

COUNCIL MEETING 13 NOVEMBER 2018

PUBLIC QUESTIONS GROUPING AND RESPONSES BY TOPIC

1. Consultation Process

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM MICHAELA SLATFORD

The majority of local residents only discovered the proposed removal of greenbelt from Land North of Merley following Richborough Estate's presentation, please can you clarify what steps were taken by the Council to communicate with local residents about this major impact on their community, environment and well-being, and if you are satisfied that these methods of communicating with residents are fit for purpose? How many councillors voting to adopt the Local Plan have actually walked through the beautiful village of Canford Magna and down to the River, experiencing the local beauty spot they will be destroying for our future generations?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM BERYL CHANNER

I would like to ask if all the 42 councillors have actually visited Oakley Lane to see the proposed site of the new development and the impact it will have on the local infrastructure and environment. This lane had traffic calming measures introduced to try to stop the amount of traffic using this lane.

RESPONSE

The council first consulted upon the possibility of releasing Green Belt for development in 2015, without being site specific. Residents of Merley and Bearwood aired their concerns at that stage.

The council then carried out a more detailed consultation in 2016, which included a range of site-specific options including land north of Merley. 40,000 Poole residents were alerted to the 2016 consultation through a range of communication methods including emails, letters, leaflet drops and site notices.

In particular, the Council leafleted all of the properties adjacent to the possible sites and held a series of drop in sessions across the Borough to enable residents to discuss the sites with Council officers. Two drop in sessions were held in Merley during 2016 where 397 people attended.

The draft Local Plan that included land north of Merley as a proposed housing site was then published for further consultation in 2017. The Council again used emails, letters, press releases and social media to publicise the consultation. When the plan was submitted for Examination local Merley residents attended the hearing sessions highlighting that the proposals were known about.

All consultations throughout the Local Plan process were undertaken in accordance with Council policies and procedures.

In terms of Councillors, Poole Councillors have been engaged with the process of revising the Local Plan over the past five years, which has included various workshops and committee meetings and consideration of a detailed evidence base. This site was first proposed in 2016 and Councillors have

therefore had two years to appraise themselves of the context and geography including visiting the site.

2. Green Belt / Brownfield Strategy

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM GEMMA ELLIOTT

There are 122 brownfield sites in Poole borough yielding over 100 acres. Why are these sites not used before greenbelt land? For brownfield owned by developers pressure should be exerted to make them build; for brownfield owned by the council it should be utilised ahead of greenbelt. Correct?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM TIM LISTER

Whilst I understand the need for a local plan so that there is some control over housing development in Poole; and there is a need for low cost housing. Would the Council explain why the local plan advocates the use of Green Belt Land when the Council have identified more appropriate "brownfield" sites close to existing transport links and essential services in urban Poole? This goes against central government policy on protecting the environment particularly Green Belt Land as outlined in the Government document "A Green Future: Our 25 year Plan to Improve the Environment?"

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM NICOLA LOWE

I have raised my concerns generally in relation to the development at a Merley but the question to Council is why is green belt land being released which is contrary to NPPF 2018 as there are many sites listed on the Poole brownfield site register which should be developed before green belt? The exceptional circumstances for the release of green belt land cannot exist if other brownfield sites remain undeveloped. I ask this in the context of my other concerns.

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM KARL FROST

Why are areas given green belt status and then removed for building sites when brown sites suitable are still available, surely this should be a last resort not a money talks situation especially when the current road links are already unable to cope with the volume in and out of the area at the best of times?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM MARK HETHERINGTON

How can the Borough of Poole convincingly argue for the release of Site UE1 from the Green Belt, when the fields north of Oakley Lane clearly fulfil 'National Planning Policy Framework Criteria of Green Belt' (No.9 Paragraph 80) notably the classification by preventing Wimborne and Merley merging into one another? (they are neighbouring towns).

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM VINCE GRAVENOR

How can Poole Council convincingly argue for the release of Site UE1 from the Green Belt when the fields north of Oakley Lane clearly fulfil National Planning Policy Framework Criterion 2 of Green Belt classification by preventing Wimborne and Merley 'merging into one another'?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM JEANNE HUMPHRYS

How can Poole Council convincingly argue for the release of Site UE1 from the Green Belt when the fields north of Oakley Lane clearly fulfil National Planning Policy Framework Criterion 2 of Green Belt classification by preventing Wimborne and Merley 'merging into one another'?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM KIM TODD

The NPP Green Belt p79 states; Government attaches great importance to Green Belts, the fundamental aim of the policy to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, and confirms that the essential characteristics of Green Belt are their openness and permanence. How can you consider releasing UE1 when your report states the parcel as a whole performs relatively well in terms of the purposes of Green Belt due to the open character and function it serves in preventing coalescence between Merley and Wimborne? One of the five purposes of Green Belt set out in p80 of NPPF.

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM LYNNE SLATFORD

Why is the Council proposing to build on a small Green Belt area of outstanding natural beauty in Canford Magna, a place where local people can escape, enjoy peace tranquillity & solace. This will totally destroy the current eco system, along with many beautiful animals birds & their habitats forever, also adding to the already heavily congested route from Wimborne to Merley or Magna Road via the picturesque Canford village, with its already speeding cars, noise & pollution. You should be Conserving!! Not Building here.

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM SUZANNE OSBORNE

I join the many people within the local Merley and Canford Magna community to object to this proposed development. There are already three other developments in the Wimborne area; Canford Paddock, Leigh Road, Wimborne Chase. At least these are on open space land and not "infilling" one of the few remaining green spaces in Wimborne. Whatever happened to the government's promise of restricting urban sprawl by protecting and enhancing the green belt?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM JOANNE SQUIRES

According to the Office for National Statistics, in the Borough of Poole in 2017 the Birth Rate was 10.5 per 1000, whereas the Death Rate was 11.1 per 1000. Earlier this year the Office for National Statistics produced new projections of housebuilding requirements in the future, predicting a significantly lower figure than that upon which the Poole Plan is based. In the light of these statistics – which destroy the "exceptional circumstances" argument – why is Poole not withdrawing from its plan on the release of Green Belt land?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM PK COLUM MAHER

The Government promised to prioritise protection of the Green Belt; so I would like to know what special circumstances have been identified by the Council leading to designation change of Crupton Farm, Merley in the local plan, especially in view of the decision not to review the Boroughs future housing needs using the latest Government methodology?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM STEVE PHILLIPS

In Mr Rivett's (Inspectorate) report to BoP on 24th Oct it is noteworthy that he writes (on page 19, item 77), that greenbelt is no longer sacrosanct. Could the council explain the rationale and logic of greenbelt loss, which over the last 20 years has decreased by some 22,580 hectares(*)(**) in England, and what the remaining area in BoP will be following construction of 14000 plus dwellings? Noting that BoP greenbelt is just 1,900 hectares* before the next proposed developments come to fruition.

*Government published statistics

** Also Government stat: 12.5% of remaining land in England is greenbelt as of 31/3/2018

RESPONSE

The Local Plan is based on an objective assessment of housing need, which identifies a requirement to provide 14,200 homes in Poole by 2033. Government policy is clear that local plans should include policies to meet identified needs in full.

The 2016 based household forecasts, produced by the Office for National Statistics, released in September 2018 indicated a lower forecast of household formation than previously identified. Whilst this was only ever the starting point for establishing a housing requirement, Government told local authorities in October 2018 to ignore these latest projections and continue to work with the 2014 based household projections when setting housing requirements in order to tackle the issue of housing affordability and lack of supply.

Based on the latest Government proposals, the standard methodology for calculating housing need would result in a requirement for 823 homes per year in Poole. This is considerably higher than the Poole Local Plan target of 710 homes per year, but will not apply if the Council adopts the Poole Local Plan as presented. The Local Plan Inspector also confirmed that the housing number in the plan was appropriate and advises there is no case for the Council to delay adopting the plan.

Turning now to the location of new housing, the local plan strategy is to maximise the re-use of brownfield sites with 12,900 homes to be built within the urban area, including 6,000 homes in the town centre. The Council has also reviewed all of its assets and released a number of brownfield sites for housing. However, as shown in the evidence base there are not enough brownfield sites in Poole and therefore some Green Belt release is also necessary in order to meet needs in full as required by government policy.

The Council's evidence base included a Green Belt Review that identified that the site proposed for development at Merley could be released from the Green Belt without leading to harm to the overall purpose and function of the South East Dorset Green Belt. Government policy allows Councils to alter the Green Belt boundary through the preparation of a Local Plan, provided it can demonstrate that there are exceptional circumstances to do so. The Inspector accepted that there are exceptional circumstances in Poole for a limited release of Green Belt noting that it would bring significant benefits to the borough with only limited harm to the Green Belt.

The Planning Inspector also agreed with the Council's Green Belt assessment that the development of the site at Merley would not lead to coalescence with Wimborne given the area of open land around the River Stour that will remain as protected Green Belt. Following the release of Green Belt land as set out in the plan there will be 1,838 hectares of Green Belt still remaining in Poole.

3. Transport and Infrastructure

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM SUE WELLMAN

What traffic, waste, recycling, extra schooling and other general facilities are being considered for the proposed extra 650 homes planned for the land North of Merley off Oakley lane please? I ask as I was most unsatisfied by the suggestions made at the Community engagement event held at Hamworthy club about how the extra traffic congestion would be managed? I really feel putting in speed humps and moving pedestrian crossing further down road will not help with another 1000 cars, this does not include the extra traffic from the Canford park development. Also what about impact on emergency services who I believe were also against this proposal. I also heard no proposal for extra waste recycling etc due to this development and others around area.

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM JANET CONNOR

What plans have been made for the provision of medical services for this area? – at present patients are having to wait three weeks for a doctors appointment.

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM MAUREEN LEWIS

Could the Council tell us why Merley is open for massive overdevelopment when existing brownfield sites in Poole with planning permission remain undeveloped. Also do our elected representatives actually care about the impact on existing residents of inadequate infrastructure and NHS services if this goes ahead. The roads in this area are horrendously gridlocked. Oakley Lane cannot support this amount of extra traffic, especially combined with proposed development along Magna Road and the eastern boundary of Merley. What facilities do the Council intend to implement to protect current residents from their lives being impacted to the detriment of their well-being.

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM DENISE CLARKE

With 324 homes already under construction at Canford Paddock, 800 proposed at Canford Park plus 650 at Croxton Farm , what changes to infrastructure are planned to negate the impact of so many new homes in such a small area. All of these developments will empty onto Magna Road or Gravel Hill. You also have to factor in other developments close by at Julian's Bridge, Wimborne and Longham. The roads are already gridlocked in rush hour and with all these new residents taking their children to school and going to work it will be considerably worse.

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM MEGAN MORRIS

What provision is planned for adding to road networks, schools and doctors surgeries in order to meet the needs of 650 new households without reducing quality of life for those currently living in Merley?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM MARIE FRANKLIN

Regarding Land north of Merley (area B3) in the Poole Local Development Plan, where is the report from the Services; Fire, Police and Ambulance on the feasibility of the use of Oakley Lane as the infrastructure for the plan to build 650 houses and a Retirement Home, and be able to supply taxpayers the services they need?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM ANN HILL

With reference to Poole local plan & in light of the statement Care in the Community I am writing as a person with complex health conditions. What are your plans to make sure that there is adequate medical facilities in the Merley area that has a large elderly population. Along with this, adequate parking, with disabled parking to be able to visit any facilities & the shops in Merley. To build more houses in the Merley area will no doubt put a very considerable strain on an already groaning infrastructure.

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM FRANCIS RAINES

“Where are all the cars supposed to park”? I work as an Health Care Assistant and I am sure that some of these houses will be dedicated to people with learning difficulties. Such people require assistance throughout the day and at times I have seen three visitors in separate cars arriving at one house. Where will they park? Most people with difficulties are provided with a car as well. This could mean four cars to one house. Plus normally each house can be counted as at least two cars. I am afraid that my maths are creating traffic jams.

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM PATRICIA MUNRO

According to Government guidelines and to comply with European law for the protection of Nature Conservation sites, Council has to provide SANGs to mitigate planned development of 14,000 dwellings and obtain Local Plan approval but with the consequent loss of the greenbelt. Will Council agree to ring fence the CIL from this development as well as any 106 Agreement to help alleviate the problems it will cause and provide local infrastructure i.e. meaningful traffic mitigation (including provision of access to the A31), doctors' surgery and primary school on site plus additional middle and senior school places, all as part of any planning approval?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM KIM HONEYBUN

How is Merley and the surrounding areas going to cope with such an enormous increase in traffic and population?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM WILLIAM GRAY

What about the traffic and highway safety implications for development of land North of Merley?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM FRANK AHERN

In paragraph 70 of his report on the Poole Local Plan, the Inspector says that with, “suitable mitigation to address unacceptable impacts on the highway network”, sites UE1 and UE2 “would be unlikely to give rise to severe adverse traffic impacts.” What realistic ‘mitigation’ can be provided to Oakley Lane given the narrowness of the road through Canford Magna village, and to Oakley Hill given the physical limitations of a T-junction and two bridges and a busy roundabout?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM NIALL MUNRO

Is the Council prepared to improve the local highway system by finishing the Ferndown bypass and linking it up to the A3049 on Canford Heath? Take the example of Surrey Council who built the Hindhead Tunnel under an SSSI. This will satisfy the EU and stop the massive pollution to the Canford Heath site as traffic on surrounding roads will by 2030, be at a standstill. The public then have easy access to the whole of the Dorset countryside without the need for SANG's and by using 'Brownfield' sites instead of Green Belt land ie Merley, for development

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM LESLEY THOMPSON

What are your plans for this increase of traffic, new roads etc.? And how do you propose to keep those who live here safe? The 30 mile an hour limit, can you do anything to enforce it?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM TONY LEWIS

Is the Council aware of the traffic congestion at the lights at Oakley Hill/Lane? Traffic backs up at these lights in all directions, the journey from Wimborne can take 30 mins The proposal to build 650 houses on Green Belt which has no other access except these lights and Canford Magna is poorly conceived. I also have concerns that Sopwith Crescent will become a rat run. Please explain what, if any, road improvements will be made to prevent further traffic problems which this and other local developments will have on Merley and the well being of its current residents?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM JEREMY ORME

What steps has the council taken to ensure that the increase in traffic resulting from the proposal to develop green belt land north of Merley can be managed sustainably, given that the road capacity is already frequently overwhelmed, to the detriment of local residents, local businesses and the built and natural environments of Merley and Canford Magna?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM PETER CONNOR

How will the Council improve Oakley Lane to enable it to safely accommodate the traffic from this development and other major developments using this route? The existing country lane is already congested at peak hours and the very narrow footpath is dangerous - and there is no provision for cyclists. If the essential wide footpath and cycle track is provided how will the Council preserve the existing roadside hedges which are an important element and habitat? If the road improvement are not provided to cope with the over development how will the Council deal with the ensuing congestion?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM PHIL TELFORD

How do the Council propose ensuring traffic through the conservation area of Canford Magna will not cause increased danger to pedestrians on the narrow footpaths, will restrict an increase in vehicle noise, will control excessive speed, will manage an increase in back logs at the traffic calming barriers and will stop drivers increasing speed to swerve around the traffic calming barriers rather than slow down and give way to oncoming traffic with right of way?.

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM STEPHEN BROWN

What about all the extra traffic? Which is an issue already shaking our house day to day to its foundations. Grade 2 listed 14 Canford Magna in the conservation area. The development will bring heavier traffic, weight and quantity during development and after. The Willett arms junction and Queen Anne Drive end will not cope, however they are changed.

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM SUE HETHERINGTON

The routes from the lanes down to the river are all narrow and weight restricted with traffic calming points, there will obviously be a huge deterioration of the infrastructure from large volume hgvs, artics, plant and machinery so how will large volume of HGVs, Artics and plant / machinery over many years be managed and policed given that upgrades will be required before, during and after development works?

RESPONSE

The Local Plan is accompanied by an Infrastructure Plan that sets out the infrastructure requirements to support the proposed development. This has been prepared with service providers. Additional pressure on schools and doctors' surgeries arising from the development will be mitigated by securing financial contributions from the developer as direct planning obligations to fund required new infrastructure.

This will ensure that schools and doctors have sufficient capacity to accommodate population growth arising from the development. In working with the emergency services no specific infrastructure requirements have been identified.

In terms of waste and recycling, the development will meet the Council's requirements for bins to serve the scheme and be serviced by the Council's refuse collection arrangements.

Turning now to transport matters, the Council is aware of congestion across the highway network in Poole at peak times, including around Gravel Hill and Merley. Tackling congestion is a major challenge that is widespread across the country, which the Council is working with its partners, including Dorset County Council and Bournemouth Borough Council, to address across Poole and the wider conurbation.

The north Poole sites, including Merley, have been modelled to understand likely traffic movements up to 2033. The Council, therefore, fully understand the potential impacts that will need to be mitigated through a range of measures that will include enhancing bus services and enabling safer and improved environments for walking and cycling. The modelling shows there is significant opportunity in north Poole to promote modal shift away from the car subject to suitable mitigation being provided alongside development. Whilst clearly an issue that needs to be addressed, the Council consider the impact can be mitigated and should be viewed in the context of the benefits this growth will produce.

The Council's approach to mitigation is set out in the Poole Local Plan Transport Mitigation Plan. The Local Plan Inspector examined the mitigation plan and concluded that the proposed measures were sufficient to address the impacts from the proposed development at Merley and Bearwood. This Mitigation Plan is consistent with the strategy set out in Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) to prioritise sustainable forms of transport.

To mitigate the overall traffic impact, the Local Plan is clear that the Council's planning strategy is to facilitate and support more sustainable forms of travel for all developments across the borough. In essence the focus is on enabling a modal shift away from private car journeys, not road building.

For the strategic extension to the north of Merley, this will include infrastructure to reduce through traffic and slowing vehicle speeds along Oakley Lane through the introduction of additional speed reducing features such as new pedestrian crossings on raised tables. A new cycling and walking shared path will be provided along the northern section of Oakley Lane set back from the existing hedge. This can be delivered without affecting or removing the existing hedge; creating a natural, green barrier between the footway and carriageway. The mitigation measures along Oakley Lane will enable safe and attractive walking and cycling routes that will also naturally slow traffic speeds and create a safe and pleasant environment for existing and future residents.

Junction and road capacity improvements are likely to include, but not be limited to, enhancements to the Willet Arms junction and the Magna Road / Canford Magna junction.

As specified in the policy, any planning application will also be accompanied by a detailed Transport Assessment. That assessment will include detailed traffic modelling of the impact of vehicle

movements associated with any detailed proposal. The Council will assess the transport assessment and secure the necessary proportionate mitigation that comes from it through the planning application process.

In terms of parking provision, all developments must have regard to the Council's adopted guidance on parking requirements to ensure that the appropriate level of parking is provided to support the development.

In terms of impact from construction traffic, the planning application would include a construction management plan that will form part of any planning permission to ensure that the development of any approved scheme proceeds in an appropriate way and that there will not be harm to the existing and proposed infrastructure and overall amenity of the area.

In response to the Council's intentions for the Ferndown bypass scheme, the Council as local Highway Authority is constantly looking at ways to improve its network and tackle traffic congestion. The Ferndown bypass scheme was removed from the Government's road building programme many years ago and the environmental constraints that now exist make it difficult for this to be re-instated. However, the Council's transport policies do make clear that improving access to the A31 remains a key strategic priority in the longer term and the Council will continue to explore ways to do this with Government and Highways England.

To reassure you planning permission will only be granted where the Council is satisfied that impact can be adequately addressed.

4. Social and Environment

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM SUE AHERN

Can the council confirm that all permitted housing projects within the Borough of Poole will provide a priorly agreed percentage of genuinely affordable housing through guaranteed, legally-binding agreements with the developers?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM AMY SMITH

Explain the assessments regarding the effect that the North Merley development, 650 houses and a 60 bed care home on green belt land, will have on local resident's mental health and well being? With the loss such a loved natural area which has been enjoyed by many people for many hundreds of years, I personally know of many people very emotionally affected by this devastating proposed development and loss of green space. As the government allocated 2billion to support schemes and support for mental health in the 2018 budget, it is clear that the importance of mental health and well being in our society is fundamental.

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM PATRICK RYAN

In a submission to the Poole planning department submitted on 2nd November, Natural England (Annex A) lays out the necessary information required for an Environmental Scoping exercise. Included are "expected residues and emissions (water, air and soil pollution, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation, etc.) resulting from the proposed development" and "an assessment of alternatives and clear reasoning as to why the preferred option has been chosen". In its Local Plan the Council identifies Green Belt sites it proposes to release. Shouldn't the Council be undertaking Environmental Scoping BEFORE rather than AFTER the releasing of Green Belt land?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM TRICIA ZIMMERMAN

What independent detailed analysis has been completed on the different species living in and around the proposed development site, including how they and their habitat will be impacted as a result of the development? I understand there are otter, kingfisher, Great Crested Newts and bats living on the site, amongst many others?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM GRACE HETHERINGTON

Where will the wildlife now go to live if you take away the green belt status here?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM MARK SMITH

Why is Borough of Poole considering a change to their own observations and published statements that will impact this conservation area due to increased traffic and reduced openness of views? The Canford Magna Conservation Area PDF⁺ identifies traffic and movement as a key issue and states, "*Traffic management schemes will be considered with a view to reducing the number of vehicles using the area.*" The PDF goes on to state, "*Given the openness of views into and out of the conservation area, proposals for development in surrounding areas will be considered in terms of their impact on its setting.*"

⁺Reference document: <http://archive.poole.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=5586>

RESPONSE

Providing sufficient affordable homes in Poole is a key priority for the Council. The social benefits of providing affordable housing are considerable including enhancing health and wellbeing by people being able to live in quality accommodation that they can reasonably afford.

The Poole Local Plan duly seeks to secure an agreed percentage of affordable housing on sites of eleven or more homes through planning obligations, which once agreed through the planning application process are legally binding.

The Local Plan also has the wider principles of health and well-being embedded throughout the strategy and policies such as promoting sustainable travel, providing new jobs and providing new areas of public open space for residents to enjoy.

In respect of Merley, the SANG and areas of new public open space that will be delivered through the development will provide health and wellbeing benefits not only to the residents of Merley, but for residents of the wider conurbation.

On environmental matters, the Environmental Scoping exercise that has been referenced relates to a future planning application and is not related to the Local Plan that is being considered by Council tonight. The Local Plan has been subject to its own proportionate strategic environmental assessments that have been confirmed by Natural England to be acceptable and sufficient to support adoption of the plan.

Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Requests are part of due process for any prospective major planning application. This process goes through scheme specific matters in more detail to enable any likely significant environmental effects of a development proposal to be identified and, where possible, avoided or mitigated and will take the form of an Environmental Statement in the planning application process. The EIA process will also require the developer to undertake detailed ecological surveys and analysis in order to demonstrate that identified species are not harmed as a result of the development.

In terms of land north of Merley, the development site is farmland. The species referred to in the questions are not known to be present on the developable farmland area of the site but are known to be within the proposed adjacent Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), which is to be protected in perpetuity from development. The design of the SANG provides the opportunity to improve and enhance wildlife habitat, with the potential to link with the proposed Stour Valley Park forming a wildlife corridor from Wimborne to Christchurch.

Turning now to the built environment, the Council has not changed its approach to the Conservation Areas near to the site and has considered the impact on these carefully in preparing the plan. The Inspector has endorsed the Council view that development of the site would not adversely affect the setting of the two conservation areas. The detailed consideration of impact on the Conservation Area is now a matter of consideration for a planning application for the site.

5. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM HELEN JANE LEAVER

Please can councillors explain why the Community Infrastructure Levy in respect of the proposed development of land north of Merley, which had been set at £200 per metre, has been reduced to £175 per metre, apparently by council officers without reference to councillors?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM DANIEL STENNING

A consultation is currently in progress to reduce the CIL from £200 per square metre to £175 per square metre, after the developers of Cruxton Farm and Knighton Farm opposed the higher rate. Why has this reduction not been approved by the Council and been proposed in the first place? A higher rate would not affect the provision of affordable housing as developers get a discounted rate for affordable housing anyway, so what is the real reason?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM JANET ROGERS

The CIL on the recent Canford Paddock Development was reduced to £75 per square metre costing the community nearly £4million in lost levy charge. Why did this happen and will the same approach be taken on the land north of Merley development?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM SIAN SMITH

Why is Borough of Poole considering lowering the proposed CIL rate North Poole, when it knows it will cost the council millions?

RESPONSE

The current base CIL rate for Merley and Bearwood is £75 per square metre. The Council proposed increasing this to £200 per square metre and issued it to an independent Examiner to consider.

As part of the examination a further consultation was necessary, which was undertaken in September 2018. Following the consultation and consideration of responses, the Council undertook further assessment of the proposed rates against new evidence that emerged since the £200 rate was originally proposed.

This information is published on the Council's website and indicates that £200 per square metre is now too high for Merley and challengeable through the examination process. The new evidence included assessing updated costs of the site-specific mitigation that the sites will need to provide for affordable housing, school places and transport infrastructure, which the Council will secure as direct contributions as opposed to being funded by CIL. The new evidence on increased S106 costs therefore resulted in the proposed reduction.

Officers followed the appropriate decision-making process to start the consultation on a revised rate of £175 per square metre. This rate still needs to be tested at examination and is still out for consultation for people to comment on if they so wish.

Once the examination is complete, the decision to adopt can only be made by Full Council and therefore Councillors will have the final say on whether the proposed rate is appropriate once the Examiner has considered all comments and issued his final report.

Subject to the recommendations of the Examiner, the Council will then be able to start using the new rates for Merley and Bearwood. It is also important to reiterate that the developers of the Merley and Bearwood sites will also have to provide significant planning obligations to deliver required infrastructure in the local communities, in addition to the CIL payments.

6. Procedural Issues

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM KATRINA ROBERTS

I object to this proposal and I have a question - Given that probably as many people in Wimborne as people in Poole will be affected by the site UE1 development, why were people from Wimborne excluded from the ePetition to Poole Council?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM WAYNE MILLER

As many people are against the use of Green Belt generally for development, and many hundreds of people in Merley are against the specific removal from the Green Belt of the land to the north of Oakley Lane in the draft Local Plan, and as the Conservative Party manifesto is to protect the Green Belt, can I propose a motion, which should be supported by the Conservative councillors, to amend the draft Local Plan to take out the Green Belt area designated UE1 from the draft Local Plan before it is considered in detail and voted on.

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM VIVIENNE ARKELL

I would like to propose an amendment to the local plan to take greater consideration of freeing up Green Belt if that is allowed. I would like the land North of Merley to be removed from reducing its Green belt status in the plan to protect this area from over development. What plans are there to expand the roads around Merley so that the road network will cope with extra traffic as they are already gridlocked at peak times and often during the day now with the proposed development North of Merley?

PUBLIC QUESTION TO COUNCIL FROM MIKE BEASLEY

The planning inspectorate updates, item 21, I believe that in 2009 - 2013 there was an undelivery of 415 homes creating a backlog of unmet housing targets. The rate of household formation to compensate now reads 900 homes. If the council uses greenbelt to facilitate this catch we will destroy all greenbelt because the policy is now unsustainable due to a failing of historical backlog quotas, brownfield should have been facilitated, therefore My question is can an amendment be made for Bearwood and Merley Green Belt to be considered outside of the full local area plan?

RESPONSE

In respect of the Council's Constitution there is provision that a petition shall only be presented by a Member of the Public if it contains at least 100 signatories or more of residents in the Borough.

Whether the public can propose a motion to amend the plan the answer is no. Only a Borough of Poole Councillor can do this when the issue is debated.

Even if such a motion were proposed and then agreed, this amendment would result in a plan that is materially different to the one that is before Council tonight, and that has followed due statutory process including examination in public.

Planning law is clear that the Council can only adopt a plan including any main modifications that has been found to be acceptable by an independent local plan Inspector.

As set out in my report for Item 8, the independent local plan Inspector has concluded that the Local Plan, that includes the sites at Merley and Bearwood, is acceptable and can be adopted.

To remove the sites at Bearwood and/or Merley at this stage and then adopt a fundamentally different plan that had not been through statutory examination would mean the Council would be making an unlawful decision that will be challengeable in the courts.

The only lawful way that an amendment to remove sites could be considered at this stage in the process would be for Council to prepare a new plan to be taken back through the statutory process, and then confirmed as acceptable by an independent Inspector through examination.

It would take at least two years to go back through examination at considerable additional public expense. During this time the Council would not have an up-to-date strategy in place, as required by Government policy, and would thereby risk facing a much higher housing requirement than the plan before us. This would create uncertainty and the loss of control in local decision making.

In terms of the related question about whether the Green Belt is being used to address historic under delivery of housing, the plan provides a framework to meet an overarching need of 14,200 homes by 2033. The sites at Merley and Bearwood are integral components to the strategy, and without these sites Poole would not be able to deliver its local need for housing, as needs could not be met on brownfield sites alone. The Green Belt sites are part of the strategy to meet the total need over the plan period and not included as a means to address backlog from previous years of under-delivery.

Link to the report considered by the Council on 13 November 2018:

<http://ha2.boroughofpoole.com/akspoole/users/public/admin/kab14.pl?operation=SUBMIT&meet=167&cmte=COU&grpId=public&arc=71>