

West Parley Parish Council's response to the Draft SW Regional Spatial Strategy 2006-26

The SE Dorset RSS Policies are: SR25, SR26, Diagram 4.6, SR27, SR28 and SR29.

a) Is the draft RSS sufficiently clear about the spatial outcomes it is seeking in Bournemouth and Poole in terms of their present and future regional and sub-regional roles and their relationship with the other parts of the HMA?

There appear to be failings on the issue of spatial outcomes and whether the RSS is sufficiently informed on this matter. For instance, no recent SE Dorset transportation study (or an agreed transportation model) has been undertaken by the SSCTs which calls into doubt the presupposition that the effect of major housing - and the consequential increase in population and vehicular movements - can be accommodated within the known constraints. The lack of recent data could compromise the roles and relationships with local authorities in other parts of the HMA. Further work needs to be done.

The SE conurbation is not homogeneous. Insufficient consideration has been given to the distinctive character of its individual parts.

In area of search P, if retained in the RSS, a substantial recreational area should be planned for in West Parley.

b) Has the scale of additional greenfield development been adequately justified against the likely level of housing requirements and in particular the urban renewal opportunities in the main urban areas?

South East Dorset is a unique area. The vibrant cosmopolitan towns - Bournemouth and Poole (SSCTs) - exist adjacent a hinterland which is composed of small villages and towns, many with a long heritage, and numerous protected nature conservation sites, all set within a Green Belt. The area is popular with in migrants, especially retired people. However, the need for affordable housing is primarily for first time home buyers - especially within the SSCTs. As much of the new employment over the Plan period is expected to be centred in the SSCTs, and in view of the constraints highlighted later in this statement, we do not believe that the proposed greenfield development at West Parley, (Area of Search P), is either justified or sustainable.

The area has existing stock that exceeds the need of the local population and therefore any further development would be superfluous to needs.

Area of search P should be deleted.

c) Has sufficient consideration been given to the impact of lead-in times for all or any of the development areas on the required annual output for the HMA?

Little attention seems to have been given to the required infrastructure needed preceding development. It is felt that the lead-in times are too short.

d) Have environmental limits arising from matters such as flood risk and the protection of environmental assets been adequately taken into account and in particular do the proposals reflect the need to avoid any impact on the integrity of the important nature conservation areas around the conurbation?

Outside of the SSCTs of Bournemouth and Poole, SE Dorset contains a mixture of attractive countryside which includes protected environmental assets - mostly lowland heath, woodland, rolling hills and river valleys. The village of West Parley - which dates back to Saxon times and is mentioned in the Domesday Book - lies partially in the River Stour valley before the ground rises gradually northwards to Ferndown. The escarpment of Dudsbury Hill - which includes an iron age scheduled monument - rises sharply out of the Stour Valley just west of the main built area of West Parley. Due to the geographical nature of the area and the higher terrain upstream (especially in North Dorset), the river has a tendency to flood the pastures during winter months and other times of high and persistent rainfall.

Some of the land being proposed for recreation, in conjunction with a new housing development, lies within the Stour floodplain and therefore subject to substantial flooding.

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development: Some general principles of PPS1 include -

"leisure and recreation - taking into account issues such as accessibility and sustainable transport needs, the provision of essential infrastructure, including for sustainable waste management, and the need to avoid flood risk and other natural hazards".

The Parish Council does not believe that the PPS1 principles highlighted above have fully been taken into consideration in drafting the RSS. It also supports the views of residents expressed in the recent survey that the existing Green Belt land should not be developed.

e) Have infrastructure considerations been adequately taken into account?

As with much of the United Kingdom, traffic growth in SE Dorset over the last 30 years has been substantial. Congestion in and around the SSCTs of Bournemouth and Poole is at least a twice daily occurrence causing lost working time and pollution. A full transportation study therefore needs to be carried out to -

- assess the future needs of increased travellers, including improved public transport facilities into the hinterland; and
- solutions to ease the present critical problems that face the area, which may include additional highway infrastructure.

In addition -

- Substantial recreation area would be required in south of area of search P;
- The effects of the expanding airport have not been adequately considered, particularly with regard to traffic implications;
- Access to main shops, schools and medical facilities less than ideal at West Parley site;
- It is unrealistic to expect developers to supply the essential road infrastructure (which is not there at present) community facilities and affordable housing to support an urban extension in this location. It is therefore likely that any such development would put pressure on existing community facilities in Ferndown which would be quite unable to cope with the anticipated influx.

f) Do the proposals adequately reflect the need to reduce the need to travel, support the use of public transport and minimise congestion?

The Government, quite rightly, puts sustainability at the heart of new development. The guidelines of this overarching framework and its delivery, are explained in Planning Policy Statement 1. Under 'Delivering Sustainable Development' para iv of the General Approach highlights the need to - provide a number of services including sustainable transport.

The SE Dorset sub-region - particularly close to and within the SSCTs - already experiences very heavy traffic congestion every day. West Parley also suffers from this problem and would therefore be unable to cope with major housing development proposed in the draft RSS, area of search P, due to -

- Parley Crossroads being the busiest intersection in Dorset, outside of Bournemouth and Poole. It consistently has very high traffic volumes which lead to congestion on a daily basis, and not just at peak-flow times: any disruption (road works, accident, etc) on the A338 Spur Road, causes increased traffic holdups both on the A247 at Parley and the A348 through Ferndown and Longham. Apart from proposals for a possible gyratory system at Parley Cross which could increase capacity, no provision exists in the RSS for improvements to the local highway network. Even with a revamped intersection, there would continue to be significant problems for vehicles heading towards Ferndown, Longham, Hurn and especially into the SSCTs of Bournemouth and Poole;
- Highways Agency's major concerns about both existing traffic volumes and future growth at Canford Bottom roundabout, some 3 miles west of Parley Cross. The lack of proposals to improve or relieve the A31 west of Ferndown is also relevant;
- The infrequent public transport network that serves the hinterland of SE Dorset. New housing development would therefore increase car usage thereby compounding the problem of traffic congestion. West Parley has 92% car ownership;
- The parish has limited retail, community and other facilities. As such there is little opportunity for employment in the immediate area;

- Parley First School and the nearest doctor's surgery would be 1.5 miles from the proposed development;
- Commuting distances from West Parley to the main employment centres in Poole and Bournemouth are 15Km and 8Km respectively;
- Other developments which include an expanding airport (see item g) - both operationally and possible new Northern Sector Industrial Estate, gravel extraction works and a proposed MBT Waste Plant both at Hurn. All of these add to the growth of both private vehicles and HGVs on local distributor roads;
- Access to the A338 Bournemouth Spur Road) is severely restricted from the west due to single lane traffic. A new access from the airport site to the A338 is inhibited due to the sites of SSSI which lay between the airport site and the A338. This part of Dorset has not been subject to a Highway study
- Concerns expressed by the Government Office of the South West into this proposed greenfield development.
- With most of the expected jobs in the SSCTs, West Parley is an unsustainable location for major housing development. In the Parish Council's view, it does not meet the government's sustainable development criteria.

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

The SE Dorset was established in 1980 primarily to prevent urban sprawl and to stop settlements from merging. Generally, the distance between the inner and outer boundaries is 5 to 8 miles.

West Parley is at present separated from north Bournemouth by Green Belt land which is a maximum of 1 mile wide. It is made up of pastures (within the R. Stour floodplain), woodland and grade 1 agricultural land. Following a recent survey (see below), it is the wish of parishioners that this area be retained as open space.

West Parley Parish Council has grave concerns regarding the proposed urban extension (Area of Search P) within the existing Green Belt. This is due to the numerous constraints which affect the area. details of these are given below:

- The semi-rural parish of West Parley is dominated by Parley Common, an internationally protected heathland immediately east of the built area. The existing Green Belt to the south separates Bournemouth from its hinterland north of the River Stour. Development would narrow the gap between the village and north Bournemouth.
- A growing Bournemouth International Airport where passenger growth numbers are projected to quadruple by 2030 from the existing 1M per year (as at December 2006). The existing 6000+ vehicle movements will also increase with higher staffing levels and a steady rise in the numbers of passengers over the following decades, placing great pressure on the already congested distributor roads.
- Safety issues also arise. The area is immediately under the flight path of the airport some 1.5km away from take-off and so subject to the noise and risk of aeroplanes just overhead. In addition, there would be a consequential increase in pollution and a higher risk of injury, or worse, in the event of an accident. New housing here would also remove large areas of open space where an aircraft in trouble, could, at present, attempt a landing.
- The River Stour floodplain is another constraint in respect of new recreational and riverside walk areas. Much of the area is under water for periods during the winter months. With Global Warming affecting sea levels, this could have an adverse effect by raising river levels.
- Site of Scheduled Monument (Dudsbury Iron Age Hill Fort, or Castle Rings) on escarpment overlooking R. Stour valley immediately below and southwards. English Heritage is not in favour of development close to the scheduled monument as this could undermine its long-term future.
- Dudsbury Guide Camp is situated within the castle rings. Bournemouth Guide Camp Association is so concerned about the proposed development which could cause some

serious difficulties, in particular the safety of girls using the facility, that it has written to their parents requesting them to sign a petition. the Parish Council supports their efforts.

- Any proposal to roll-back the green belt at this location, should be resisted. West Parley values its long heritage and semi-rural views which should be preserved.

A recent parish-wide survey undertaken by [West Parley Residents Association](#) shows that 98% of respondents (based on a 66% return), place the need to retain the existing Green belt at the top of their priorities. A copy of the main analysis sheet is attached as Appendix 1.

(Full copies of the Survey Report have been made available to the Panel together with relevant photographs.)

h) Does the draft RSS set out adequate guidance on the provision of Green Infrastructure?

As mentioned elsewhere, SE Dorset has a number of environmental assets - many of which are protected both by national and international law. These assets are primarily lowland heaths - fragile habitats, rich in flora and fauna. Due to the proximity of an urban environment, some sites - such as Parley Common, SSSI, - suffer from human activities including anti social behaviour.

The principles behind the establishment of new public open space in order to take the pressure off heaths is therefore supported. However, there are problems: the amount of green infrastructure set aside for the proposed 900 homes at West Parley is far too little and; the new houses would be on the border of a 400m exclusion zone. The only land available for additional green infrastructure would be in the area of search itself,

Concern had been expressed for some time by local authorities about new residential development close to environmental assets. One local authority even put a halt to granting planning applications until the situation had been resolved. A formula was put forward by Natural England last autumn and, following detailed consultations between the local authorities and other bodies, this was agreed. The Interim Planning Framework 2007-2009 allows certain residential development outwards of 400m from an environmental asset with developer contributions being placed into a fund for countryside works - improved access, etc to non-heathland open spaces. This has yet to be tested.

West Parley Parish Council submit that green infrastructure - whilst a good idea for the reasons stated above - should be of sufficient size for new development. This is not the case here and therefore, on the question of Green Infrastructure, the new housing is unsustainable.

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RESULTS OF WEST PARLEY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION SURVEY

Question	TOTAL TOTAL TOTAL			PERCENTAGES	
	YES	NO	Y+ N	YES	NO
Reducing the Housing Waiting list is higher priority than preserving Green Belt ?	23	1579	1602	1.44%	98.56%
Should we protect GREEN BELT & build houses elsewhere ?	1633	37	1670	97.78%	2.22%
Are you concerned by :					
Loss of Green Belt as matter of principle ?	1618	80	1698	95.29%	4.71%
West Parley becoming suburb of Bournemouth ?	1564	119	1683	92.93%	7.07%
Inadequate roads, congestion, air pollution ?	1730	14	1744	99.20%	0.80%
Insufficient schools, medical, recreational facilities ?	1644	55	1699	96.76%	3.24%
TRANSPORT					
Are roads adequate now ?	322	1315	1637	19.67%	80.33%
Will roads cope with this extra traffic ?	162	1525	1687	9.60%	90.40%
Is Air pollution from traffic a concern ?	1429	249	1678	85.16%	14.84%
Do you make a minimum of 5 car journeys per week ?	1400	290	1690	82.84%	17.16%
Do you use the local bus services regularly ?	429	1232	1661	25.83%	74.17%
Should money be spent on better bus services ?	1304	264	1568	83.16%	16.84%
Should money be spent on better cycling facilities ?	1119	425	1544	72.47%	27.53%
Do you take your car to the supermarket each week ?	1563	138	1701	91.89%	8.11%
AIRPORT					
Do you see the airport as an advantage to the area ?	1210	438	1648	73.42%	26.58%
Have you flown to/from the Airport ?	1308	375	1683	77.72%	22.28%
Are you happy with fourfold passenger growth by 2030 ?	450	1168	1618	27.81%	72.19%
Are you happy with the growth in jobs there ?	969	551	1520	63.75%	36.25%
WASTE DISPOSAL					
Are you sufficiently informed about the MBT Waste Plant & Incinerator planned for Chapel Lane, Hum ?	226	1406	1632	13.85%	86.15%
Are you concerned by the proposed Waste Plant ?	1452	186	1638	88.64%	11.36%
Do you put out a recycling bin ?	1568	110	1678	93.44%	6.56%
Should we all be recycling more ?	1601	66	1667	96.04%	3.96%
With more bins/more help, would you recycle more ?	1494	151	1645	90.82%	9.18%
Total Number of Forms RETURNED (i.e. no of Households)	Total			997	
Number of Forms DELIVERED (i.e. No. of Households)	Total			1530	
	Percentage Return			65.16%	
	Total Number of Responders			1755	