

Current proposal for 15 would cause harm to the character and appearance of this area of countryside

Site is considered a 'greenfield' site in an unsustainable location – future occupants would be reliant on car for day to day needs

Outside village envelope and is strongly influenced by the countryside

Adverse impact on character and visual amenity of this area of countryside, the landscape and the conservation area

When considering para. 14 of the NPPF the Council concluded on the basis of the current proposals that the proposal would result in adverse impacts which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

Sherborne St John is a designated Neighbourhood Area and the local community are actively moving forward with preparing the plan, including assessing the suitability of potential future sites for housing (*note: the officer was not aware when responding to the developer that this site was preferred choice*)

The officer advised that the draft plan was due to be published for consultation in late 2015

The officer advised that whilst a draft plan had not been submitted at the time of writing, it would be necessary for the developer to have regard to the evolving status of the neighbourhood plan and in determining an application officers must also have regard to its status. The officer advised that as the document progresses through the various stages of neighbourhood planning the plan is given greater weight.

The officer made clear that the developer should fully engage with the Parish Council before submitting any future application.

Landscape

Adverse impact on landscape character and visual amenity of the countryside, contrary to policy E6 of the local plan.

As there is built form on the site, the principle of development is considered acceptable, however, it is considered that the proposals are too urban in character to be acceptable. A significant reduction in the number of dwellings may possibly address this, however, this would also need to ensure that the countryside character of the area is maintained throughout any proposal.

Conservation

Although the existing barns on the proposed site appear to be of no historic or design merit the loss of which may be acceptable; however they reflect the surrounding significant rural character in terms of use.

There appears at present to be little justification for support for 15 dwellings within this location.

Although there is little detail regarding design, materials scale height or mass, the proposed layout does not respect or respond to the special character and locally distinctive pattern of development of the area which can be identified in small scale cottages, the formality of a historic farmstead, significant historic planned landscape or open countryside, it is projecting a distinctly suburban character; an unfortunate response in this significant location adjacent to the conservation area and beyond the village envelope.

Urban Design

This scale of development in this location does not respond well to the locally distinctive pattern of development around Sherborne St John and would thereby harm the character of the area.

The pattern of development in Sherborne St John is characterised particularly in the central and eastern part of the village by a compact built up area with a clear distinction between it and the

adjoining countryside. This is reflected in the tight drawing of the settlement policy boundary around the built up area in this part of the village.

This particular stretch of Vyne Road is characterised by open spaces, such as with the playing fields to the south west of the enquiry site and fields and the occasional property set in larger grounds such as those to the west of the site. It is not part of the locally distinctive pattern of development in this area to the north east of the village to contain housing developments of around 15 dwellings on sites of around 0.77 ha at a density of around 19 dwellings per hectare as is proposed here. The proposed layout which does not respect the character and locally distinctive pattern of development of the area. The proposed layout has a distinctly suburban character. There are certain detailed aspects of the layout which are particularly not in keeping with housing in the locally distinctive parts of Sherborne St John such as the lack of deeper front gardens on some plots. The layout and appearance of any housing in this location should instead take an appropriate lead from the conservation area and the lower density character of this rural area beyond the village envelope.

Affordable housing

40% of the dwellings should be affordable – 6 units were proposed as part of the scheme
Need to make sure that the mix of units actually meets the local housing need

Housing mix

Submitted developer layout did not provide for small units and no justification was submitted to evidence why the proposed mix would meet Policy C3

Environmental Health

Any future application would need to be accompanied by a contaminated land assessment due to its previous farm use

Since this advice, the developer's agents have not come back to the officer with an amended scheme nor have they chosen to comment on any of the points raised. The letter sent to the developer makes it clear that these are the opinions of an officer of the council and do not bind the council or elected members in relation to any decision they wish to make should an application be submitted in the future. The officer's letter did not say that only a development of 4 dwellings would be acceptable, this is something that the developer appears to have decided.

I note your comments that "Bob's Farm is the preferred location for housing under the N Plan has already been formally transmitted to BDBC". This information was not available to the officer when she responded to this pre-application enquiry.

Your comments in relation to the farm buildings are noted, the officer comments merely mean that such modern agricultural buildings (whilst ugly) are structures that you would associate with a countryside location as opposed to a modern suburban housing layout which in this location it is argued would not be in keeping with the character of the area.