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South Somerset Local Plan Public Examination

Resumed Hearing Sessions

Issue 6 : Delivering New Housing Growth (PMM5)

Submitted by

Sellwood Planning

on behalf of

Gleeson Developments Ltd

May 2014

Regulated by RICS

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared by Sellwood Planning on behalf of Gleeson Developments Ltd (7066529). The Statement responds to the Inspectors Questions in respect of Issue 6 of the Resumed Hearings ‘Delivering New Housing Growth (PMM5)’.
- 1.2 Gleeson Developments Ltd have land interests in Crewkerne and is concerned to ensure that the plan provides clear and sound guidance on residential development in Crewkerne.

2.0 Matter 6.2 “Is the Council’s approach to residential development proposals in Crewkerne sufficiently clear and justified”?

- 2.1 The Inspectors Preliminary Findings document of the 3rd July 2013, expressed concern (paragraph 61) that minor modification 217 did not adequately clarify the Council’s approach towards development proposals which are submitted prior to the Site Allocations DPD being adopted. As a consequence, the Council was invited, in the interests of “effectiveness”, to bring forward a further modification to give greater clarity, and hence soundness, to this issue.
- 2.2 The Council’s response was to publish Main Modification PMM5. At paragraph 5.6 of the Council’s ‘Issues Summary’ of PMM5, it is stated

“It is considered that the key concern is that the delivery of appropriate development for each market town and rural centre is not adversely affected by substantial additional provision at one or several of these settlements brought forward by market forces before the Site Allocations DPD is adopted”.

- 2.3 It is evident from this that the Council had determined that in order for the plan to be found sound the scope of this guidance needed to be widened from just the market

towns with an identified direction of growth to “each market town and rural centre”. I agree with the Council that it is appropriate to widen the scope of the guidance to relate to both tiers in the settlement hierarchy.

2.4 The concern of Gleeson is that the proposed modification is not ‘effective’ since there is an inconsistency between the proposed change to Policy SS5 and the supporting text in paragraph 4.103. This is detailed below.

2.5 The supporting text at paragraph 4.103 is supported and is sound since it refers to

“The approach taken allows flexibility amongst both developers and the local community to bring forward sites at any moment whilst not detracting from the delivery of appropriate levels of growth in all the market towns and rural service centres to continue to support sustainable communities” (my underlining).

2.6 This is a clear and unequivocal statement that the guidance refers to all the market towns. However, the modification to Policy SS5 states something subtly different

“..... a permissive approach will be taken when considering housing proposals in ‘directions of growth’ at the Market Towns The same key conditions should also apply when considering housing proposals (wherever located) adjacent to Rural Centres”.

2.7 Since Crewkerne is the only Market Town not to have a ‘Direction of Growth’ and it is not a Rural Centre, it is the case that Crewkerne is the only significant settlement in South Somerset that is excluded from the modified policy. Since this was clearly not the intent of the Council (as evidenced in the ‘Issues Summary’ and the amended paragraph 4.103), this inconsistency needs to be remedied. Once remedied, this part of the plan will be effective, and hence, sound.

3.0 **Recommended Change**

- 3.1 The inconsistency between the proposed paragraph 4.103 and Policy SS5 can be remedied by modifying the text of the final sentence of the third paragraph of the policy to read

“The same key consideration should also apply when considering housing proposals (wherever located) adjacent to the Market Town of Crewkerne and the Rural Centres”.

- 3.2 This modification will ensure that the Council’s approach to residential development proposals in Crewkerne is sufficiently clear and justified as well as being consistent with the policy applying in all other Market Towns and Rural Centres. This part of the Plan will then be ‘effective’, and hence, sound.