

Somerset County Council

County Hall,
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Somerset,
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Puriton Parish Council,
by email

Please ask for:
Miss Louise Martin

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01823 359746

email:
louise.martin@somerset.gov.uk

my reference:

your reference:

6th December 2022

FAO: Sally Diaz, Parish Council Clerk

Dear Sally,

Puriton Neighbourhood Plan: Pre-submission consultation (Regulation 14)

Thank you for consulting Somerset County Council on the pre-submission draft of the Puriton, Downend and Dunball Neighbourhood Plan.

Our response is made as the Local Education Authority for Somerset and we have the following comments to make on education matters:

Land safeguarded for school expansion:

The plan identifies a need for additional land to be used adjacent to the school to resolve a number of issues related to the school including the current deficit in outdoor provision for play and sport, the potential need for the school to increase capacity (either indoor or outdoor) to accommodate additional children from the potential new development south of Woolavington Road and introduce more flexible play-time and outdoor activity/learning space.

To address this identified need, the Plan designates 0.5 hectares of land to the south of the school to be safeguarded for future school expansion and could enable the provision of a drop-off area for parents and children noting the parking and associated congestion that takes place in Rowlands Rise which causes disruption to existing residents.

We welcome the proposed safeguarding of land adjacent to the school for future school expansion and improvement. 0.5 hectares would be a sufficient area of land to accommodate the number of pupils likely to arise from the planned development south of Woolavington Road.

Additional land in event that a school site not delivered at Gravity site

We would ask that the plan make provision for an additional area of land to be safeguarded for future school expansion as a contingency for the Gravity site development as the adopted LDO permits a range of development including up to 750 dwelling houses.

Through the LDO consultation process, the County Council has asked the developer to make provision for a 2.1ha site for a new primary school and nursery to accommodate pupils expected to be generated from the development.

If the Local Education Authority is unable to secure a 2.1hectare site on the Gravity development but the permitted new homes are delivered, the pupils arising the Gravity site will need to be accommodated in existing schools, including the primary schools at Puriton and Woolavington.

The safeguarding of 1.5 hectares (including the 0.5ha already identified) for future school expansion through the Puriton Neighbourhood Plan would provide sufficient space to accommodate pupils from the Gravity development. This is based on the assumption that Woolavington would also meet some of demand from the development.

Policy LFA3 amendment for greater flexibility in use of the land for education purposes

Policy LFA3 makes provision for the safeguarding of land and sets out a number of potential uses for the land:

- i. A drop-off and collect turning area to remove traffic causing congestion at the start and end of the school day on Hillside, Webbers Way and Rowlands Rise; and /or;
- ii. Additional green open space; and / or;
- iii. Provision of a multi-use games area; and / or;
- iv. Additional indoor or covered teaching space.

We would ask that this policy is amended to offer greater flexibility for the school on the use of the land. An additional criterion making provision for "or other needs as identified for education purposes" would enable the school to use the land for any other facilities as necessary (eg catering, changing rooms) and optimise the overall use of the school site.

Contact details for the Estates team

For business continuity purposes, please can we ask that you use the following email address as the point of contact for the Councils Estates team as any future correspondence related to the development of the plan may be after my secondment has concluded and/or after vesting day for the new Somerset Council: estates@somerset.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

Miss Louise Martin
Estates Planning Advisor
Estates Team, Property Group
Economic and Community Infrastructure Commissioning
Somerset County Council