

West Somerset District Council Local Plan Examination

Matters and Issues Statement made by Savills on behalf of the Trustees of The Wyndham Estate

Matter 6: Other sites in the event that the Council needs to bring forward additional sites for soundness

- 1.1. The Wyndham Estate is concerned about the way that the Council has brought forward additional sites in order to ensure that the Local Plan is sound. Contrary to the views expressed by the Wyndham Estate and by other consultees on the Local Plan, including the Home Builders Federation, the Council maintains that it has a five year supply of housing land and that its method of calculating the five year supply is appropriate. However the Council is uncertain about its ability to maintain a five year supply and its Members, on the advice of officers, have resolved to endorse six sites for residential development to supplement the strategic sites in the Local Plan.
- 1.2. The Council acknowledges that there is a need for public consultation on the proposed additional sites, but it is understood that public consultation will be a part of the Examination process and will not take place until the Inspector has recommended sites for allocation. The report to the Local Development Panel in November 2015 and the subsequent report to Full Council in December 2015 emphasised the importance of avoiding a delay to the timeframe for the Examination. This suggests that the Council decided against any form of public or stakeholder consultation in the latter part of 2015 because of the delay that this would create.
- 1.3. The Wyndham Estate is disappointed that the Council has made some significant changes to the allocations in the Local Plan, and indeed introduced the early release sites, but did not announce that it was doing so. In previous rounds of consultation the Estate has expressed support for the proposed allocations and has sought to provide constructive feedback on the policies in the Local Plan, but there has been little time for the Estate to review its position on the most recent amendments to allocations and policies in the Local plan. Furthermore the Estate questions the appropriateness of Members taking decisions on key changes to the Local Plan without due consideration of consultation responses from key stakeholders and the public.