Bournemouth the JSA work indicated that the allocation of land as Green Belt should be retained.
- 1.5 Additionally, in a report prepared for the South West Regional Assembly by Colin Buchanan and Partners, consideration was given to whether the land in the Bournemouth Green Belt met the 5 purposes for including land within the Green Belt as set out in PPG2. This study concluded (appendix 10 to that study) that the main area of Green Belt in Bournemouth (north Bournemouth between Throop and Holdenhurst) met 4 of the purposes set out in the criteria.
These were those relating to :-
criteria 1- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
criteria 2- to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
criteria 4- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
criteria 5- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 1.6 Within this study the consultants concluded that when ranked against all the other possible sites for release from the Green Belt in SE Dorset this area ranked as causing sixth least harm should it be released (with 1st causing the least harm of all and 8th the most harm). Bournemouth Borough Council would fully support the conclusions of this study.
- 1.7 In addition to meeting the purposes for allocating/retaining land within Green Belt the areas of Green Belt in Bournemouth also serve a number of additional functions which are of importance today and will become more important in the future.
- 1.8 The SE Dorset JSA proposes a level of development of 680 dwellings a year for the next 20 years, which equates to 13,600 new dwellings. (RSS would if adopted raise the number of additional dwellings to 15,600) This level of development represents an increase of 17% (19%) in the number of dwellings within the Borough in the next 20 years and would also represent some of the fastest development rates in the town's recent history. The adopted Dorset Structure Plan CSP 23, quotes a development rate of 524 net dwellings per annum, therefore a development rate of 680 dwellings a year will represent a 29.8% increase (780 dwellings per annum equates to a 49% increase). Although some provision can be made for the recreational and amenity needs of the

new residents of these dwellings within the built up area it will not be possible both physically and economically, with land values as high as they are, to fully meet this need within the boundaries of the existing built up area. It is expected that, in line with recent development trends, 100% of this development can, and is likely to, come forward on brownfield sites within the existing built up area. With this level of anticipated growth it is considered that the remaining areas of open space both within the built up area and on its fringe should, therefore, be retained.

- 1.9 Rather than just leaving the green belt allocation area within the LDF purely as an area where development would not normally be permitted, it is considered, however, that the area currently allocated as green belt should be 'actively managed' for future recreational and nature conservation use. In order to deliver this level of growth within the Borough it is necessary to create an environment that is attractive for people to live in. With the urban intensification that will be the by-product of the levels of growth anticipated it is vital to create a sustainably located area of open space that can be used for informal and formal recreational purposes. Bournemouth Borough Council feels that this can best be achieved through intensive Green Belt protection policies linked with improved access and management arrangements. The positive use of the area currently designated as Green Belt should, therefore, be seen as a vital element in the creation of a sustainable community in this area. This would bring the use of the Green Belt in line with the vision for the SE Dorset JSA which indicates that 'a network of strategic open spaces, natural and maintained green spaces/corridors in urban and urban fringe areas will provide better access and recreational facilities for people and enhance existing biodiversity through establishing new habitats in key areas' This would give a positive future for this area by creating a recreational resource in close proximity to the town which would also support the proposal within the SE Dorset JSA to create a new 'recreational and green corridor' along the Stour Valley.
- 1.10 In addition this approach is in accord with the need to provide additional recreational facilities as part of the Interim Heathlands Mitigation Strategy as set out in the Joint Authority response to matter 1/2. This study has identified the need for additional recreational opportunities to be created to remove pressure from the areas protected under the Habitats Directive. To be effective these areas need to be well located to 'intercept' those who would previously have visited heathlands to exercise dogs etc. There are few locations available for such use within Bournemouth and those that do exist lie within the area covered by the current Green Belt designation. Should the Bournemouth Green Belt be subsequently suggested for future development this would have two consequences. Firstly additional pressure would be placed upon the existing heathland areas for recreational use, thereby accentuating the problem currently experienced by the Heathland Areas, and secondly some of the few opportunities to find an alternative location would have

been lost.

- 1.11 A final concern relates to the practical implications of developing the area of North Bournemouth should it be suggested for release from the Green Belt. If this area were subsequently proposed for release it would be vital that the infrastructure needs to 'service' the development are met. These relate primarily to two issues. Traffic Infrastructure and waste water treatment facilities. Traffic Issues; The area of North Bournemouth in which the possible site for development is located already experiences serious issues with traffic congestion. It would not be possible for anymore development of this area to be completed in advance of planned Castle Lane relief road. Although this relief road has previously been identified in other plans and proposals it would have to be in place in advance of any further development in this area. In this respect irrespective of any other identified requirements to provide this route it would be a vital prerequisite of any future development of this area. This scheme has already been costed at between £10 and 30m and there is a concern that should the site be subsequently proposed for release from the Green Belt these highway infrastructure costs, when added to the contribution that the area would also be expected to make towards other requirements (affordable housing, education and social services, heathland mitigation measures, open space contributions low carbon emission housing etc.) could place so high a burden upon the development that it is not implemented. Secondly sewerage. The allocation of this land would also fail to recognise the practical, and possibly economic, issues that will arise from developing a major site here. The sewerage treatment works that would service this new development area are both physically close to and at the same grade as the new development. This could place an additional cost on a large scale development to get the sewerage to the treatment works. Whilst this may be simply a financial issue rather than a practical one Bournemouth Borough Council are unaware whether an approach has been made to Wessex Water to check whether there is sufficient capacity at these works for a substantial development in this location.
- 1.12 In summary the financial implications of the infrastructure provision, to enable this development to take place, may leave the site on the borderline of economic deliverability. It will be vital, therefore, to ensure that mention is made of them as a 'significant' factor in the future development should consideration be given to a revision to the Green Belt allocation in this area.
- 1.13 It is considered essential that a realistic view of the likely costs of providing the infrastructure must be identified in advance of an allocation being made to ensure that a developer seeking to purchase the site can be fully aware of the development costs. Failure to do so could lead the developer to seek to reduce the infrastructure or other (affordable housing for example) provisions provided leaving the Local Authority to make up the shortfall or the cost will be put on the sales price of the property thereby reducing their affordability.