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2/5/2024

Dear Sir/ Madam

Response by the Home Builders Federation to the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Plan Publication Draft March 2024 (Reg 19).

1. Please find below the Home Builders Federation (HBF) response to the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Plan Publication Draft March 2024 (Reg 19). HBF is the principal representative body of the housebuilding industry in England and Wales. Our representations reflect the views of our membership, which includes multi-national PLC's, regional developers and small, local builders. In any one year, our members account for over 80% of all new "for sale" market housing built in England and Wales as well as a large proportion of newly built affordable housing.
2. We have not commented on every policy on those of interest to our members.

Legal Compliance and Duty to Cooperate

The need for positive planning

3. The NPPF requires a plan to be positively prepared, setting a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for meeting housing needs and addressing other economic, social and environmental priorities. As such HBF would expect Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole's Plan to be an ambitious plan that plans for the future development of BCP, detailing where new housing will go, meeting housing needs, providing certainty for the house building industry and setting out a long-term vision for the area, in accordance with the NPPF.
4. Instead, we have a document that appears to be ignoring the need for growth, failing to plan positively for the future of BCP area and failing to deliver the housing numbers that need to be planned for. In adopted a 'constraints-based approach' the Council is seeking to justify a 'policy-on' approach to the evidence base and then using this to justify the policy they were seeking in the first place. This is not the evidence-based policy-making expected by the



planning system but policy-based evidence-making that fails to address the development needs of BCP. HBF is very disappointed that in the midst of a Housing Crisis the Council is seeking to develop a long-term plan for its area that fails to grasp the challenges facing BCP and its wider context.

5. HBF cannot support the Council's approach to Duty to Cooperate because it appears completely disingenuous. Previous work on the emerging Dorset Local Plan included an over-provision/surplus of 8804 homes. This recognised the role that the wider Dorset area will need to play in meeting the housing needs of BCP. Although HBF recognise there may be some environmental factors that needs to be weighed in the balance when considering where development should be located in BCP, this simply does not justify a constraints-based approach which artificially reduces the housing requirement of BCP so that conversations with neighbouring authorities about the need for them to plan for some of BCPs unmet need disappear. This is not how the plan making process or the Duty to Cooperate is intended to work.
6. Para 2.6.1 of the Reg 18 Dorset plan said:

“This section sets out the spatial strategy for future growth in Dorset. It aims to meet all of Dorset’s identified need for housing and employment land, together with some capacity to meet a proportion of the unmet need from the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole and New Forest areas should this need arise and subject to changes in national policy on this issue.”
7. Para 2.7.22 of the Reg 18 Dorset plan said:

“Policy DEV1 establishes a housing requirement for 30,481 new (net additional) homes during the period 2021 to 2038, which includes the figure for ‘local housing need’ in Dorset. Discussions are taking place to establish whether there is a need for Dorset Council to meet an element of the unmet need from Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole and the New Forest should either council not be able to meet their own need.”
8. The Dorset Reg 18 Plan then went on to establish the housing figures significantly over the minimum, which seems to reflect the need for the Dorset Plan to accommodate some of the unmet from BCP.
9. BCP should assess its housing need using the standard method, consider if there are factors that need to be considered and then set the housing requirement for BCP, only then should constraints be considered, and if evidence shows housing numbers needed cannot be accommodated within the BCP area then an unmet need should be declared, and neighbouring authorities approached to help.
10. Paragraph 61 of the NPPF requires that in order to “determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local

housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance – unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals.” Therefore, the Government requires Local Planning Authorities to use the standard method to calculate housing need in all but exceptional circumstances.

11. HBF do not believe the Council has shown any exceptional circumstances that justify departing from the standard method. The Government has made it very clear that it still supports the national target of 300,000 new homes per year. HBF cannot understand how the approach in the BCP plan represents proactive planning to meet the housing need of BCP and the wider region.
12. HBF would therefore encourage the Council to take a broader view of the role of its Plan. The new BCP Local Plan should not be trying to progress its plan in isolation. There is clearly a need to acknowledge the role and location of BCP within its wider geography and Housing Market Area, and for the Plan to be proactive in supporting growth and development of the Region. This necessitates planning for a higher number of much needed homes.
13. HBF note that there is a significant interaction between housing issues across the wider Dorset housing market, which are not being adequately addressed in this plan. This includes recognition of the need for a range of housing types to attract younger working people to support the economy as the population ages. Without the BCP presenting a positive pro-growth agenda this Plan is likely to result in the housing needs of this region being unmet for many years to come, with the subsequent impacts on the economy. In failing to deliver a proactive pro-growth Local Plan and grasping the housing needs of BCP and the potential resulting unmet need conversations, BCP is failing to deliver how the Duty to cooperate is intended to work in practice.

Need to reflect new Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Government Policy

14. HBF believe BNG should be a significant factor in emerging Local Plans and may require additional research, evidence work, policy and guidance of it to be made to work in practice. Plan-making is the appropriate stage for many BNG issues to be considered and we therefore suggest that the BCP Plan need to be reviewed and revisited to ensure that it is doing all it can to support the delivery of the national mandatory BNG policy through providing clear advice guidance and, wherever possible, certainty for developers and landowners and communities on what is expected.
15. HBF suggest that on-site BNG will impact on the housing densities achievable and therefore impact on the housing that can be provided under the current proposed Local Plan policies. The result of the need for development to deliver environmental benefits must not lead to less housing, and a further reduced ‘policy-on’ housing requirement. It should result in increased housing allocations that can deliver both environmental improvements such as BNG, and the much-needed homes to address the current housing crisis.

Problems with the evidence base and Sustainability Appraisal

16. HBF suggests the issue of fully meeting housing needs requires consideration within the supporting documentation of the Plan. It is simply unacceptable that a scenario where all of the housing needs of BCP are met has simply not been considered as one of the options in the (SA). HBF do not see how it is possible to reach a conclusion that a reduction in housing numbers is needed due to environmental constraints without having assessed the social economic and environmental impacts of seeking to meet all of the housing need within the BCP area.
17. The failure of the SA to consider an option where the BCP Plan meets all of the areas housing need as a realistic alternative is very worrying, so too is the failure to consider and test a strategy that included Green Belt release. These are both possible policy options that should have been considered and tested. Without this work having been done the SA is completely inadequate. The lack of a robust SA with such serious omissions and efficiency brings into question the whole Plan, its policy approach and the supporting evidence base. All of which may be fundamentally unsound. This could only be rectified by a new improved SA being undertaken and this new SA being used to inform a fully reviewed BCP Plan, incorporating any revisions necessary.

Problems with engagement with the industry

18. HBF is also aware of some of our members frustrations at the opacity of BCP Council when it comes to engagement, particularly with the development industry. Although we are aware of regular and ongoing meetings with many community groups about the BCP Plan the same courtesy has not been afforded to the development industry. This is particularly disappointing as house builders also have a key role to play in helping to deliver the outputs and outcomes of that the BCP Plan is seeking to achieve, social, economic and environmental. Effective plan-making must include effective engagement with all those with an interest in delivering a viable and deliverable plan, and setting an effective vision for BCP, this must include proper engagement with the development industry.
19. Presenting the SA as a scoping document at Regulation 18 Stage and then as a publication report at this Regulation 19 Stage, omitting the chance for developing and refining alternatives, is symptomatic of this failure to properly engage with the industry and follow the appropriate process in the PPG.
20. HBF also note that the on-line consultation did not go live until the end of the first day of consultation period and representatives have to be submitted by 1pm on the final day. HBF are aware that this has already been raised at the recent Developers and Agents forum.

Changes requested:

BCP should assess its housing need using the standard method, consider if there are factors that need to be considered and then set the housing requirement for BCP, only then should constraints be considered, and if

evidence shows housing numbers needed cannot be accommodated within the BCP area then an unmet need should be declared, and neighbouring authorities approached to help.

HBF would encourage the Council to take a broader view of the role of its Plan. The new BCP Local Plan should not be trying to progress its plan in isolation. There is clearly a need to acknowledge the role and location of BCP within its wider geography and Housing Market Area, and for the Plan to be proactive in supporting growth and development of the Region. This necessitates planning for a higher number of much needed homes.

Additional research, evidence work, policy and guidance on BNG is required.

It is simply unacceptable that a scenario where all of the housing needs of BCP are met has simply not been considered as one of the options in the (SA). HBF do not see how it is possible to reach a conclusion that a reduction in housing numbers is needed due to environmental constraints without having assessed the social economic and environmental impacts of seeking to meet all of the housing need within the BCP area. The failure of the SA to consider an option where the BCP Plan meets all of the areas housing need as a realistic alternative is very worrying, so too is the failure to consider and test a strategy that included Green Belt release. These are both possible policy options that should have been considered and tested. Without this work having been done the SA is completely inadequate. The lack of a robust SA with such serious omissions and efficiency brings into question the whole Plan, its policy approach and the supporting evidence base. All of which may make the plan fundamentally unsound. This could only be rectified by a new improved SA being undertaken and this new SA being used to inform a fully reviewed BCP Plan, incorporating any revisions necessary.

Presenting the SA as a scoping document at Regulation 18 Stage and then as a publication report at this Regulation 19 Stage, omitting the chance for developing and refining alternatives, is symptomatic of this failure to properly engage with the industry and follow the appropriate process in the PPG. This creates a fundamental problem with the Plan.

Better engagement with the development industry is needed.

The Need to Extend the Plan Period

21. HBF request that the plan period is extended. The BCP Plan only covers the period to 2038/39. This is not long enough. The NPPF (2023 Paragraph 22 states strategic policies should look ahead over a minimum 15-year period from adoption and that where larger scale developments form part of the strategy for the area, policies should be set within a vision that looks further ahead (at least 30 years), to take in account the likely timescale for delivery.
22. HBF request that the Council extends the Plan period to ensure that a 15-year period is provided post adoption of the Plan. In light of the amount of time it can take to progress through the multiple stages of plan-making, a

longer end date for the plan, of 2041, or even 2042, may be a more realistic. Whatever plan period is chosen there is a need for evidence to cover the whole plan period. This means the evidence will also need to cover a longer time frame as well.

Chapter 4. Development Strategy

Strategic Policy S1: Addressing the climate and ecological emergency

Policy S1 is not considered to be sound as it is not effective, justified or consistent with national policy

23. Although HFB welcomes criteria j. and agree that there is the need to deliver a mix and type of housing to meet local needs, including affordable housing and specialist needs housing, sadly the Plan does not do this. HBF suggest a commitment to meeting housing needs in full should be a clear objective of the BCP Plan.
24. HBF note that para 4.9 recognises that the standard method requires 2,806 new homes are needed each year in BCP and that the Local Housing Needs Assessment states that there is a significant need for affordable housing. This is the minimum level of housing that should be being provided.
25. The housing requirement for BCP should be based on an assessment of housing using the standard method unless exceptional circumstances apply. HFB does not believe there are any exceptional circumstances in the BCP area that justify departing from the standard method. However, once the standard method figure has been established HBF would suggest that the Council should then consider whether it needs adjusting for other planning reasons.
26. HBF suggest higher housing numbers are needed for a variety of reasons including addressing the current housing crisis, meeting housing need, providing affordable housing and supporting employment growth. Planning for an artificially reduced housing number appears perverse in the midst of a housing crisis, particularly when partnership work with Dorset Council under the Duty to Cooperate has previously suggested if there are constraints that result in an unmet housing need within BCP, Dorset Council was willing and able to help to meet this need.

Change requested: higher housing numbers are needed

Strategic Policy S2: Spatial strategy and levels of growth

Policy S2 is not considered to be sound as it is not positively prepared, effective, justified or consistent with national policy

1. Environmentally sensitive areas and the Green Belt

27. HBF is of the view that BCP faces the exceptional circumstances required to justify the allocation of land for housing within the green belt. HBF would support additional allocation in the Green Belt to meet the housing requirement. Indeed, HBF support the need for a comprehensive Green Belt review, and the need for greenfield and Green Belt releases within BCP boundary and beyond.

2. Amount of development

28. HBF do not believe the constraint-based approach to setting the housing requirement, is appropriate, justified, supported by evidence or in line with national policy. The Council's own evidence indicates a worsening housing crisis in BCP, with affordability become more problematic and a significant need for affordable housing, and an ageing population.

29. HBF would support the standard method figure of 2,806 3,380 per annum figure as being the starting point for consideration of the appropriate housing requirement for BCP. The Government has made it clear that it still supports the national target of 300,000 new homes per year. However, the standard method housing requirement has always been only the starting point for setting the housing requirement in a Plan.

30. HBF would support more housing than the standard method housing requirement in order to support economic growth, provide a range and type of sites and to support small and medium house builders. There is a need to provide a range and choice of sites, a need for flexibility and viability considerations to be taken into account and a need for the Council to consider whether higher levels of open-market housing are required in order to secure the delivery of affordable housing and/or support economic growth.

31. NPPF para 60 still requires that in order "to support the government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay".

32. HBF would request that BCP Council revisit its housing requirements and set it using the standard method as a starting point, as required by the NPF. We recognise this is likely to result in the need to fundamentally review the approach of the BCP Local Plan and there are likely to be consequential changes needed to many other policies. If having established the housing requirement with reference to the standard method as the minimum starting point, the Council's evidence of constraints does show it cannot meet its own housing need in full, this provided justification for both a full Green Belt review and conversations with neighbouring authorities about addressing any of BCP's unmet needs.

3. Broad location of development

33. HBF does not comment on individual sites, other than to say the Plan should provide for a wide range of deliverable and developable sites across the area in order to provide competition and choice to ensure that housing needs are met in full. HBF would wish to see the Plan set out a logical settlement hierarchy which meets all the housing needs and addresses all areas of the housing market, with a range of sites proposed for allocation. The soundness of strategic and non-strategic site allocations, whether brownfield or greenfield, will be tested in due course at the Local Plan Examination.
34. Although HBF do not comment on individual sites allocations, we find this policy is unsound because additional housing allocations are required. We are of the view, for the reasons details elsewhere in our representation, so not repeated here, there need to be more housing allocations. This necessitates a need for a Green Belt review, the evidence base for which is already in place, in the form of the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council and Dorset Council Strategic Green Belt Assessment 2020, and a revisiting of the spatial strategy of the Plan to enable additional housing sites to be allocated.

The Need for a Buffer

35. HBF would also recommend that the plan allocates more sites than required to meet the housing requirement as a buffer. Any buffer should be sufficient to deal with any under-delivery which is likely to occur from some sites and to provide flexibility and choice within the market. Such an approach is consistent with the NPPF requirements for the plan to be positively prepared and flexible. HBF is therefore supportive of additional housing allocations to ensure that there is a housing supply buffer.

The Need for Small Sites

36. The NPPF requires Local Plans to identify land to accommodate at least 10% of the housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare, unless there are strong reasons why this cannot be achieved. The HBF has undertaken extensive consultation with its small developer members. One of the chief obstacles for small developers is that funding is extremely difficult to secure without a full, detailed, and implementable planning permission. Securing an implementable planning permission is extremely difficult if small sites are not allocated. Without implementable consents lenders are uneasy about making finance available or the repayment fees and interest rates they set will be very high. Small developers, consequently, need to invest a lot of money and time up-front in the risky business of trying to secure an allocation and a planning permission, and this is money that many small developers do not have.
37. The Council should set out in the Plan's policies and evidence base to set out how the plan will deliver 10% of homes on sites of less than one hectare, as required by paragraph 69 of the NPPF. Indeed, the HBF would advocate that a higher percentage of small sites are allocated if possible. Such sites are important for encouraging the growth in SME housebuilders who will tend to

develop these sites but rarely see the benefits that arise from the allocation of sites in a local plan. Up until the 1980s, small developers once accounted for the construction of half of all homes built in this country resulting in greater variety of product, more competition, and faster build-out rates. Since then, the number of small companies has fallen by 80%.

38. HBF have been unable to find within the evidence base any analysis of how the small site requirement will be delivered within this Plan. This information needs to be provided and HBF may wish to comment on it once it has been.
39. HBF also note that support for small and medium builders need not be limited to only small sites of less than 1Ha. SMEs also deliver on other types of non-strategic sites (for example up to 100 units). The inclusion of additional non-strategic allocations would expand the range of choice in the market, and (possibly most importantly), be of a scale that can come forward and making a contribution to housing numbers earlier in the plan period.

The Need for Realistic Density

40. The policy expects density of 150-300 dwellings per hectare in the Strategic Opportunity Areas, 30-50 dph in strategic urban extensions and 40-150 dph elsewhere. The deliverability of residential development in the SOAs will be dependent upon the viability of brownfield sites and the demand for high density city centre living post Covid-19. It is important that delivery of the housing requirement in BCP does not rely on overly ambitious intensification of dwellings in the SOAs. As set out in the NPPF, all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up to date evidence, which should be adequate, proportionate and focussed tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned and take into account relevant market signals (para 31). HBF question if the Council have evidence such high densities are deliverable and viable especially when considered against other policies in the plan including for example BNG and design requirements.
41. The setting of residential density standards should be undertaken in accordance with the NPPF (para 125), whereby in the circumstances of an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs then a minimum net density in suitable locations such as town centres and those benefiting from good public transport connections may be appropriate. HBF suggest the current proposed densities are unrealistic and further work is needed to develop a range of density standards specific to different areas of BCP. This is necessary to ensure that any proposed density is appropriate to the character of the surrounding area, and to ensure that the density policies allow for a variety of housing typologies to meet the housing needs of different groups.
42. Although HBF recognises the policy intention to maximise density, the Council must recognise the interaction between this policy and the size and type of housing units that will result. This needs to be fully evidenced. In particular this policy will interact with the new mandatory national requirement

for 10% BNG which will impact on densities as under the BNG hierarchy on-site BNG is preferred where possible. HBF question whether optimum densities and high-density development are always synonymous. There will clearly be a trade-off to be made between what land is used for new green space and what land is used for new built forms. The policy and supporting text should be amended to include reference to these considerations.

Changes requested

1. Environmentally sensitive areas and the Green Belt

There needs to be a comprehensive Green Belt review. There is a need for greenfield and Green Belt releases within BCP boundary and beyond.

2. Amount of development

The standard method housing requirement must be the starting point for setting the housing requirement in a Plan. HBF would support more housing than the standard method housing requirement in order to support economic growth, provide a range and type of sites and to support small and medium house builders. There is a need to provide a range and choice of sites, a need for flexibility and viability considerations to be taken into account and a need for the Council to consider whether higher levels of open-market housing are required in order to secure the delivery of affordable housing and to support economic growth.

HBF would request that BCP Council revisit its housing requirements and set it using the standard method as a starting point, as required by the NPF. We recognise this is likely to result in the need to fundamentally review the approach of the BCP Local Plan and there are likely to be consequential changes needed to many other policies. If having established the housing requirement with reference to the standard method as the minimum starting point, the Council's evidence of constraints does show it cannot meet its own housing need in full, this provided justification for both a full Green Belt review and conversations with neighbouring authorities about addressing any of BCP's unmet needs.

3. Broad location of development

Additional housing allocations are required. This necessitates a need for a Green Belt review, the evidence base for which is already in place, in the form of the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council and Dorset Council Strategic Green Belt Assessment 2020, and a revisiting of the spatial strategy of the Plan to enable additional housing sites to be allocated.

Additional housing allocations to ensure that there is a housing supply buffer.

The Council should set out in the Plan's policies and evidence base to set out how the plan will deliver 10% of homes on sites of less than one hectare. Such sites should be allocated.

Residential density standards need to be realistic and evidenced.

HBF question whether optimum densities and high-density development are always synonymous. There will clearly be a trade-off to be made between what land is used for new green space and what land is used for new built forms. The policy and supporting text should be amended to include reference to these considerations.

Strategic Policy S3: Healthy communities

Policy S3 is not considered to be sound as it is not positively prepared effective or justified

43. HBF is disappointed to see the Plan's failure to recognise the role of good housing in providing positive health outcomes. We would request the Plan acknowledge this point.

Change requested

HBF is disappointed to see the Plan's failure to recognise the role of good housing in providing positive health outcomes. We would request the Plan acknowledge this point.

Policy S4: Health and wellbeing

Policy S4 is not considered to be sound as it is not effective, justified or consistent with national policy

HBF is concerned that the policy requires use of the NHS Rapid Health Impact Assessment but makes no reference to a potential successor or update, which may be brought out during the Plan period. It is important that plan policy allows for the most up to date information to be used. HBF agree any HIA must be proportionate.

Change requested

Reference should be made within the policy to a potential successor or update, which may be brought out during the Plan period for the NHS Rapid Health Impact Assessment.

Chapter 5. Tackling Climate change

Strategic Policy C1: Addressing climate change

Policy C1 is not considered to be sound as it is not positively prepared effective, justified or consistent with national policy

44. Although HBF fully recognise the role that development and developers have to play in addressing climate change, this policy seems overly long and

complex and seeks to address matters in planning policy that are more appropriately addressed elsewhere.

45. It is not clear from the policy wording what a developer would need to do to show compliance with this policy and as such rewording is necessary if this policy is to be helpful to those submitting, determining or commenting on a planning application. Any ambiguity in the policy wording must be resolved, as must any confusion between the policy wording and the supporting text.

Policy C2: Sustainable construction and low carbon energy

Policy C2 is not considered to be sound as it is not effective, justified or consistent with national policy

46. HBF supports the Council in seeking to promote sustainable construction and low carbon energy. However, HBF does not consider that the Council setting its own standards is the appropriate method to achieve these outcomes. HBF is concerned when Councils seek to create Local Plan policies on issues that are already adequately addressed nationally. In addition to the complexity of policy, regulations and standards that housebuilders are already expected to comply with, the policies may in fact undermine the objectives they are seeking to achieve. The key to success is standardisation and avoidance of individual Councils specifying their own policy approach, which undermines economies of scale for product manufacturers, suppliers and developers.
47. It is not clear from the policy wording what a developer would need to do to show compliance with this policy and as such rewording is necessary if this policy is to be helpful to those submitting, determining or commenting on a planning application. For example, do they need a Design and access Statement, the Council checklist- if so what checklist- as this is not defined in the policy. Are the developers being asked to apply the national or local standards? Are these different? Any ambiguity in the policy must be resolved, as must any confusion between the policy wording and the supporting text.

Policy C3: Water efficiency

Policy C3 is not considered to be sound as it is not positively prepared, effective, justified or consistent with national policy

48. HBF opposes any requirement for applicants to assess or demonstrate the capacity of the water company to connect a development with water services and/or to demonstrate water neutrality, (e.g. the supply of fresh water and the treatment of wastewater). These are not land use planning matters. They are matters managed under a separate statutory regime. Matters relating to water and sewerage infrastructure and its availability and/or network capacity are both controlled by separate, dedicated legislation, i.e. s37 (water) and s94 (sewerage) of the Water Industry Act 1991. The planning process should not be used as a route to subjugate established primary legislation. The legal responsibility for the supply of water services falls to the water company.

49. Building Regulations already require all new dwellings to achieve a mandatory level of water efficiency of 125 litres per day per person, which is a higher standard than that achieved by much of the existing housing stock. This mandatory standard represents an effective demand management measure. There is no need for the Local Plan to venture into this area of policy making, as the matter is already being addressed through Building Regulations.
50. HBF also note that the level of customer experience starts to get affected at 100 litres per dwelling and below. There are examples of schemes around the country where once water usage begins to get too low there becomes a secondary issue of odour, air quality and human health as the piped systems aren't getting enough volume to run through and cleanse the system. Pipes need a certain volume of water to flush everything through, otherwise if the effluent is not getting cleared and if 'solids and matter' are just sitting dry in pipes this can cause air quality issues and nuisance to residents.

Changes requested:

Remove any requirement for applicants to assess or demonstrate the capacity of the water company to connect a development with water services and/or to demonstrate water neutrality.

There is no need for the Local Plan to set water efficiency standards as the matter is already addressed through Building Regulations.

Policy C6: Flood risk

Policy C6 is not considered to be sound as it is not positively prepared or effective or justified

51. It would be helpful for the flood risk policy to explicitly consider the development of sites for BNG net gain. It would be helpful for the Plan to clarify if these sites are appropriate within the certain flood zones, what evidence is required to support them and so on.

Policy C7: Sustainable Drainage (SuDS)

Policy C7 is not considered to be sound as it is not effective, justified or consistent with national policy

52. It would be helpful for the SUDS policy to explicitly reference BNG and the stacking of credits in particular.
53. It is also not appropriate for the policy to seek to give Local Plan status to the SUDs guidance. If the Council wish to provide additional advice on the interpretation of this policy, this should be done through a Supplementary Planning Document, which is prepared and consulted on after the Local Plan policy has been adopted. It cannot be done through trying to give Local Plan

policies status to existing guidance, especially as this may change or be reviewed during the Plan period.

54. If this reference is retained the term 'our SUDs guidance', must be defined within the policy.

Chapter 6. Our natural environment

Strategic Policy NE1: Natural environment

Policy NE1 is not considered to be sound as it is not effective, justified or consistent with national policy

55. HBF is concerned that the wording of this policy is vague, meaning it is difficult for a developer to know what is required of them to show compliance with the policy.
56. The requirement for all development BNG gains is contrary to the national legislation, guidance and advice on BNG where some development is exempt. The national requirement is for 10% BNG to be provided on eligible sites, and there is no requirement for BNG on other sites. The BNG PPG and the DEFRA Guidance is clear that there is no need for individual Local Plans to repeat national BNG guidance and LPAs should not seek to apply BNG to exempt development (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments> and <https://defraenvironment.blog.gov.uk/2024/01/22/biodiversity-net-gain-what-are-the-exemptions>).

Policy NE3: Biodiversity

Policy NE1 is not considered to be sound as it is not positively prepared, effective, justified or consistent with national policy

57. HBF note the introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain which came in for large sites on Feb 12th 2024, and for small sites from 2nd April 2024. It would be helpful for the Plan to note this as applications submitted before this time, including subsequent detailed application relating to already approved outlines are not required to deliver mandatory BNG.
58. It will be important for this policy to fully reflect all the new legislation, national policy and DLUHC and DEFRA guidance. Including explicit mention of the 10% requirement.
59. HBF has been involved in a significant amount of work, being led by the Future Homes Hub, on BNG preparedness for some time, including feeding into the BNG Planning Practice Guidance from DLUHC and the DEFRA BNG Guidance. HBF note that this represents a lot of new information that the Council will need work though and consider the implications of, in order to ensure that any policy on Biodiversity Net Gain policy complies with the latest policy and guidance now it has been published. It should also be noted that

the PPG is clear that there is no need for individual Local Plans to repeat national BNG guidance.

60. HBF therefore suggest that significantly more information, assessments and analysis around BNG, and Viability (for BNG and viability more generally) is needed to support the amber Vallet Plan, and in particular the site allocations.
61. It is the HBF's opinion that the Council should not deviate from the Government's requirement for 10% biodiversity net gain as set out in the Environment Act. The Plan should provide certainty for developers and a clear BNG policy with a fixed 10% figure, rather than the policy including the phrase "at least 10%" would help to provide this.
62. It is also important to note that for large and complex sites where the development is phased, the guidance is clear that the 10% must be delivered at the end of the development, and this may not result in 10% BNG on each phase. Additional advice on phased development has been provided in the new BNG PPG.
63. The costs of BNG must also be considered as part of the whole plan viability assessment and should be specified as a single specific item, not combined into a generic s106 costs item. There are significant additional costs associated with biodiversity net gain, which should be fully accounted for in the Council's viability assessment, some of which are unknown at this time. It is important that BNG does not prevent, delay or reduce housing delivery. The costs relate both the financial costs and also land take- which will impact on densities achievable if BNG is provided on site.
64. As this is still a new policy area and the market for off-site provision, and statutory credits are not yet known, any figure used for BNG costs will need to be kept under review as BNG implementation progresses and a greater understanding of actual costs become available. The Whole Plan Viability Assessment should clearly set out how it considered the implications of mandatory BNG and how it was arrived at using the most up to date BNG costs information available.
65. HBF suggest that there is also a need for this policy and supporting text to say more about Local Nature Recovery Strategies. As the LNRS emerges it will be important for this Local Plan to be kept under review and further public consultation on the interaction between the two documents and/or changes to Local Plan policy to reflect the LNRS may be needed.
66. HBF would also encourage the Council to ensure the Local Plan fully considers the new BNG requirements in relation to site allocations. This is likely to require undertaking an assessment of the baseline to support the allocation to enable an understanding the BNG requirements for a site to be allocated and the impact this may have on viability and other policy requirements and considerations. It will be important to understand the BNG costs of mandatory BNG as this is non-negotiable and as such may impact on

the viability of the site and its ability to deliver against other policy requirements such as affordable housing or other s106 asks.

67. HBF also notes that there seems to be significant potential for confusion around environmental hierarchy, and suggest particular care is needed to avoid any confusion between the well-established mitigation hierarchy and the new BNG hierarchy. There is need for the policy wording and/or supporting text to be clearer about the differentiation between the mitigation hierarchy (which seeks to avoid harm in the first place, then mitigate and only then compensate it in relation to protected habitats) and the BNG delivery hierarchy (which prioritises on-site BNG delivery, then off-site units and finally allows for statutory credits). There seems to be significant potential for confusion between the two difference hierarchies. HBF therefore suggest that the Council should take particular care to explain how the requirements of the two-part BNG hierarchy work in different ways and that they seek to achieve different aims.
68. Reference could also usefully be made within the Plan to the small sites metric. This is intended to be a less complex statutory metric that can be used to set out how 10% BNG will be secured on small sites. It can only be used for on-site BNG delivery. The national mandatory 10% BNG policy will apply to small sites from April 2024.
69. BNG will also impacts on the density of housing schemes that can be provided, as land used for on-site BNG is not available for housing. This may require larger and/or additional housing sites to be allocated.

Changes Requested:

The policy must be revised to reflect national BNG legislation policy and guidance. It must be clear that BNG can be delivered on-site, off-site or through statutory credits as a last resort.

Reference should be made within the Plan to the BNG PPG and the DEFRA guidance which provides to applicants on this issue. There is no need to repeat this in the Local Plan but signposting to it is essential.

It is also not appropriate that the policy is seeking to Local Plan status to the existing BNG Guidance note. Planning policy must be made through the Local Plan process which is subject to mandatory requirements for public consultation and independent scrutiny through the Examination process. If the Council wishes to provide additional guidance and advice on BNG this should be though a SPD prepared and consulted on after the Local Plan has been adopted.

Chapter 7. Our built environment

Strategic Policy BE1: Design and high quality places

Policy BE1 is not considered to be sound as it is not effective or justified

70. HBF is concerned that the Design policies serve to undermine other policies including delivery of the housing requirement and there also is some duplication between the criteria in Policy BE1 and BE2. The design 'Vision'

the Council is seeking to implement ought to be better highlighted in the accompanying text. There ought to be clarity about the design material and presentation expected at different scales to assist the development industry understand planning application expectations.

Policy BE2: Townscape

Policy BE2 is not considered to be sound as it is not effective or justified

71. HBF is concerned that the wording of this policy is too prescriptive with the use of 'must' at the end of the first paragraph and the word 'and' at the end of each sub-set of criteria indicating the need to show compliance with all criteria in various development contexts. That will not be the case, for instance smaller scale infill development would not normally be expected to provide tree lined streets. There is also some duplication of boundary treatment criteria (b. and f.) unless there is meant to be a distinction between front and other boundaries. It is also not clear how these considerations are to be resolved in planning applications. The start of the policy could be re-worded as follows:

A high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. All development needs to relate to, complement and wherever possible improve the function, attractiveness and distinctiveness of its context. To achieve this, development proposals should respond appropriately, as justified within the Design and Access Statement, to the following considerations where relevant to the development type and context:

Chapter 8. Homes

Strategic Policy H1: Housing delivery

Policy H1 is not considered to be sound as it is not effective, justified or consistent with national policy

Need for more homes

72. HBF strongly object to the minimum target of 24,000 homes. Our comments on the need for the Council to deliver the standard method as a minimum are set out elsewhere and so not at length here. However, in summary HBF do not believe the Council has demonstrated any exceptional circumstances that justify departing from the standard method of calculating housing need. Indeed HBF suggest higher housing numbers are needed for a variety of reasons including addressing the current housing crisis, meeting housing need, providing affordable housing and supporting employment growth.
73. HBF are of that view that planning for an artificially reduced housing number in the midst of a housing crisis is not acceptable, particularly when partnership work with Dorset Council under the Duty to Cooperate has

previously suggested if there are environmental constraints that result in an unmet housing need within BCP, Dorset Council was willing and able to help to meet this need. For the reasons listed above HBF object to both the number and the phasing of the housing requirements.

74. In addition to the HBF being of the view that the BCP Plan is unsound because the number of homes being planned for is too low, HBF also believe the Plan is unsound because of the phasing of the new housing delivery which appears to be a deliberate gaming of the system for the Council to artificially suppress housing needs and requirements in order to artificially demonstrate a five-year land supply at the time of adoption. This approach is entirely disingenuous and fails to plan for the housing needs of the area as planning policy and guidance requires.

Concerns about phasing of delivery

75. Policy H1 shows that the Council has decided to phase the Housing Requirement resulting in 1,200 per year in Phase One between 2024/25 and 2028/29, and 1,800 dwellings per year in Phase Two from 2029/30 to 2038/39. HBF have significant concerns about both the number of homes being planned for and the phasing of those homes within the plan period, and as previously mentioned also have concerns about the Plan period itself not being long enough.
76. The phasing methodology seems to have been artificially contrived to make the housing requirement as low as possible and manipulate the housing figures so that the Council is able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply on adoption, whilst still ducking many of the important strategic policy decisions that should be made within this Plan. Such an approach is both disingenuous and misleading and does nothing to address the current housing crisis.
77. HBF suggest that the annual requirement (which it itself should be higher) should be spread evenly over the plan period. This should be clearly set out in the housing trajectory. HBF note that the Council should provide a site-by-site analysis to check of the deliverability of individual site allocations. HBF note that the new site allocations will be tested in due course at the Local Plan Examination. It is critical that the Council's assumptions on lapse rates, non-implementation allowances, lead-in times and delivery rates contained within its overall Housing Land Supply, 5 Year Housing Land Supply and housing trajectory are correct and realistic. These assumptions should be supported by parties responsible for delivery of housing and sense checked by the Council.

Concerns about windfall

78. The NPPF (para 72) only permits an allowance for windfall sites if there is compelling evidence that such sites have consistently become available and will continue to be a reliable source of supply. By including windfalls within

the Plan's housing requirement, the opportunity for windfalls to provide some additional housing numbers is removed. Windfalls do not provide the same choice and flexibility in the market as additional allocations.

79. HBF are concerns about the amount of windfall the Council is seeking to rely on 8,390 of only 24,000 dwellings. Figure 8.1 sets out that 9,110 dwellings have planning permission but have not yet been built, windfall sites make up 8.390 and therefore the Council believes that allocations of 7815 is sufficient. Less than one of third of the already greatly reduced housing requirements will be met through the Plan allocations. This seems completely unacceptable and further underlies our concern that this plan is not planning proactively for the future of BCP.
80. HBF also note that there is a tension between environmental constraint policies which according to the Council justify a severely constrained housing requirement and the seeming contradiction of relying so much on windfall. Either development is constrained or it is not. The Council seem to be arguing both points of view at the same time. The requirement for on-site BNG and other new policies add further concerns to ongoing reliance such a high amount of windfall development.
81. HBF believe that the BCP Plan should be planning for housing and growth, not leaving it to windfall. The inconsistency between the Council's constraint-based approach to setting their housing requirement and the high amount of windfalls they are seeking to rely on needs recognising and resolving
82. HBF are also of the view that any allowance for windfall should not be included until the fourth year of a housing trajectory, given the likelihood that dwellings being completed within the next three years will already be known about (as they are likely to need to have already received planning permission to be completed within that timeframe).
83. HBF are also of the view that any buffer provided by windfall sites should be in addition to the buffer added to the housing need figures derived from the Standard Method to provide choice and competition in the land market.

Problems with monitoring and actions in case of housing under-delivery

84. HBF do not support the inclusion of policies within a Local Plan that merely triggers a review of the Local Plan if monitoring shows housing delivery is not occurring as expected. Such a policy does nothing to address the housing crisis or undersupply of homes. There are other more effective and immediate measures that could be introduced into policy that would enable the Council to address housing under deliver, much more quickly than would be possible through the production of another plan, or plan review.
85. It is important that houses are brought forward, and the matter addressed as soon as possible, if under delivery is observed. HBF would suggest, as a minimum, explicit reference should be made within the Plan's policy and monitoring framework to the potential to bring forward additional housing

supply earlier. As the housing need and requirement figures for the Plan are minimum (not maximum) figures the Council could also specifically identify reserve sites and/or include policies that would allow for additional windfall housing sites that could/would be brought forward sooner to address any under delivery whatever the reason for that under performance. This could be a shortfall in market housing permissions granted and/or completions, affordable housing permissions granted and/or completions and any failure against the Housing Delivery Test or local plan monitoring.

86. BCP must also monitor the delivery of any unmet need by neighbouring authorities and actively participate in local plan consultation and examination to ensure the need for other authorities to meet their need is robustly supported in neighbouring Local Plans.
87. The Plan needs to set out how and when monitoring will be undertaken, and more information is needed on what action(s) will be taken when if monitoring shows under delivery of housing. Not doing so means the plan will be ineffective and therefore unsound.

Changes requested:

In the midst of a housing crisis is not acceptable to artificially reduced housing numbers, particularly when partnership work with Dorset Council under the Duty to Cooperate has previously suggested if there are environmental constraints that result in an unmet housing need within BCP, Dorset Council was willing and able to help to meet this need.

HBF are of the view that the BCP Plan is unsound both because the number of homes being planned for is too low, and because of the phasing of the new housing delivery which appears to be a deliberate gaming of the system for the Council to artificially suppress housing needs and requirements in order to artificially demonstrate a five-year land supply at the time of adoption. This approach is entirely disingenuous and fails to plan for the housing needs of the area as planning policy and guidance requires.

As such the Plan needs fundamental revisions to its policy, strategy and approach, and additional allocations. the phasing must be removed, the housing requirement must be increased, having considered the outcomes of a full green Belt review, if this then creates an the issue of unmet need for BCP this must then be addressed in partnership with Dorset council under the Duty to Cooperate.

The BCP Plan should be planning for housing and growth, not leaving it to windfall. Any buffer provided by windfall sites should be in addition to the buffer added to the housing need figures derived from the Standard Method to provide choice and competition in the land market.

The Plan needs to set out how and when monitoring will be undertaken, and more information is needed on what action(s) will be taken when if monitoring shows under delivery of housing. BCP must also monitor the delivery of any

unmet need by neighbouring authorities and actively participate in local plan consultation and examination to ensure the need for other authorities to meet their need is robustly supported in neighbouring Local Plans.

Strategic Policy H2: Affordable housing

88. HBF question whether the percentage of affordable housing being sought are deliverable. HBF are concerned about the amount of asks being sought from development in BCP, including the increased currently proposed in the CIL consultation. HBF are concerned all of the asks being made from developers will make the plan undeliverable and unviable.
89. The BCP Viability Study needs to fully consider the wide range of challenges and additional costs facing developers at this time. For example, HBF information suggests that complying with the current Building Regulations new part L is costing £3500 per plot. The Future Homes Standard Part L in 2025 is anticipated to cost up to £7500+ per plot. There will also be the addition of the Building Safety Levy that is coming in pay for cladding. This will be a per plot basis around the UK, and initial values are around £1500-£2500 per plot.
90. Other factors that need to be taken into account include increasing costs of materials and labour due to inflation and the costs of mandatory BNG, which are still emerging as the off-site market is yet to be established. HBF members are reporting costs of £20-30k per off-site BNG unit. Although the initial price of statutory credits is now known this national fallback option has been deliberately highly priced to discourage their use. Whilst this intention is understandable, at present the lack of functioning local markets for off-site credits causes viability problems because HBF members experience to date suggests that any scheme that needed to rely on statutory credits would become unviable.
91. Whole Plan viability testing is an important part of the plan-making process. However, as noted in PPG (ID: 10-003-20180724) assessing the viability of plans does not require individual testing of every site or assurance that individual sites are viable, and therefore flexibility in the amount of affordable housing sought may be needed to deal with site specific issues.
92. It will therefore be necessary for any policy on viability to include flexibility because whole plan viability assessments use methodologies that test typologies of sites, and not the detailed circumstances of individual sites. As such there may be individual sites that are already not viable, for example if the costs or values of a specific site fall outside the parameters used of a typology that was tested.
93. Some sites will be on the very margins of viability and other sites may already be unviable even without a change of circumstances. HBF therefore suggest that any viability policy should include the opportunity for negotiation around policy requirements for site specific reasons, as any sites whose circumstances fall outside the parameters of the typologies tested could

already be unviable under the proposed Local Plan policies. The policy need amending to allow for site specific viability considerations to be taken into account.

94. At a very basic level viability can be improved by reducing costs or increasing values. Sometimes, therefore changing the type of affordable housing provided can help to improve viability of a specific site, and the plan should recognise this. In this situation there may be a “deviation” from the detail of the policy- in this example a change of the percentages of different types of affordable housing provided, but the headline figure of how much affordable housing is provided would remain the same. This is another reason why flexibility within the Affordable Housing policy is needed.
95. HBF also note that work undertaken by DEFRA to inform the national percentage BNG requirement found that a 20% net gain requirement would add c.19% to the net gain costs, over and above the minimum requirement of 10%. The report concluded that:

“While this suggests that varying the level of net gain between 5% and 20% has very limited impact on the outcome, there is a trade-off between cost implications for developers and the likelihood of net gain being delivered at a national level (e.g. less costly/likely at 5% net gain compared to 10%, and vice versa for 20%). Our chosen policy approach, which sets out that 10% is the right level to demonstrate net gain, considers this trade-off among other issues.”

96. Again, these conclusions support the need for the Council to clearly set out a BNG policy of 10%. There is already a need to consider the viability implications of statutory BNG and there would be a further need to consider the viability implications that seeking to go further and faster than national mandatory BNG could have on the delivery of affordable housing. HBF see no reason why BCP should deviate from DEFRA’s conclusion that 10% BNG strikes the right balance between these trade-offs. Evidence would need to be provided to show that any higher BNG figure would be viable.
97. There is also a need to consider the costs of delivering the policy requiring housing to M4(2) and the requirements for accessible and adaptable dwellings policy which references M4(3). A distinction needs to be made between M4(3)a wheelchair adaptable housing and M4(3)b wheelchair accessible housing. The whole plan viability assessment needs to be explicit on what costs it has been applying when considering M4(3)a or M4(3)b, as the latter can only be sought on affordable housing where the Council has nominations and is considerably more expensive than the former.

The Whole Plan Viability Assessment need to be revised to fully reflect the actual development costs. This may create a need for the percentages of affordable housing been sought in different circumstances to be reduced, but in any event, for viability and delivery reasons, for example the uncertainty around the implications of on-site BNG delivery flexibility is needed within the policy.

Policy H4: Internal and external space standards

98. In relation to criteria a. HBF does not support the introduction of the optional Nationally Described Space Standard through policies in individual Local Plans. If the Council want to do this they need robust justifiable evidence to introduce the NDSS, as any policy which seeks to apply the optional nationally described space standards (NDSS) to all dwellings should only be done in accordance with the NPPF¹, which states that “policies may also make use of the NDSS where the need for an internal space standard can be justified”.
99. The NPPF² requires that all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up to date evidence, which should be adequate, proportionate and focussed tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned. The PPG³ identifies the type of evidence required to introduce such a policy. It states that ‘where a need for internal space standards is identified, local planning authorities should provide justification for requiring internal space policies. Local planning authorities should take account of the following areas:
- Need – evidence should be provided on the size and type of dwellings currently being built in the area, to ensure the impacts of adopting space standards can be properly assessed, for example, to consider any potential impact on meeting demand for starter homes.
 - Viability – the impact of adopting the space standard should be considered as part of a plan’s viability assessment with account taken of the impact of potentially larger dwellings on land supply. Local planning authorities will also need to consider impacts on affordability where a space standard is to be adopted.
 - Timing – there may need to be a reasonable transitional period following adoption of a new policy on space standards to enable developers to factor the cost of space standards into future land acquisitions’.
100. HBF also remind the Council that there is a direct relationship between unit size, cost per square metre (sqm), selling price per sqm and affordability. The Council’s policy approach should recognise that customers have different budgets and aspirations. An inflexible policy approach to NDSS for all new dwellings will impact on affordability and effect customer choice. Well-designed dwellings below NDSS can provided a good, functional home. Smaller dwellings play a valuable role in meeting specific needs for both open market and affordable home ownership housing.

¹ para 130f & Footnote 49

² Para 31

³ Ref needed

101. An inflexible policy approach imposing NDSS on all housing removes the most affordable homes and denies lower income households from being able to afford homeownership. The introduction of the NDSS for all dwellings may mean customers purchasing larger homes in floorspace but with bedrooms less suited to their housing needs with the unintended consequences of potentially increasing overcrowding and reducing the quality of their living environment. The Council should focus on good design and usable space to ensure that dwellings are fit for purpose rather than focusing on NDSS.
102. HBF considers that if the Government had expected all properties to be built to NDSS that they would have made these standards mandatory not optional.
103. If the proposed requirement for NDSS is carried forward, then the Council should put forward proposals for transitional arrangements. The land deals underpinning residential sites may have been secured prior to any proposed introduction of the NDSS. These sites should be allowed to move through the planning system before any proposed policy requirements are enforced. The NDSS should not be applied to any reserved matters applications or any outline or detailed approval prior to a specified date.
104. In relation to criteria b which requires all new development to meet M4(2), HBF note that the requirements to meet Part M4(2) will be superseded by changes to residential Building Regulations. The Government response to 'Raising accessibility standards for new homes' states that the Government proposes to mandate the current M4(2) requirement in Building Regulations as a minimum for all new homes, with M4(1) applying in exceptional circumstances. This will be subject to a further consultation on the technical details and will be implemented in due course through the Building Regulations. There is therefore no need for this element of the proposed new policy.
105. HBF also notes that the PPG (PPG Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 56-008-20160519 Revision date: 19 05 2016) states:

“What accessibility standards can local planning authorities require from new development?”

Where a local planning authority adopts a policy to provide enhanced accessibility or adaptability they should do so only by reference to Requirement M4(2) and/or M4(3) of the optional requirements in the Building Regulations and should not impose any additional information requirements (for instance provision of furnished layouts) or seek to determine compliance with these requirements, which is the role of the Building Control Body. They should clearly state in their Local Plan what proportion of new dwellings should comply with the requirements. There may be rare instances where an individual's

needs are not met by the wheelchair accessible optional requirement – see paragraph 011 below.

Local Plan policies should also take into account site specific factors such as vulnerability to flooding, site topography, and other circumstances which may make a specific site less suitable for M4(2) and M4(3) compliant dwellings, particularly where step free access cannot be achieved or is not viable. Where step-free access is not viable, neither of the Optional Requirements in Part M should be applied.”

106. The PPG sets out some of the circumstances where it would be unreasonable to require M4(2) and M4(3) compliant dwellings. Such factors include flooding, typography and other circumstances. HBF suggest that flexibility is needed in the application of these standards to reflect site specific characteristics, and the policy wording should reflect this. HBF do not believe this policy is sound without this flexibility, as it fails to comply with national policy and is not effective or justified.

107. There is also a need to differentiate between Part a) and part b) of M4(3) technical standards. M43a sets out standards for wheelchair adaptable housing, where M43b relates to wheelchair accessible housing which can only be required on affordable housing where the Council has nomination rights. This part of the policy needs to be amended to recognise this distinction. The Viability Assessment should also consider the cost implications resulting from any requirements for the provision of M43a and/or M43b requirements. HBF therefore request that the policy is amended so that it is applied flexibly. This issue should also be factored into the whole plan viability assessment as both M4(3)a and M4(3)b impact on viability, with M4(3)b being considerably more expensive.

Changes requested:

Delete NDSS requirements.

Differentiate between Part a) and part b) of M4(3) technical standards and the costs of these policies through the Viability Assessment.

The PPG sets out some of the circumstances where it would be unreasonable to require M4(2) and M4(3) compliant dwellings. Such factors include flooding, typography and other circumstances. HBF suggest that flexibility is needed in the application of these standards to reflect site specific characteristics, and the policy wording should reflect this. HBF do not believe this policy is sound without this flexibility, as it fails to comply with national policy and is not effective or justified.

Policy H9: Promoting self and custom house building

108. HBF does not consider that requiring major developments to provide for self-builders is appropriate. Instead, HBF advocates for self and custom-build policies that encourage self and custom-build development by setting out where it will be supported in principle. HBF considers that Councils can

play a key role in facilitating the provision of land as set in the PPG. This could be done, for example, by using the Councils' own land for such purposes and/or allocating sites specifically for self and custom-build home builders- although this would need to be done through discussion and negotiation with landowners.

109. It is considered unlikely that the provision of self and custom build plots on new housing developments can be co-ordinated with the development of the wider site. At any one time, there are often multiple contractors and large machinery operating on-site from both a practical and health and safety perspective, it is difficult to envisage the development of single plots by individuals operating alongside this construction activity.
110. The Council's policy approach should be realistic to ensure that where self and custom build plots are provided, they are delivered and do not remain unsold. If demand for plots is not realised, there is a risk of plots remaining permanently vacant effectively removing these undeveloped plots from the Council's HLS. The Council should consider the application of a non-implementation rate to its HLS calculations.
111. It is the HBF's opinion that 5% self build plots should not be required on housing sites of more than 50 dwellings. However, if the policy remains, it needs to be clear what happened where plots are not sold. HBF suggest that the policy should be amended to clarify that after 12 months any unsold plots will revert to the developer. Clarity is needed on how and when this will happen.
112. It is important that plots should not be left empty to the detriment of neighbouring properties or the whole development. The timescale for reversion of these plots to the original housebuilder should be as short as possible from the commencement of development because the consequential delay in developing those plots presents further practical difficulties in terms of co-ordinating their development with construction activity on the wider site. There are even greater logistical problems created if the original housebuilder has completed the development and is forced to return to site to build out plots which have not been sold to self and custom builders. The current policy therefore needs amending to make it clear that any unsold plots remaining after a six-month marketing period revert to the original developer.

Change Requested:

Remove the requirement for self built plots on larger sites.

If it is retained it needs amending to make it clear that any unsold plots remaining after a six-month marketing period revert to the original developer.

Strategic Policy E1: Nurturing our economy

113. The Plan should recognise the interaction between housing and employment. The failure to adequately plan for the housing need of BCP and

the wider area will have significant negative impacts on the local, and wider economy.

Change Requested:

The approach to the housing requirement needs to be revisited.

Strategic Policy ID2: Viability

114. HBF are concerned that the Council is seeking to require major development schemes to show they are deliverable. The viability PPG is clear that schemes are assumed to be viable and deliverable unless the developer seeks a site-specific viability argument. This requirement should therefore be deleted. There is no onus on a developer, particularly the developer of an allocated site in an adopted Local Plan to demonstrate that the site is viable and deliverable as this should have been undertaken through the Local Plan making process.

115. HBF also strongly object to the requirement d) the need for a letter from the financial backers of the development when viability is an issue. This is not required under national planning and policy and guidance and is an unreasonable request. The procedure for assessing viability of individual applications is already clearly set out in the Viability PPG.

Change Requested:

The first sentence of the policy and Criteria d should be removed.

Participation at EIP and Future Engagement

116. The HBF requests to participate in the Hearing Sessions for the Local Plan Examination, the HBF considers that their involvement is necessary to ensure that the home building industry is able to respond to any housing related issues raised during the hearing sessions.

Yours faithfully

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