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Importance of rural jobs stressed

Village plan 'frightening'

A LARGE-SCALE development planned for Thorncombe had "frightened the hell out of the village" Lt-Col Hugh Gibson told a meeting of Dorset's county planning committee.

been very productive.

Feasibility studies on possible schemes at Thorncombe, Mosterton and Seaborough had ruled out their conversion, but there had been a steady flow of inquiries from owners for advice and assistance. There were some private schemes under way.

Structure Plan villages could be doubled overnight.

He asked whether it would be possible to amend the Structure Plan at this state, without waiting for the review, to reduce the impact of putting large numbers of houses on villages like Thorncombe.

more help to district councils to try and control development. It is the size and scale of some developments which is frightening some villages. If it had been a smaller application with some low-cost housing and a few workshops we should not have had these problems at Thorncombe."

It was things like, this threatened to swamp completely ruin villages, was responsible in instances for local ty. This had been entered in the West rural development over plans for newly-craft workshops, he felt. members were told that g 1985-86 the Develop- Commission had £63,842 into the rural develop- area programme in Dorset.

Not correct

Col Gibson said the impression that Thorncombe was against rural craft workshops was not quite correct. It had come about because of a very large planning application which included 25 houses and eight holiday homes as well as craft workshops. Thorncombe had only 111 houses and would have been swamped by a development of this size.

"Thorncombe is very keen to have some low-cost houses and some workshops to keep the village alive," he said,

written at the moment it would permit an application of this sort to go through without being mindful of the size of the village, the local road pattern, the sewerage system and so on."

He pointed out that being listed as a priority village in the Structure Plan, Thorncombe and places like it had been identified as villages where between 50 and 150 new houses could be built. If this number was built in one go instead of being spread over the period of the

The real snag, he pointed out was that if a large-scale

application was refused the applicant could go to appeal and claim that the application was in accordance with the Structure Plan. "It could ruin many villages," he maintained.

Resistance

Rear Admiral Gwyn Pritchard (West Dorset) said that what appeared in the joint committee's report was fact. There was a general resistance to workshops and things like that in many villages, and there was a need to 'convince people' of their value.

He felt the Structure Plan was perfectly adequate if people had the courage to use it properly. Although the figure of 150 houses was mentioned for priority villages, no definitive numbers were laid down and the actual number of houses permitted in a village was for district councils.

Col Gibson: "I feel the structure plan sub-committee should have a look to see if they could not give a bit

Crookall said the joint committee felt there was an inbuilt resistance to change in villages. When it came to reality and there was a possibility of workshops on the ground there was resistance.

There was a general perception among the joint committee that if rural areas were to continue as productive and viable entities the idea of craft workshops must be got across he said. Villages were not going to remain the same for all time.

The subcommittee agreed that valuable work was being done in the West Dorset RDA. They approved a work programme for 1987-88 and recommended the policy committee to contribute £1,500 towards the cost of a field officer and £1,233 towards the operating costs of the Community Council's Blue Van information and advice service.

Consideration is also to be given to making the field officer's post a permanent one as a project officer.

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