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COUNCILLOR ROGER WEST
Redhill & Northbourne Ward

Your ref: This matter is being dealt with by:
Our ref: e-mail: Direct line:

Alex Lessware,
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
Planning Policies Division (2)
London SW1E 5DU

20th February 2005

Dear Mr. Lessware

Re Consultation Paper on new Planning Policy for Housing (PPS3)
pps3consultation@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

BACKGROUND

First of all, I should like to state that there are some good and helpful ideas in this proposed policy. Some of them would help the Council with the challenges it faces in dealing with housing applications. We recognise that in a thriving economy like Bournemouth, there is a need for new homes. We have a population that is living longer and is understandably reluctant to move. In fact government policy correctly encourages Councils to help residents lead as full a life as possible in their own surroundings. There is also the added pressure from outside the borough, to purchase a second home, or one to retire to. This has helped to create an unusually large demand for more housing.

The Planning Board has faced up to this by granting planning permission for many new "dwellings" each year, often reluctantly, as we feel that we have the sword of PP3 hanging over our heads.

I have intentionally used the word "dwellings", as we have not been building family homes in the accepted sense. Our statistics for gross completed new builds over the past ten years are amazing, as shown in the table below:

Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Number of new builds	804	595	716	684	756	931	939	1109	1364	1311

It should be noted though, that officers have informed me that this rate of growth is not sustainable. Most of these dwellings are flats near the coast and cannot really be regarded as satisfying the need for family housing, which is so desperately needed. Please note the

content of the two appendices attached to this letter, which clearly highlight the problem, one being the number of residential units completed and the second classifying these completions by bedroom sizes.

The Borough has the added problem that its boundaries are clearly defined with the sea to the south, the river Stour with its attendant green belt (which is so important to our residents) to the north and to the west there is Poole. Our only option has been to build on "brown field" sites. I do not like this term as these sites are usually the rear gardens of a house. The developer regards them as a potential building site whilst our residents think of them as being an intrinsic part of their local area. Gardens in general are very important to the whole community as they give an area a very special English character and are becoming an increasingly important refuge for wild life.

This Council has found itself to be between a rock and a hard place. Developers have used PPG3 against us, which is just based on dwellings per hectare. This has resulted in what we regard as town cramming. There has also been pressure from the SW Regional Secretariat, inspired by the ODPM and with advice from the Government of the South West, to accept even more dwellings (a term I dislike as they should be homes).

RESPONSE.

The introduction to this consultation process is very encouraging.

"The new PPS3 will set out the national planning policies for housing, which regional planning bodies and local authorities should take into account in developing regional spatial strategies and local development frameworks. Its objective will be to deliver new homes at the right time in the right place. The national policy framework will reflect the need for flexibility in planning between urban and rural areas, and in areas experiencing high or low demand. The aim is that the planning system is used to its maximum effect to ensure the delivery of decent homes that are well designed, make the best use of land, are energy efficient, make the most of new building technologies and help to deliver sustainable development."

The consultation Paper also has the following paragraphs, which I applaud.

"37. New development should be of high quality inclusive design and layout (consistent with Planning Policy Statement 1), and be informed by its wider context, having regard not just to neighbouring buildings but to the townscape and landscape of the wider locality. This does not mean that new development should replicate its surroundings. The key consideration should be whether a development positively improves the character and environmental quality of an area and the way it functions."

38. Housing development should be based on thorough landscape and ecological survey and appraisal. Dominant landscape or ecological features should lead the design of the layout and care should be taken to allow scope for retention or re-establishment of the biodiversity within residential environments. The residents of new dwellings should have easy access to sufficient open space (including play space) of good quality, either through additions to or improvements of the local open space network.

39. Local planning authorities should encourage applicants to apply principles of sustainable and environmentally-friendly design and construction to new developments. Local planning authorities should in particular encourage applicants to apply the Code for Sustainable Homes for strategic sites that deliver a large number of new homes to improve resource efficiency and give purchasers and tenants information on the running costs and sustainability of their new home."

I should like to challenge some of the following statements in the consultative document: -

"DETERMINING THE REGIONAL LEVEL OF HOUSING PROVISION AND ITS DISTRIBUTION

7. In determining the region's level of housing provision and its distribution, regional planning bodies should undertake a sustainability appraisal and take into account:

- (a) the Government's overall ambition for affordability;**
- (b) the Government's latest published household projections and the needs of the regional economy, having regard to economic growth forecasts;**
- (c) advice from the proposed National Advice Unit on the impact of the proposals for affordability in the region;**
- (d) the sub-regional housing market assessments (see Annex B);**
- (e) the sub-regional housing land availability assessments (see Annex B);**
- (f) the environmental, social and economic implications of development; and**
- (g) the impact of development upon existing or planned infrastructure."**

In (a) above, though affordability is very important, so is the fact **that homes should be of good quality and fit for purpose. Councils should not be forced to play the numbers game.**

What is "fit for purpose?"

It is the recognition that we are building homes for families of different sizes and means. However they should all be designed to accommodate our resident's needs for work, rest and play. Rooms need to be of an acceptable size, particularly bedrooms where family members can have their own space either for recreation or work, (we must acknowledge the fact that there is more home working, which is beneficial for the environment, but requires additional space in the home).

This lack of space generally in the majority of new-build homes, must be a contributory factor to problems that society is now facing with young people aimlessly roaming the streets in the evening.

Good storage space is essential. All families accumulate items that they wish to keep on an annual basis (Christmas trees, suitcases, camping equipment etc) and sometimes for longer so as to be able to pass items on to future generations (toys/prams etc). This is an important part of being a family. Modern homes do not have these facilities. This inevitably creates clutter and tension.

Houses or block of flats should incorporate a basement for storage and/or recreation. To complain about the high cost of land, when best use is not being made of what we have, does not make sense.

I agree with the following extracts from www.tcpa.org.uk/consultation: -

Town & Country Planning Association (TCPA) response to the ODPM Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions Select Committee Re-opened Inquiry into Affordable Housing

"The qualities of most concern to ordinary people in their homes include the provision of a garden, decent room and space standards, low maintenance and attractive design. The TCPA also believes that..... in particular, new housing should all be constructed to the best practice standards of insulation and energy efficiency..... New housing and other development should also be constructed as part of wider strategy across local authority areas to reduce carbon dioxide emissions..... will require better training and expertise in local authority planning departments."

I do hope that these points are taken into account before the final draft PPS3 is signed off.

Yours sincerely

Roger West
(Member of the Bournemouth Borough Council Planning Board)

I am pleased to say that the Chairman, Vice Chairman and the other Members of our Planning Board have endorsed this response

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Appendix 1: Completions of Residential Units (Net and Gross) by Unit Type

Bournemouth

	Completions (gross)				Completions (gross) %					
	Houses	Flats	Bungalows	Other	Total	Houses	Flats	Bungalows	Other	Total
1994/1995	377	390	35	0	802	47.0	48.6	4.4	0.0	100.0
1995/1996	238	536	30	0	804	29.6	66.7	3.7	0.0	100.0
1996/1997	130	457	8	0	595	21.8	76.8	1.3	0.0	100.0
1997/1998	176	532	8	0	716	24.6	74.3	1.1	0.0	100.0
1998/1999	157	507	20	0	684	23.0	74.1	2.9	0.0	100.0
1999/2000	143	590	23	0	756	18.9	78.0	3.0	0.0	100.0
2000/2001	126	774	31	0	931	13.5	83.1	3.3	0.0	100.0
2001/2002	134	777	27	1	939	14.3	82.7	2.9	0.1	100.0
2002/2003	157	902	40	2	1101	14.3	81.9	3.6	0.2	100.0
2003/2004	237	1092	33	2	1364	17.4	80.1	2.4	0.1	100.0
2004/2005	139	1137	29	6	1311	10.6	86.7	2.2	0.5	100.0
Total	2014	7694	284	11	10003	20.1	76.9	2.8	0.1	100.0

	Losses %				
	Houses	Flats	Bungalows	Other	Total
1994/1995	24	75	5	0	104
1995/1996	20	80	1	0	101
1996/1997	20	0	67	0	87
1997/1998	11	55	0	0	66
1998/1999	28	116	1	0	145
1999/2000	18	90	5	0	113
2000/2001	80	63	2	59	204
2001/2002	32	65	3	15	115
2002/2003	60	100	8	11	179
2003/2004	70	121	4	5	200
2004/2005	73	123	8	11	215
Total	436	888	104	101	1529

Completions (net)	Completions (net)					Completions (net) %				
	Houses	Flats	Bungalows	Other	Total	Houses	Flats	Bungalows	Other	Total
1994/1995	353	315	30	0	698	50.6	45.1	4.3	0.0	100.0
1995/1996	218	456	29	0	703	31.0	64.9	4.1	0.0	100.0
1996/1997	110	457	-59	0	508	21.7	90.0	-11.6	0.0	100.0
1997/1998	165	477	8	0	650	25.4	73.4	1.2	0.0	100.0
1998/1999	129	391	19	0	539	23.9	72.5	3.5	0.0	100.0
1999/2000	125	500	18	0	643	19.4	77.8	2.8	0.0	100.0
2000/2001	46	711	29	-59	727	6.3	97.8	4.0	-8.1	100.0
2001/2002	102	712	24	-14	824	12.4	86.4	2.9	-1.7	100.0
2002/2003	97	802	32	-9	922	10.5	87.0	3.5	-1.0	100.0
2003/2004	167	971	29	-3	1164	14.3	83.4	2.5	-0.3	100.0
2004/2005	66	1014	21	-5	1096	6.0	92.5	1.9	-0.5	100.0
Total	1578	6806	180	-90	8474	18.6	80.3	2.1	-1.1	100.0

Data taken from Residential Land Monitoring surveys 1994/95 onwards conducted by Research & Information Team, Planning & Development Services

Bournemouth Borough Council

SRG 23 October 2002, updated GCW 30 October 2003

SRG updated 20 September 2004

Appendix 2: Completions by bedroom numbers & type of accommodation

Residential Land Monitoring 2000 to 2005

Type and Size of Units Completed (gross)

	2000-01					Total
	1	2	3	4+	unknown	
Bedroom No.						
Flat	189	521	51	8		769
House	5	22	77	22		126
Bungalow	3	18	10			31
Other eg HMO					5	5
Total	198	563	141	30	5	937

	2001-02					Total
	1	2	3	4+	unknown	
Bedroom No.						
Flat	130	584	57	6		777
House	3	17	87	27		134
Bungalow	6	12	9			27
Other eg HMO					1	1
Total	140	615	156	33	1	945

	2002-03					Total
	1	2	3	4+	unknown	
Bedroom No.						
Flat	177	656	65	4		902
House	0	35	86	36		157
Bungalow	12	20	8	0		40
Other eg HMO					2	2
Total	190	713	162	40	2	1107

Percentages of all completions

2000-01					
	1	2	3	4+	unknown
	20.2	55.6	5.4	0.9	0.0
	0.5	2.3	8.2	2.3	0.0
	0.3	1.9	1.1	0.0	0.0
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5
	21.1	60.1	15.0	3.2	0.5

2001-02					
	1	2	3	4+	unknown
	13.8	61.8	6.0	0.6	0.0
	0.3	1.8	9.2	2.9	0.0
	0.6	1.3	1.0	0.0	0.0
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
	14.8	65.1	16.5	3.5	0.1

2002-03					
	1	2	3	4+	unknown
	16.0	59.3	5.9	0.4	0.0
	0.0	3.2	7.8	3.3	0.0
	1.1	1.8	0.7	0.0	0.0
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
	17.2	64.4	14.6	3.6	0.2

	2003-04				
	1	2	3	4+	unknown
Bedroom No.					
Flat	228	793	57	14	1092
House	1	83	95	58	237
Bungalow		10	19	4	33
Other eg HMO					2
Total	230	888	174	76	2

2003-04	1	2	3	4+	unknown
	16.6	57.9	4.2	1.0	0.0
	0.1	6.1	6.9	4.2	0.0
	0.0	0.7	1.4	0.3	0.0
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
	16.8	64.8	12.7	5.5	0.1

	2004-05				
	1	2	3	4+	unknown
Bedroom No.					
Flat	259	788	76	14	1137
House	3	62	49	25	139
Bungalow	0	19	10	0	29
Other eg HMO					6
Total	263	871	138	39	6

2004-05	1	2	3	4+	unknown
	19.7	59.8	5.8	1.1	0.0
	0.2	4.7	3.7	1.9	0.0
	0.0	1.4	0.8	0.0	0.0
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5
	20.0	66.1	10.5	3.0	0.5

Source:
Residential Land Monitoring Surveys 2000/01 to
2004/05
Conducted by Research & Information Team, Planning & Transport, Bournemouth Borough Council
Compiled 20/02/06