



DOGMERSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Lords and Ladies
Pilcot
Dogmersfield
RG27 8ST

26th October 2020

Dear Mr Jayawardena,

Dogmersfield Parish Council (DPC) would like to express its views on the current consultations for the Planning White Paper (PWP, deadline 29th October) and the accompanying Changes to the Planning System (C2PS, deadline earlier 1st October), so that we can let you know of our concerns and those of our Parishioners. We have already provided a comprehensive response to the questionnaire directly to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

There are many aspects of the PWP that we would support. The ambition to bridge the generational divide; the emphasis on strict design codes; the commitment to streamlining the Local Plan process and the determination to involve many more local people and their communities into the Planning process are all welcomed.

However, we also have substantial concerns about key aspects of the proposals, some of which stem from the consequences of the algorithms used in the various calculations. These algorithms produce a number of distortions which fundamentally undermine the stated intentions of the Government's proposals. Also, the imposition of central targets and central designation of local areas for development is also seen as a very big step backward from local democratic involvement in the planning process.; a key consideration for a small rural Parish such as ours. Finally, there is also an understandable strong reluctance to take any comfort from the use of algorithms and centrally developed software in determining local outcomes given the longstanding track record of successive administrations' failures to get these right.

More specifically, the proposals in the PWP and C2PS together results in the transfer of development from urban to rural areas. The proposed new standard method (para 30 of the C2PS) would shift housing numbers from the cities to the rural districts. In Hampshire, there would be increases in Winchester by 58%, East Hampshire by 50%, Test Valley by 40%; and decreases in Southampton by 17%, Portsmouth by 14%.

This cannot be consistent with the stated aims of achieving sustainable development and maximising re-use of brownfield land. It also does not account for any constraints in terms of National Parks, other designations, nor water resources, or access to public transport hubs. In Hampshire, these are critical.

Looking locally, for the Hart District (which Dogmersfield is part of) the increase in housing numbers driven by the proposed planning changes is around 69%. There are already strong feelings about the current level of inappropriate development underway or recently completed. A major expansion of this current level would be very unpopular and undeserving. For example, Dogmersfield has a very well regarded Neighbourhood Plan (DNP) which was adopted by local referendum in July of 2019 with a majority of 98% of those voting (on a turn out of over 50% of those eligible to vote). The DNP and the recently made Hart District Local Plan of which the DNP is now part, has no allocation of new housing



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for our Parish. However, we have taken a pragmatic view over the years and approved reasonable house building where judged suitable. This has resulted in Dogmersfield village of c.50 dwellings accepting a total of 8 new houses being built over the last 4 years.

It is simply not true, therefore, that even in small rural Parishes such as ours that there is complete

resistance to new buildings. However, if centrally generated targets (using the blunt instrument of an algorithm) are imposed, and a categorisation of our local area into 'growth, renewal or consent' zones results, the whole process of local decision making through informed consent will be completely fractured.

A second concern is that a regime of centrally allocated housing numbers takes no account of the realities on the ground in small rural areas.

Dogmersfield has a population predominantly concentrated in one village with the rest of the parishioners dotted around a large expanse of Historic park, agricultural land, and isolated dwellings. The village has no public amenities (no shop, no Post office, no bus routes). The nearest shop is now 2 miles away and use of a car is essential, requiring travel along narrow country lanes bordered by high hedgerows. The infrastructure will simply not support development of scale (nb. a development of 420 houses is underway on the Parish boundary and no provision for extra road traffic through our village has been included in any plans).

The DPC priorities, as expressed in our questionnaire response, are protection of green spaces and environment, more or better local infrastructure

and the [protection of existing heritage buildings and areas](#).

The reallocation of development from urban to rural areas and the transfer of top level decision making to central, obscure processes from the current structure will, in our opinion, substantially damage local support for all such developments, and such moves will also be seen in our local area as causing major harm to the concept and practical application of local democracy in those areas of most concern to local residents.

We urge you to convey these concerns into the central administration on our behalf and seek to effect changes to the most harmful aspects of the planning proposals.

For and on behalf of Dogmersfield Parish,

Yours sincerely

Graham Chisnall

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