

Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



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18 July 2018

Dear Sally

NEW BLANDFORD + NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (B+NP2) INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS

Thank you for the opportunity, albeit brief, to comment informally on the progress with the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan. I attach basic information (Annex A) about this AONB so that your Neighbourhood Plan Group are aware of their responsibilities.

I note that your introductory material refers to the Local Plan being 'out of date'. This is misleading as the possible shortage of a five year housing land supply does not make other aspects of the Plan out of date.

Whilst the Spatial Option Plans are very helpful I note that the solar park development on Dorchester Hill is not shown, neither is the line of the Charlton Marshall and Spetisbury Bypass shown. Both of these are important matters to consider in relation to the future of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Development options A and J are within this AONB and therefore are highly likely to fall foul of the basic reasons for AONB designation which are to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Major developments will, of course, need to address all of the criteria set out in paragraph 116 of the NPPF. In addition the Neighbourhood Plan should provide the highest level of protection identified in paragraph 115. Furthermore, Area B is within the setting of this AONB and the land is topographically tilted towards the AONB. That means that the development will be clearly visible and therefore detracting from the character of the AONB.

I think there is a typographic error in connection with sites F1 and F2 as they appear to be to the south west of the town and not the south east.

Current housing development approvals are in the southern sector of the area and it would seem, strategically, it is that part of the town where a new school is most urgently needed.

I note that no consideration appears to have been given to the outward movement of inhabitants in a south easterly direction to the Poole and Bournemouth conurbation for work and shopping. Furthermore, no consideration appears to have been given to any development south east of the Dorchester Hill development, between the line of the Charlton Marshall / Spetisbury Bypass and the existing A350 road. Such land is outside of both Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty whilst still providing opportunities for high quality places to live.

The Green Infrastructure Network and Open Spaces sections seem to omit the essential criteria of a network, namely places that should be joined up. They also appear to omit key green spaces, such as the cemetery on Salisbury Road and Crown Meadows.

I hope these comments are helpful to you. With the short consultation period available in this period at the start of the holiday season a more detailed contribution is not possible within the time available.

Yours sincerely

RICHARD BURDEN

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Principal Landscape and Planning Officer (part-time Monday to Wednesday)

For and on behalf of the CCWWD AONB Partnership


ENCS: Annex A

Annex A

The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB has been established under the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act to conserve and enhance the outstanding natural beauty of this area which straddles three County, one Unitary and five District councils. It is clear from the Act, subsequent government sponsored reports, and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 that natural beauty includes wildlife, scientific, and cultural heritage. It is also recognised that in relation to their landscape characteristics and quality, National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are equally important aspects of the nation's heritage assets and environmental capital. This [AONB's Management Plan](#) is a statutory document that is approved by the Secretary of State and is adopted by the constituent councils. It sets out the Local Authorities' Objectives and Policies for this nationally important area. The national Planning Practice Guidance [Natural Environment paragraph 004] confirms that the AONB and its Management Plan are material considerations in planning.

The National Planning Policy Framework states (paragraph 109) that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes which include AONBs. Furthermore it should be recognised that the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' does not automatically apply within AONBs, as confirmed by paragraph 14 footnote 9, due to other policies relating to AONBs elsewhere within the Framework. It also states (paragraph 115) that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in these areas.

More detailed information in connection with AONB matters can be found on the AONB [web site](#) where there is not only the adopted AONB Management Plan but also Position Statements and Good Practice Notes ([Planning Related Publications](#)). In particular when considering construction within the AONB I would draw attention to our [Good Practice Note on Colour in the Countryside](#)

As you may be aware, the AONB is concerned about light pollution. Any external lighting should be approved by the Local Planning Authority and comply with the [AONB's Position Statement on Light Pollution](#) and the more recent [Good Practice Note on Good External Lighting](#) and [Paper by Bob Mizon on Light Fittings](#).

This AONB is, as I expect you know, in one of the darkest parts of Southern England and hence the visibility of stars and, in particular, the Milky Way, is a key attribute of this AONB. Development that could contribute to light pollution, and hence impact adversely on those dark night skies, has to be modified so that such impacts are eliminated.

Greater details of the landscape, buildings and settlement characteristics can be found in the [Landscape Character Assessment 2003](#). That document is available and it can be viewed in [FULL](#) on our [web site](#).