



## The SSJ Neighbourhood Plan

Call for Sites – Draft Proposal post Consultation Event 14.03.15, Updated 12.10.15

### 1. Background.

- The Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council (BDBC) Draft Local Plan allocates a total of 200 new houses to be built in the period 2015-2019 in (circa) 10 Villages otherwise not identified for development – of which Sherborne St John is one. The current, major, development at Marnel Park (Phase II) of 450 houses - itself within the SSJ Parish Boundary – is not taken into consideration within this framework.
- In agreeing to the production of a Sherborne St John Neighbourhood Plan, BDBC indicated that the Parish of Sherborne St John would be expected to deliver a proportion of these 200 houses. The actual number has not been specified.
- Following the meeting with the Inspector in late 2014, the Draft Local Plan has been delayed and the expectation is that the annual housing target will be increased from circa 748pa to circa 850pa. The SSJ Neighbourhood Plan argues that this will not have an appreciable effect on the proposed numbers for Sherborne St John.
- BDBC's prediction for the Ward (not Parish) of Sherborne St John indicates a reduction in population (~2.6%) over the period to 2029.
- Review of the previous 15 years shows a significant number of housing completions during the previous Local Plan; one approach might be to propose that no specific measures are required now to ensure further housing in the next 14 years. However, this flies in the face of two considerations:
  - The requirement that only developments of a minimum of 5 houses can be considered in achieving the development target.
  - The identification of a need for Affordable (Social) and Smaller/Low Cost Open Market housing, which is unlikely to be provided by so called 'windfall' sites.

Consequently, the SSJ Neighbourhood Plan is seeking to identify a suitable development scheme(s) that provides for this need without compromising the sustainability of Sherborne St John in any way.

### 2. NPPF.

The National Policy Planning Framework is a central Government document defining that any development must meet specified Sustainability criteria. Sustainability assessment requires consideration under three headings:

#### a. Social.

- BDBC has advised that some level of development is essential regardless of other factors.
- Housing numbers are relatively small and will allow assimilation into the Community without undermining current strengths
- Suitable measures must be included to avoid adverse impact on existing properties

- Any development must not undermine Sherborne St John as an independent community providing a discrete identity for its residents
- The Housing Needs Survey and Questionnaire has defined a specific requirement for Affordable (Social) and/or Smaller/Low Cost housing which can sensibly be delivered by the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Limited, targeted development is considered to provide a positive advantage for the future sustainability of Sherborne St John.

**b. Environmental**

Much of Sherborne St John is designated a Conservation Area – any development should not only not detract from the existing settlement but should enhance it.

This applies to

- The built environment
- The rural setting of SSJ Village and the surrounding countryside.

**c. Economic.**

No economic issues within Sherborne St John have been identified through the Neighbourhood Plan process.

**3. Site Selection – Call for Sites**

The 'Call for Sites' process was initiated in May 2014. The Neighbourhood Plan:

- Contacted all identified landowners / potential developers
- Advertised the process in 'The Villager'
- Advertised the process on the SSJ Parish Council website.

A number of responses were received; these were long-listed (see Appendix A) and this list was included in the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire sent to every house in SSJ Parish in October 2014. At this stage, respondents were not asked to vote for specific schemes, only to indicate preferred locations / types.

Positive responses were then invited to identify the scope (specifically numbers of houses) of their proposed development. Schemes involving less than 5 houses are not eligible for consideration under the Neighbourhood Plan – these were therefore (politely) dropped from the process. This led to a 'short list' of potential developments (see Appendix B); as previously inclusion on the short-list does not imply approval by the Neighbourhood Plan.

Each short-listed site was invited to provide further, more detailed, information about the proposed development. A sub-committee of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee was duly constituted and a quorum of members:

- Held a formal meeting with each potential developer in turn
- Visited the proposed sites and assessed their suitability against a suitability framework

These sites have the advantage that they may deliver other benefits for the Parish/Village such as land for a shop, shell building for a shop, further play areas or other items deemed important.

Based on the 'short-list', there is an obvious trade-off between location, impact on other residents and wildlife habitats, use of previously used land (NB farm buildings are not formally recognised as 'brownfield' sites).

4. The short-listed sites have now been identified as part of the Neighbourhood Plan Consultation and Feedback Event – none fully complies with the preferences indicated by the Questionnaire. Residents are invited to comment and vote on specific sites – explaining the reason for their preference(s).

### Appendix B

Name / Ref	Availability	Relationship with Village	Protects Strategic Gap?	Access	Utilities	Number of Houses	Mix of Houses	Affordable (Social) Houses	Community Benefit	Comments
Rydon - Cranesfield & Cranes Rd / 01	Yes	Good but abuts Village Pond and affects view for existing Residents	No	Good	All	Package 1 = 35, Package 2 = 30	1-5 bedroom	Package (option) 1 = 14** Package (option) 2 = 0	Yes  Village Shop  Possible provision of a landscaped country park' to the North of Site A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Twice</b> the number of houses indicated by the Questionnaire responses.</li> <li>• <b>Greenfield site</b></li> <li>• <b>Partly located in Strategic Gap</b></li> <li>• Housing Mix (1-5 bedrooms) incorrect</li> <li>• ** Affordable housing could be replaced by Sheltered housing</li> <li>• Relatively big impact on other residents.</li> <li>• Possible useful site for replacement Village Shop/ PO.</li> <li>• Size of 'Country Park not defined.</li> </ul>
Horton – Bob's Farm/ 02	Yes	Good	Yes	Good	All (tbc)	15	2-5 bedroom	6	Removes existing eyesore  Permissive footpath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Semi-derelict site</li> <li>• Housing Mix (2-5) incorrect</li> <li>• Would greatly improve the look of the Village.</li> <li>• Positive impact for residents</li> <li>• Permissive footpath will allow foot access across site</li> </ul>

Hatt – ‘Tin Sheds’ behind 14 Aldermaston Rd/ 03	Yes	Poor	No	Good	No Mains Gas or Sewers?	15	SK01=2-5 bedroom SK02=1-4 bedroom	tbc		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replaces existing sheds</li> <li>• <u>In the middle of the Strategic Gap.</u></li> <li>• Housing Mix (1-5) incorrect</li> <li>• Out of sight except to 15&amp;16 Aldermaston Rd.</li> <li>• Not attached to the Village.</li> </ul>
Hilltop – Lewis/04	Yes	Poor	No	Good	No Mains Gas or Sewers?	10-20	1-3	8-10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Greenfield Site</u></li> <li>• <u>Does not protect Strategic Gap</u></li> <li>• Not attached to Village</li> <li>• Housing Mix (1-3 beds) correct.</li> <li>• No detailed drawings available</li> </ul>
Kiln Rd / 05	Yes	Good	No	OK	All (tbc)	10-12	2-3	10-12	Provides 10-12 Affordable (Social) Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Greenfield site</u></li> <li>• <u>Does not protect Strategic Gap</u></li> <li>• Housing Mix (1-3 beds) correct</li> <li>• <u>Affordable (Social) housing only ie no market housing</u></li> <li>• Impact on residents in Kiln Rd</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Aubrey Place/06	No	Good	Yes	Poor	Good	?10	?	?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May become available for development in next 6 months – no guarantee it will suit N Plan.</li> </ul>

**5. Agreed Steering Group Position (post Consultation Event 14.03.15)**

**1. Background.**

- i. Call for Sites – Discussion Paper 08.03.15 R6. Environmental. Much of Sherborne St John is designated a Conservation Area – any development should not only not detract from the existing settlement but should enhance it. This applies to**
  - a. The built environment**
  - b. The rural setting of SSJ Village and the surrounding countryside.**
- ii. This led to a ‘short list’ of potential developments (see Appendix B attached); as previously, inclusion on the short-list did not/ does not imply approval by the Neighbourhood Plan.**

**2. Key Criteria**

- i. The development should preferably be an integral part of the Village**
- ii. Some of these options directly contradicted the two fundamental ‘no-go’ rules identified by the N Plan Questionnaire:**
  - No development on greenfield sites (94%)**
  - No development in the Basingstoke – Sherborne St John Strategic Gap (with the possible exception of specific 'brownfield' sites, where development would not jeopardize separation and would enhance the environment) (95%)**

**3. Draft Proposal.**

- i. The following sites fail on two counts and should be discounted:**
  - 1 Cranesfield. In addition, the proposal submitted for these two sites is twice the number of houses identified as required by the N Plan Questionnaire**
  - 3 Aldermaston Rd**
  - 4 Hilltop**
  - 5 Kiln Rd. In addition, the proposal is for Affordable (Social) housing only – contrary to the ‘mixed’ requirements identified by the N Plan Questionnaire**
- ii. The following site should be pursued through discussion with the developer to establish that they are prepared to deliver a suitable housing mix, ideally 50% Affordable, 50% Market:**
  - 2 Bob’s Farm**
- iii. The following site(s) should be held in abeyance pending discussions / further progress.**
  - 6 Aubrey Place**

**6. Briefing Paper - Call for Sites: Meeting 12th October 2015**

**1. Overall Position.**

**For a number of reasons, it is desirable to agree the preferred Neighbourhood Plan Development Site as soon as possible; hence voting in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Consultation Event will close at 6pm on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015 and a decision is required at the Meeting. Reasons:**

- a. BDBC Local Plan Inquiry – possible Developer Agreement, which would limit or stop other possible (probable?) development in SSJ (see contents of Rydon email below).
- b. Early completion of the Neighbourhood Plan which will provide us with some protection against developers, once it is approved. Currently it has no legal status.
- c. Neighbourhood Plan Spending deadline – the current grant is valid until end 2015 (however, it may/should be possible to extend its validity).

## 2. Bob's Farm.

Voting at the Call for Sites Consultation Event 14<sup>th</sup> March 2015 identified Bob's Farm as the chosen location for a development of 15No. houses (including 6No. Affordable, Social, houses). The developer (Pro-vision) then submitted the same proposal to Basingstoke & Deane BC (BDBC) for pre-application advice, who responded with a largely unfavourable review. Following this response, the developer opted to reduce the number of houses from 15No. to 4No. A meeting between BDBC and SSJNP (8<sup>th</sup> September) failed to identify a way of reinstating the 15 house option; the developer confirmed their intention to stick with the 4 house option. Subsequent to this, recent discussions involving Cllrs Leek, Cubbitt and Ruffell failed to identify a route for exerting fair pressure on the developer, or guaranteeing that BDBC would definitely accept any 15 house application submitted.

Bob's Farm cannot be proposed as a preferred site since the site is not available.

## 3. A340/Cranes Rd.

Rydon (developer) originally submitted two sites combined for the March 2015 Consultation Event. They have subsequently approached the N Plan Steering Group with an 18 house proposal at a single site – A340/Cranes Rd. This proposal broadly meets the aspirations of the Parish, reflected in the Neighbourhood Plan; it includes 6No. Affordable (Social) houses and a reasonable spread of house sizes for the commercial market. It also incorporates an option for the Parish to acquire, free of charge, new shop premises of 1230sq ft. Securing a Post Office / Village Shop for the future is one of the Key Policies of the draft N Plan.

Of specific interest is the following email communication from Elliott Newlyn of Rydon dated 21<sup>st</sup> Sept 2015:

*Dear Julian,*

*As confirmed by Kevin Willcox recently I can confirm that if we are to be supported by the Parish then Rydon will not be seeking to pursue any other development opportunities in Sherborne St John at the emerging Basingstoke Local Plan sessions.*

*I will confirm this to Chris Hough (Sigma Planning) who is away this week, but will deal with the necessary withdrawals on his return.*

*Kind regards,  
Elliott.*

The developer (Rydon) has also explained that, should the Parish decline to support the proposal, they will still proceed with a formal planning application for this site. It is not known whether the houses numbers would still be restricted to 18. BDBC's lack of a 5 year housing supply suggests that approval would be a formality.

This was the only development option put forward for the recent 2<sup>nd</sup> Consultation Event.

The results of the Consultation Vote will be available at the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015:

- a. If the majority of the Parish has voted in favour of the A340/Cranes Rd site, I will propose it is adopted as the preferred site for the SSJ Neighbourhood Plan. If necessary this will be put to the vote, but I would not expect the Steering Group to vote against the Parish.
- b. If the majority of the Parish has voted against the A340/Cranes Rd site, it cannot be adopted and we will be obliged to proceed without a preferred site. I fear this will leave us exposed.
- c. The third possibility is that the vote is tied, in which case we will have to exercise our judgement. This may involve further Consultation, but we need to bear in mind the dis-advantages of indecision and the current exposure to Developers.

Rydon will be advised of the Parish / Steering Group's decision immediately after the meeting by email.

7. Voting was carried out via a placing (insert) in the SSJ copies of the October 2015 Villager Magazine. Residents received their copies no later than 1<sup>st</sup> October, voting was by paper voting slip deposited in ballot boxes located at 4 locations in SSJ Village, close time for returns was 6pm on 12<sup>th</sup> October.

Residents decided the site was suitable and voted in favour of adoption of the A340/Cranes Rd site as the (only) preferred development site for the SSJ Neighbourhood Plan:

<b>Votes Received</b>	<b>199</b>	
<b>In Favour</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>Of which -</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 90 were in favour irrespective of whether the scheme provides a shop or not.</li><li>• 40 were in favour only if the shop is provided</li><li>• 4 undefined</li></ul>
<b>Against</b>	<b>65</b>	

The SSJ Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group resolved to support a development of 18 Houses at A340/Cranes Rd., working in co-operation with the developer.

8. SSJ Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – Minutes of Meeting 12.10.2015.

#### 52.15 Call for Sites

The Committee discussed the Briefing Paper (attached) in detail. The main conclusions were as follows:

- a. Bob's Farm cannot be designated / proposed as a 'preferred site' as it is not available. Further discussion with Cllrs Leek, Cubbitt, and Ruffell were unable to achieve progress.
- b. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Consultation Event Voting (attached) showed a majority of Parish respondents in favour of adopting the A340/Cranes Rd proposal, on the basis of the Rydon commitment.
- c. The A340/Cranes Rd. proposal, limiting the extent of development during the period of the emerging Local Plan (ie up to 2029), represents the 'least bad' option – taking into account the implications of the BDBC lack of 5 year building supply.
- d. The Chairman to email Rydon immediately following the meeting – to confirm support, subject to Rydon complying with the commitment in their email 21<sup>st</sup> Sept. 2015. (*Urgent - BDBC Local Plan Inquiry Issue 4, programmed for 13.10.15 refers*).
- e. The Chairman will respond to Historic England (their letter to BDBC dated 14<sup>th</sup> Aug.2015), arguing that an SEA is no longer required.