**Lytchett Matravers Parish Council**

**Notes of a Meeting on 12th June with Dorset Council Planning Policy & Development Management**

# Introduction

Councillors Alf Bush and Ralph Watts met with Anna Lee (Dorset Council Planning Policy Manager) and Alan Davies (Dorset Council Development Manager) at Westport House on 12th June 2019. The meeting followed on from a meeting with Anna Lee on 16th May. The purpose of the meeting was to follow up on matters discussed at the previous meeting, including the Purbeck Local Plan, the Lytchett Matravers Neighbourhood Plan, and negotiations on Developers Contributions, etc, that the Dorset Council may have with Developers in relation to the 3 allocated sites in Lytchett Matravers.

# Notes of the Meeting

## Matters Arising from Meeting on 16th May

* Alan Davies said that he did not see significant opportunities for the Parish Council to be engaged/involved in the negotiations with the Developers who were promoting the 3 allocated sites in Lytchett Matravers. These negotiations normally cover the viability of each site, the requirement for affordable housing, the requirements for CIL and/or Developer Contributions (currently achieved through Section 106 Agreements), and the impacts on other policies included in the Local Plan on the viability of the site such as the Housing Mix requirement. However, he was willing to consider a proposal from the Parish Council on how they might be involved, e.g. in pre-application meetings. He added that the Dorset County Councillors who represent our ward were able to attend the meetings with Developers.
* Anna Lee reported that through the discussions between the Dorset Council and Turley/Wyatt Homes, Turley/Wyatt Homes had stated that they intended to bring forward plans for the development near Glebe Road within a couple of months of the Purbeck Local Plan being adopted (in the expectation that when adopted it will include the 3 allocated sites in Lytchett Matravers). Anna commented that the current expectation was that the Purbeck Local Plan was likely to be adopted towards the end of 2019, so that the plans for the Glebe Road site might be submitted early in 2020. Anna went on to say that Turley/Wyatt Homes had stated that they also intend to bring forward plans for the developments near Blaneys Corner soon after the Purbeck Local Plan is adopted, i.e. early in 2020. The final plan for the Blaneys Corner site will depend on whether the Inspector accepts the submissions by Turley/Wyatt that the Green Belt boundary should be moved further than had been proposed by the Purbeck District Council (which would allow the site plan originally put forward by Turley/Wyatt Homes to be implemented, with a road throughway linking the site to the Huntick Road site, and also allowing a children’s play area on Blaney’s Corner). Anna pointed out that the actual rate of building out each site would be determined primarily by the housing market, i.e. the rate at which Wyatt Homes expected to sell the houses once complete. She agreed to ask Steve Boyt for the rate of house building that Wyatt Homes had proposed.
* Councillors Bush and Watts reported to Anna Lee and Alan Davies the outcome of the discussion at the Parish Council’s Full Meeting in May. In summary, in view of the amount of work involved in undertaking a revision of the Neighbourhood Plan, and the limited time available before Turley/Wyatt Homes were likely to submit their plans, the Parish Council intended to let the Neighbourhood Plan “settle in” for a bit longer. It was noted that this left an opportunity to start preparing a revision to the Neighbourhood Plan in parallel with preparation of the Dorset Local Plan by the Dorset Council.

## Other Matters

We asked what factors had driven the changes in CIL that had been proposed by Purbeck District Council, and which were currently going through an examination process prior to being adopted. Anna Lee replied that within the Purbeck area, the CIL collected had been “top sliced” to pay for Heathland Mitigation and to pay for the Swanage Railway loan. This top slicing accounted for much of the 75% of CIL retained by the Purbeck District Council, so that only a much reduced amount was available for the District Council to invest in infrastructure. As a consequence, Developer Contributions secured for example through Section 106 Agreements represent a better mechanism for securing infrastructure spending. Because the total amount of levy that can be placed on an allocated site is limited by viability considerations, i.e. all the requirements placed on Developers come out of the same pot, an increase in Developer Contributions must be matched by a corresponding reduction in CIL rates. This is a simplification of the situation, because there were other considerations to be taken into account as well. For example, the framework for CIL allows the levies collected from different sites to be pooled, whereas this is not the case with Section 106 Agreements.

We discussed the views expressed by members of the Parish Council with regards to agreeing to a meeting with Turley/Wyatt Homes before the Purbeck Local Plan was adopted. Alan Davies said that while he could understand such concerns, he emphasised the importance of early engagement with the Developers. In his experience, by the time the Local Plan is adopted, the Developers plans would be so far advanced that persuading them to make any significant changes would be virtually impossible. An option he suggested was that arrangements could be made with Turley/Wyatt Homes for a “Public Consultation” to be run very soon after the Public Hearings on the Local Plan have been completed. This might take the form of a meeting, e.g. in the Lytchett Matravers Village Hall, to which members of the public could be invited to discuss concerns with the Developers. Councillor Bush raised his interest in making sure that any new developments in Lytchett Matravers include car parking arrangements (whether off road, or on road) that work. The Parish Council have carried out studies in the village which clearly show that while some recent developments work in terms of parking provision, others clearly do not work, such as where on road parking is combined with narrow roads. Alan Davies suggested that Colin Graham was very good at considering such matters and developing workable solutions, and that we should make sure that he is involved in the Public Consultation process. In preparation for this, Alan suggested a meeting with Colin Graham in July to consider the evidence on parking provision that the Parish Council has collected.

We asked about the arrangements in the legislative framework for CIL which allowed Developers to make payments in kind, for example by contributing land or buildings. We explained that this was in the context of proposals made by some members of the Parish Council for a CLT to be set up to pursue the provision of social housing in the village. Alan Davies said that he had no experience of using the payment in kind provisions for CIL, and made the following points:

* CIL is not chargeable on Affordable Housing, so a proposal linked to CIL payments due on Affordable Housing would not work.
* It is fairly common for a Housing Association to purchase Affordable Housing and then manage it. It is not clear what the introduction of a CLT in this process would add. Unitary Authorities, County Councils, and District Councils are used to dealing with Housing Associations, and have sufficient experience of working with them that Councils have confidence in their involvement in provision of Affordable Housing. If a new CLT was to be set up for this purpose, the relevant Council would need to be convinced that the CLT had a viable business model, and had the skills, experience, and resources to ensure sustainable operations. He added that Housing Associations tend not to be keen on small numbers of housing units, because the viability of Affordable Housing relies on achieving economies of scale.
* Alan concluded by saying that the discussions with the Developers for the 3 allocated sites proposed in the Purbeck Local Plan were already underway, based on the Planning Policies set out in the Local Plan, and it was too late to introduce significant changes of direction, such as setting up a CLT. If the Parish Council wished to pursue this, it would need to consider other opportunities.

We raised the question of the length of time allowed for consideration of planning applications, for which Purbeck District Council had allowed 28 days, compared to the 21 day period that the Dorset Council has introduced. Alan Davies said that Purbeck had “gone out on a limb” a bit with 28 days, and that it was not in his power to change the Dorset Council arrangements. Councillor Bush raised the issue of a level playing field and asked why residents sometimes get more time to respond to planning applications than the Parish Council. Alan Davies said that the time allowed for residents to comment is sometimes extended to take account of Bank Holidays, etc. We also discussed the role of the Parish Council in the planning application process. Alan Davies commented that he did not see much value in the approach taken by some Parish Councils which simply collate the views of residents. The Council already receives all the comments made by residents. While he recognised that a submission by the Parish Council may add weight to a residents comments, he felt that the Parish Council should reflect the interests of the wider community, and not necessarily the views of the neighbours (for whose responses the Council has a separate channel). He added that the Dorset Council has a Portfolio Holder for Planning (which Purbeck District Council did not have), currently David Walsh, and if the Parish Council wanted to try to define its role, and perhaps challenge the reduction from 28 days to 21 days, they could raise the matter with the Portofio Holder. However, we also recognised that the 21 day period allowed for responses on planning applications was in fact the time period specified in the relevant legislation.

# Follow Up Actions for Lytchett Matravers Parish Council

The following actions arise:

1. Prepare a proposal to Alan Davies on involvement of the Parish Council in the pre-application interactions between the Dorset Council and the Developers promoting the 3 allocated sites in Lytchett Matravers.
2. Liaise with Alan Davies on setting up a meeting with Colin Graham in July to discuss parking provision in new developments.
3. Liaise with Alan Davies, Anna Lee, and Turley/Wyatt Homes on arrangements for a Public Consultation to take place in September/October.
4. Contact David Walsh to arrange a meeting to discuss the role of the Parish Council in reviewing planning applications.

# Subsequent Interactions

Since the meeting on 12th June, Anna Lee has provided the following trajectory of house building that had been put forward by Wyatt Homes.

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| **Allocations** | **2018/19** | **2019/20** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** | **2022/23** | **2023/24** |
| **Lytchett Matravers / Upton (Local Plan Policies H6 and H7)** |   |   | 15 | 85 | 85 | 55 |

Note that the 3 allocated sites in Lytchett Matravers total 150 new homes, and the allocated site in Upton is for 90 new homes.

Councillor Alf Bush

Councillor Ralph Watts

June 2019