

1 May 2015

Dear Sir,

North Dorset Local Plan Examination – Land West of Dorchester Hill

My comments relate to Document Reference MHD011.

North Dorset District Council says it attaches considerable importance to the potential impact of development on the AONBs and their immediate hinterlands. The Council also states that site selection in Blandford was carried out on the basis of consideration of a number of factors including the potential impact on the AONBs.

Despite that the Council has dismissed the importance of the Landscape Impact Assessment which states that “any development on the elevated part of the site would have a greater negative impact on the character and setting of the AONB and its landscape character”. The LIA also recognises that development on this site (Land west of Dorchester Hill) would affect a series of undeveloped paddocks and farmland and potentially impact on the important trees, hedgerows and copses within and around the site.

My concern relates to the elevated part of the site which is good quality arable land. The Landscape Impact Assessment highlights the amenity value of the land as open, undeveloped greenfield land and emphasises that the trees and hedgerows have some important wildlife value. If development was located away from the more elevated and exposed parts of the site containing the arable field then this would minimise the identified impact on landscape character and the AONB.

The mature trees and hedgerow which sub-divide the site form a distinctive and important landscape feature as well as having important wildlife values. Any development beyond this natural boundary would endanger that important and natural feature. Development should be restricted to the north of that natural boundary by excluding the arable field from the Local Plan.

The small loss of housing units if the arable field was excluded from the Local Plan would be more than made up by inclusion in the Local Plan of the site south of the A350 and A354. The proposed housing development on the site of Hall and Woodhouse brewery would also add to the housing stock in Blandford St. Mary.

I hope that these views can receive full and sympathetic consideration.

Yours faithfully'

Robert Jones