

**NORTH DORSET LOCAL PLAN PART 1
EXAMINATION**

**RESPONSE TO
INSPECTOR'S NOTE TITLED 'STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET
ASSESSMENT (SHMA) 2015'**

November 2015

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is in response to a note from the Inspector titled 'Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2015'.

The Inspector's note reads as follows:

'It has been brought to my attention that the Eastern Dorset 2015 SHMA is to be published soon. I understand that it concludes that the objectively assessed need for North Dorset is 330 dwellings a year – as opposed to the 285 figure on which the housing policies of LP1 are based.

I have not seen or tested any of the evidence which informs the revised SHMA but nor am I aware of any reasons why I should question its conclusions.

Although there is a degree of flexibility embedded in the policies of LP1 (in terms of housing numbers and provision) and the Council is committed to an early review of the local plan, I nevertheless consider that the requirement for an additional 45 dwellings a year is significant.

I therefore ask the Council to carefully consider the implications of this new evidence and let me know, via the Programme Officer, as soon as possible how it wishes to proceed.

For example, the Council may wish to reconsider LP1 in the light of these new figures, identify where to locate the additional housing (including updating the Sustainability Appraisal) and engage in full appropriate public consultation before revising the plan. Alternatively it may wish to re-emphasise in writing its commitment to an early review of the plan which would take the new figures into account. This should include confirmation of specific dates by which the review would commence and be completed and clearly these dates should be as soon as is reasonably possible. If the Council follow the latter route, I would take this into account in completing my Report.'

2. Council's Response

- 2.1 In light of the Inspector's Note titled 'Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2015' the Council wishes to re-emphasise its commitment to an early review of the plan. The early review will take into account the objectively assessed housing need of 330 dwellings per annum identified in the soon to be published Eastern Dorset 2015 SHMA and consider whether this number of dwellings can be met in the plan area.

- 2.2 However, as set out in Brandon Lewis's letter to Simon Ridley, the previous Chief Executive of The Planning Inspectorate, (December, 2014) (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/

[390029/141219 Simon Ridley - FINAL SIGNED.pdf](#)) the outcome of a SHMA is untested and should not automatically be seen as a proxy for a final housing requirement in Local Plans. In its review of the plan the Council will need to give careful consideration to the SHMA evidence and consider whether environmental and policy constraints will impact on the Council's final housing requirement.

- 2.3 In terms of dates for the review, and in particular specific dates by which the review will commence and be completed, the Council can confirm that it will aim to start the review by 31st March 2016 and complete the review by 30th November 2018. Nevertheless, as set out in the Council's response (Document Ref: INS023) to the Inspector's Note titled 'Responses to the Main Modifications' the proposed date by which the Council adopts the plan could be subject to change and any such changes would be detailed in future revisions of the Council's Local Development Scheme.