

NORTH DORSET LOCAL PLAN 2011 – 2026 PART 1 EXAMINATION

HEARING STATEMENT

ISSUE 1

Duty to Co-operate, Legal Requirements and the Council's Broad Strategy

March 2015

Question 1.1: Has co-operation between North Dorset District Council and other nearby local planning authorities been a continuous process of engagement from initial thinking? What evidence is there of effective co-operation (NPPF paragraph 181) and of joint working on areas of common interest being diligently undertaken for the mutual benefit of neighbouring authorities (NPPF paragraph 178)? Is there a long-term commitment to co-operation?

- 1.1 The Council's Duty to Co-operate Statement (SUD019), sets out how the Council has effectively co-operated to plan for issues with cross-boundary impacts. SUD019, which was produced in November 2014, supersedes an earlier version produced in November 2013 to accompany the Pre-submission Document.
- 1.2 There has been a continuous process of engagement from initial thinking. Much of the initial thinking on the Local Plan Part 1 (LP1) stems from the work undertaken on the Revised South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). LP1 has also been informed by later joint work undertaken with other local authorities (for example on the production of Strategic Housing Market Assessments – SHMAs) and through wider engagement on issues such as the growth of Gillingham (for example, in the production of Assessing the Growth Potential of Gillingham – MTC004).
- 1.3 Joint working has been diligently undertaken both through: (a) the development of joint planning and other policy documents; and (b) the preparation of evidence base studies and reports. These two areas of joint work, which is evidence of effective co-operation, are described in detail in Sections 3 and 4 of the Council's Duty to Co-operate Statement respectively.
- 1.4 There is a long-term commitment to co-operation as evidenced through the joint working arrangements set out in Section 2 of the Council's Duty to Co-operate Statement. These arrangements include: memoranda of understanding; a joint liaison committee; officer groups; community planning; representation on the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP); and the emerging tri-council partnership between North Dorset, West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Councils.

Question 1.2: Have any cross-boundary strategic priorities or issues been identified? If so are they clearly reflected in LP1 (NPPF paragraph 179)?

- 1.5 Section 5 of the Council's Duty to Co-operate Statement provides a discussion of the strategic priorities and issues that may require a strategic approach or cross-border co-operation. It notes that the rural nature of the District and the relatively small size of the main towns results in a degree of self-containment. It also notes that the distances to other larger towns outside the District limits levels of interaction.

- 1.6 In relation to growth, Section 5 includes an overview of housing, economic and transport issues. In brief, LP1 has made sufficient provision to meet its own needs, as have other neighbouring authorities.
- 1.7 Proposals in North Dorset that could have impacts on neighbouring areas are identified as:
- growth at Gillingham;
 - growth at Shaftesbury; and
 - the settlement boundary of Zeals.
- 1.8 These potential issues were discussed with neighbouring authorities (i.e. Wiltshire and South Somerset) and statutory consultees and where necessary have been addressed in policy. In particular, continuous engagement with the Highways Agency in relation to the potential impacts from growth at Gillingham on the A303 has influenced the location of the urban extension of the town and the proposals to deal with projected increases in traffic.
- 1.9 Proposals outside North Dorset that could have an impact on the District are identified as:
- major growth at Yeovil;
 - Henstridge Airfield; and
 - modest growth at Mere and Tisbury.
- 1.10 These potential issues were discussed with neighbouring authorities (i.e. Wiltshire and South Somerset) and the Council is satisfied that any issues that may arise can be addressed by the policies in the local plans in these areas. In particular, policies relating to Henstridge Airfield in the South Somerset Local Plan together with the masterplan for the site (Core Document COD040) will ensure that any issues arising from additional traffic generation are addressed.
- 1.11 In relation to the environment, Section 5 of the Duty to Co-operate Statement also refers to:
- the joint strategy and landscape sensitivity study relating to renewable energy developments (ECC022 and ECC021a to d respectively);
 - measures to protect internationally important wildlife sites, as set out in the Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework (COD039) and the emerging Strategy for Managing Nitrogen in Poole Harbour (discussed in more detail in ECC005); and
 - measures to conserve and enhance AONBs many of which are outlined in their management plans (ECC011 and ECC013).

Question 1.3: Has LP1 been prepared in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement?

- 1.12 The Local Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which was adopted in July 2006. More detail is set

out in the Submission Statement (SUD 018), which provides an overview in paragraphs 1.24 and 1.25, with details of the consultation undertaken at each stage of plan preparation set out in Chapters 2 to 9.

- 1.13 Figure 3 on page 13 of the SCI sets out the engagement techniques that would be used at the different stages of preparation of the documents proposed at the time. The techniques that have been used in the preparation of the Local Plan, which includes strategic 'core' policies, development management policies and a specific allocation at Gillingham, are detailed in Chapters 2 to 9 of the Submission Statement.

Question 1.4: Is LP1 based on a sound process of sustainability appraisal and testing of reasonable alternatives, and does it represent the most appropriate strategy in the circumstances? Has the strategic site selection process been objective and based on appropriate criteria? Is there clear evidence demonstrating how and why the preferred strategy was selected?

- 1.14 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has been prepared alongside the production of the Local Plan with the results of the appraisal being reflected in the content of the Plan. The SA process has been documented in several reports produced at different stages of the plan making process. These reports are the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report 2007 (COD023), Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report 2009 (COD011), Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report (COD010), Addendum to the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report (COD004), North Dorset Local Plan 2011-2026 Part 1 – Sustainability Report (SUD003) and LP 2011 to 2026 Part 1 Focused Changes Supplement to the Final SA report (SUD008).
- 1.15 In line with the requirements of the SA process, reasonable alternatives have been considered for achieving the objectives of the Plan as set out in Section 6.0 and Appendix C of the Initial SA Report (COD010) and in Sections 3.0 and 4.0 of the associated addendum (COD004). In addition, where the Council has been made aware of new suitable, achievable and available alternative sites or where the approach to a particular issue has altered to a significant degree, these additional alternatives have been assessed in a manner consistent with those already considered. These have been reported in the appendices of the North Dorset Local Plan 2011-2026 Part 1 – Sustainability Report (SUD003) and Section 3 of the associated supplement (SUD008).
- 1.16 In considering reasonable alternatives, the Council has made its assessment based on all available evidence. Where additional evidence has come to light which may have an impact on the results of any assessment, this has been used to update the assessment and suggest changes where appropriate.
- 1.17 Assessments have been made on a consistent basis against the framework established in the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report 2009 (COD011). This set

of criteria has been used to assess each option and policy during the development of LP 1 using all available evidence in an objective way. The result of the assessment of the policies included in the submitted LP1 has been detailed in Appendices D, E and F of the final Sustainability Report (SUD003). Further discussion on the selection of sites and the evidence considered through this process, including the SA process, is set out in the Market Towns Site Selection Background Paper 2013 (MTC001).

- 1.18 It is the opinion of the Council that the policies in LP 1 represent the most appropriate strategy to deliver the objectives of the plan having regard to all of the reasonable alternatives considered through the SA process.

Question 1.5: Is the Council's core spatial strategy (policy 2) justified and compatible with the principles referred to in paragraphs 17 and 55 of the NPPF? Will the policies and proposals in LP1 contribute to the sustainable growth of the District?

- 1.19 The Council's core spatial strategy (policy 2) is justified as it is the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives and it has been based on proportionate evidence. This is demonstrated in the Sustainable Development Strategy Background Paper 2013 (SDS001) that provides a general overview of the Council's spatial strategy for the distribution of development in North Dorset. It summarises those parts of the evidence base which informed the spatial policies and also sets out the policy background - at national, regional and local levels - against which the plan was prepared.
- 1.20 The Core Spatial Strategy (policy 2) is compatible with the core land-use planning principles in paragraph 17 of NPPF that underpin the local plan:
- it empowers local people to shape their surroundings with communities deciding through the neighbourhood planning process the scale and location of growth to meet local needs;
 - the Council have creatively engaged with local communities in the plan making process as summarised in the Submission Statement (SUD018);
 - every effort has been made to objectively identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of the District taking into consideration market signals. This is summarised in the Housing Background Paper 2013 (MHN001) and the Supporting Economic Development Background Paper 2013 (SED001);
 - it promotes the vitality of the main urban areas by focusing strategic growth in the four main towns and supports thriving rural communities by giving local communities the choice of meeting their needs through the neighbourhood planning process or opting into the Local Plan Part 2 (LP 2) whilst ensuring that essential rural needs are met through specific countryside policies;

- it contributes to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution by focussing strategic growth in the most sustainable locations; and
 - it actively manages the pattern of growth by focussing strategic development in main towns.
- 1.21 The Core Spatial Strategy (policy 2) is compatible with paragraph 55 of the NPPF as it promotes sustainable development in the rural areas to meet local needs. Rural communities have the choice of enhancing or maintaining the vitality of their communities through the neighbourhood planning process or by ‘opting in’ to LP 2. For example, a village could opt to have its settlement boundary reinstated in LP 2, but this is a local choice rather than a solution imposed from the ‘top down’.
- 1.22 The Core Spatial Strategy (policy 2) specifically avoids new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances. Those special circumstances are guided by Policy 20 – The Countryside and supported by specific development management policies.
- 1.23 The Council believes that LP1 will contribute to the sustainable growth of the District as all policies and proposals have evolved and been tested through the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process that considered the social, environmental and economic effects of implementing the plan. Full details of the SA can be found in the Pre-submission Sustainability Appraisal Report (SUD003) and the Focused Changes Supplement to the Final Sustainability Appraisal (SUD008).

Question 1.6: Paragraph 1.8 of the Sustainability Appraisal (SUD003a) refers to ‘five market towns which act as hubs serving their rural hinterland’. Is Stalbridge the ‘fifth’ market town? The town is referred to as an individual settlement throughout LP1 (rather than included generically as a village). Is this an indication that it displays different characteristics to other small settlements in the District and as such are the policies being applied to it justified?

- 1.24 Stalbridge is the ‘fifth market town’ referred to in Paragraph 1.8 of the Sustainability Appraisal (SUD003a). It is referred to as an individual settlement throughout LP1, rather than being included as a village, as it is small town with a town council and not a parish council. The local community are proud of their ‘town’ status and are keen to be referred to as such, although in planning terms it is not considered suitable as a location for strategic growth due to its small size and ‘district centre’ function.
- 1.25 The classification of settlements in the District and the spatial approach to growth in LP1 is summarised in the Sustainable Development Strategy Background Paper 2013 (SDS001). This document explains how the national and regional policy context has changed considerably since the draft Core Strategy was produced in

March 2010 and how these changes, combined with the reduced housing numbers in the 2012 SHMA Update Report and the introduction of neighbourhood planning, have informed the Council's spatial approach to growth.

- 1.26 As the largest settlement in the District after the four main towns, Stalbridge displays different characteristics to other small settlements in the District. As a small town with a population of 2,698 (Census 2011) it has a range of services but it is still considerably smaller than Sturminster Newton, the smallest town identified for strategic growth (Census 2011 population 4,292).
- 1.27 Paragraphs 6.44 to 6.46 discuss the hierarchy and network of centres in North Dorset in the light of the joint Retail Study (SED007a and b). Paragraph 6.44 states that Blandford Forum, Gillingham, Shaftsbury and Sturminster Newton all merit classification as 'town centres'.
- 1.28 The status of the settlements in North Dorset is discussed in the conclusions (Section 10) of Volume 2 of the joint Retail Study (SED007b). Table 10.2 on page 47 of that document provides the evidence for the statement in Paragraph 6.44 of LP 1. It also indicates that Stalbridge is considered to be a 'District centre'. Paragraph 10.18 of SED007b states *"with the opening of the new Dyke and Sons supermarket, Stalbridge is now fulfilling the role of a District Centre and should continue to be designated as such"*.
- 1.29 The policy approach in Stalbridge is justified and is the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, as set out in the Sustainable Development Strategy Background Paper 2013 (SDS001) which is based on proportionate evidence.

Question 1.7: Restrictive countryside policies will apply to settlements where settlement boundaries are proposed to be removed. Bearing in mind that only 230 dwellings (as a minimum) are proposed outside the 4 main towns, will housing need (including for affordable housing) and LP1 objectives 4 and 5 (page 23) in these locations be met? What is the justification for only proposing about 230 dwellings (6% of total provision) in smaller settlements? Why has the Council placed little weight on the 2010 SHLAA (MHN007) which identified 19 smaller settlements (page 47) suitable for some market and affordable housing? Are there any significant opportunities for sustainable residential or economic development in these settlements? (see also question 6.1)

- 1.30 The aim of the approach to the areas outside the four main towns is to enable locally identified needs to be met whilst recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside through the application of countryside policies. Policy 20 - The Countryside recognises that some uses will require a countryside location and

makes provision for these. However it also recognises that development (particularly large scale residential and employment development) in rural areas is less sustainable than development at the larger services centres of the four main towns.

- 1.31 Policy 20 enables a number of routes to be taken for the delivery of housing in the countryside, including the production of a neighbourhood plan or ‘opting-in’ to LP 2. There is also the opportunity for the delivery of affordable housing with a small element of market housing on rural exception sites.
- 1.32 Parish councils have the opportunity afforded them through the Localism Act 2011, to prepare a neighbourhood plan for their area to meet local needs and aspirations. The Council fully supports this opportunity, whilst also recognising that there is a resource burden placed on parishes who wish to produce such a plan. For this reason, an alternative route for delivering development has been devised where parish councils have the option of ‘opting-in’ to LP 2. Through this route the Council will, in collaboration with local people and the parish council, take the lead in the allocation of sites to meet local needs and aspirations.
- 1.33 In addition to the preparation of a neighbourhood plan or the ‘opt-in’ route to delivering development, there is the opportunity for a rural exception site to be delivered under Policy 9. This would require a local need for affordable housing (usually from within the parish) to be identified but would also permit a small amount of market housing to contribute towards closing any funding gap to enable the affordable element to be provided.
- 1.34 Paragraph 5.25 of LP 1 (as revised) shows that about 4,120 homes could be delivered at the four main towns. The figure of ‘at least 230 dwellings’ is the number required to meet LP 1’s overall housing provision figure of 4,350 dwellings. Paragraph 5.25 recognises that this level of provision is *“very modest and should be easily achieved”*.
- 1.35 Paragraph 5.26 goes on to explain that this figure should not be seen as a target or a cap on the overall level of development that should take place in the countryside and that *“it is simply the amount of housing required outside the four main towns to ensure that the identified District-wide need is met”*. Paragraph 5.27 further explains that the level of housing provision in the countryside should reflect what’s required to meet *“local and essential rural needs identified at the local level”*.
- 1.36 Development since 2011 and current commitments (in terms of extant planning consents) already significantly exceed the figure of 230 dwellings. Levels of completions in the countryside (including Stalbridge and the villages) since 2011 (as set out in Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) – IMP001, 002 and 006*) have been:
- 26 – 2011/12;
 - 33 – 2012/13;
 - 29 – 2013/14.

- 1.37 Commitments for Stalbridge and the villages, which have increased significantly over the last year, as developers have submitted planning applications in advance of the anticipated policy change to remove settlement boundaries, now stand at 316. Completions since 2011 plus commitments (in terms of extant planning consents) equals 404 dwellings, against the figure of ‘at least 230’.
- 1.38 It is difficult to determine what the overall level of provision in the countryside might be by 2026 because many of the mechanisms for delivery, such as neighbourhood plans, ‘opting-in’ to LP2 and rural exception schemes with a market element are new. The neighbourhood plan mechanism is supported by legislation and rural exception schemes with a market element are supported by national policy. However, neither mechanism has been in existence long enough to provide sufficient past evidence of likely future delivery.
- 1.39 The Council has included an allowance in the five-year supply for occupational dwellings, based on delivery over the past five years, but has found it difficult to estimate what might be delivered through recent changes to permitted development rights, such as the conversion of redundant agricultural buildings to dwellings. Changes to Policy 29 – The Re-use of Existing Buildings in the Countryside, to be less restrictive in relation to residential uses, are also likely to yield more dwellings, but again future numbers are difficult to predict.
- 1.40 Part of the SHLAA process included a ‘call for sites’ in settlements where development could potentially be accommodated to meet local needs. These settlements play host to a range of services and facilities and therefore were considered to be the more sustainable centres. This assessment of facilities was put in place in the framework emerging through the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West.
- 1.41 With the advent of neighbourhood planning and the revocation of Regional Strategies, the opportunity for a ‘bottom up’ approach to housing growth to meet local need arose. For this reason, the District’s strategic housing need has been focused on the four main towns. The SHLAA evidence will be used to support the delivery of housing through neighbourhood plans and will provide the starting point for site selection where a community decide that they want to allocate land in a village for housing.
- 1.42 Although a significant amount of land has been put forward as being available for development within the areas outside of the four main towns, it is considered that the most appropriate location for significant development is at the four main towns. These towns offer a range of everyday facilities and already act as centres of economic activity. Locating significant development at these centres, rather than in the more remote rural areas will reduce unsustainable travel patterns and support the role of the towns as service centres for their rural hinterland.

Question 1.8: Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on Rural Housing (paragraph 001) advises that rural housing is essential to ensure viable use of local facilities and that blanket policies restricting housing development in some settlements and preventing other settlements from expanding should be avoided unless their use can be supported by robust evidence. What is the robust evidence for the Council's approach? Is there a risk that the Council's approach, which includes the removal of all settlement boundaries (except for the four main towns), will lead to uncertainty and act as an impediment to sustainable development in these locations?

- 1.43 The Council's approach to development in rural areas is not a blanket policy restricting housing development. The approach advocated would allow residential development through the routes outlined in response to Q1.7 above.
- 1.44 In the past there have been unsustainable levels of development in rural areas and the Council has taken action to manage this¹. A large proportion of the oversupply in rural areas was through infilling within the settlement boundaries of villages and it is recognised that this infilling has led to a significant impact on the character and appearance of many of these settlements. Whilst oversupply was taking place, there has been a continued decline in the level of facilities in these rural settlements, making the developments even less sustainable.
- 1.45 The approach the Council is seeking to take forward has been developed with these issues in mind and in consultation with local communities. As set out in the Statement of Consultation (SUD018), consultation with local parishes indicated an appetite for the production of neighbourhood plans with approximately 50% of responses indicating that they wished to produce a plan. The preferred approach coming out of this consultation was for the Council to not set housing targets in the villages and not to identify sites in these locations for development. This has formed the basis for the approach in LP1, including the removal of settlement boundaries.
- 1.46 As the approach in LP1 is flexible, offering a number of routes to enable development in the rural parts of the District, it should not be seen as an impediment to sustainable development but should be seen as a way of local communities identifying the development that they need to deliver on local priorities. The approach will also enable sustainable growth to meet the District's

¹ The Council adopted its Managing Housing Land Supply Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (COD037) in 2007 in response to the oversupply of housing in the District. The level of supply in the rural areas at that time was significantly higher (72% higher) than the planned rate. By the end of the plan period the delivery rate in rural areas had come down to 47% above the rate set out in the 2003 Local Plan.

overall need through development at the four main towns, offering certainty about the strategic growth needs being met.

Question 1.9: Local Planning Authorities should boost significantly the supply of housing, including through the promotion of sustainable development in rural areas (NPPF paragraph 55). Does the Council’s option of ‘opting in’ to the Local Plan Part 2, or the reliance on the adoption of Neighbourhood Plans (pages 36 and 37) provide the appropriate framework for ensuring that local needs for housing and employment in rural areas will be met?

- 1.47 Paragraph 55 of the NPPF highlights the importance of locating residential development in areas “*where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities*”. It goes on to highlight that isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided unless they:
- are required to meet an essential need for a rural worker;
 - would represent the optimal use of a heritage asset or be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of a heritage asset;
 - would reuse a redundant or disused building and lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting; or
 - are of exceptional or innovative design quality.
- 1.48 Within LP1, provision is made through Policy 33 for occupational dwellings where there is an essential need demonstrated for a worker to live at or near to their place of work. In relation to heritage assets and existing buildings in the countryside, Policy 5 and Policy 29 make provision for residential uses including enabling development to secure the future of a heritage asset.
- 1.49 The ‘opt-in’ and neighbourhood plan routes to development in rural areas provide mechanisms for local communities to bring forward development (including residential and commercial developments) to meet their needs or aspirations. Through this approach, local communities outside of the four main towns can have the level and type of development they want. This could include development to help deliver facilities such as a new village hall within a settlement, adding to its sustainability.
- 1.50 The local understanding of the way a settlement functions and the features of a settlement that are valued, can lead to developments that are more closely aligned to the needs and aspirations of a local community. This approach is considered to offer greater opportunities to create sustainable settlements and to secure development that would enhance or maintain the vitality of settlements.

Question 1.10: What is the justification for the removal of the settlement boundaries now (with the exception of the four main towns)? What options were considered by the Council? Policy 9 refers to affordable housing schemes ‘adjoining the built-up area’ of Stalbridge and the villages. How would a decision maker know how to react to such a scheme when the built-up area is not defined? If the Council’s approach is not sound (i.e. justified), what is the appropriate way forward?

- 1.51 The draft Core Strategy, published in 2010 (COD009) proposed the retention of settlement boundaries around Stalbridge and the 18 largest villages within the District. This approach was in accordance with the settlement hierarchy in the draft RSS and was backed up by a detailed assessment of settlements (in SDS003) including testing through the consideration of options in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report (COD010). Although defining a hierarchy of settlements was in accordance with the draft RSS, the approach received a large number of objections.
- 1.52 The main concern with the assessment of settlements (in SDS003) was that it was ‘broad brush’ and did not recognise ‘fine-grained’ issues. It gave a simple yes / no answer to the question of whether any individual settlement was sustainable and this ‘one-off’ assessment would then effectively operate as a blanket policy where development would be broadly encouraged in some villages, but largely prevented in others, regardless of changing needs over the plan period.
- 1.53 Subsequent to this consultation, the Localism Bill was published proposing a system of neighbourhood development plans. In 2011, the Council took the decision to consult parish councils on the level of strategic steer that should be included in the plan and the appetite for neighbourhood planning. The options considered at this stage were:
- Option 1 – The Council gives a strong strategic steer in Stalbridge and the larger villages with greater choice elsewhere;
 - Option 2 – The Council gives a strong strategic steer in Stalbridge and a more limited number of larger villages with greater local choice elsewhere;
 - Option 3 – The Council gives ‘light touch’ strategic guidance only with greater local choice in Stalbridge and all villages.
- 1.54 The result of this consultation with parish councils (COD008) was that the majority preferred Option 3 with 50% of those who responded signalling their desire to produce a neighbourhood plan.
- 1.55 In the light of the advent of neighbourhood planning and having considered the level of objection to the settlement hierarchy and the limitations of the approach to classifying settlements, the Final Sustainability Appraisal (SUD003) considered that a more flexible approach incorporating neighbourhood planning was the most appropriate strategy for inclusion in LP1.

- 1.56 As the Council are able to meet in full its housing requirement through sites at the four main towns, there is no need to identify sites at Stalbridge and the villages. In order to enable local communities to determine the future of their settlements, it is considered appropriate to start from a position where the focus is on meeting local needs, with development being delivered through neighbourhood planning or the 'opt-in' route. For this reason, settlement boundaries are to be removed at this stage rather than through LP2.
- 1.57 Where an affordable housing scheme is proposed in line with Policy 9, the approach should be to identify a site within the existing built-up area or where no such site exists, adjacent to the built-up area. It should be noted that since the settlement boundaries defined in the 2003 Local Plan include Important Open and Wooded Areas (IOWAs), they cannot be considered to be synonymous with the built-up areas of villages.
- 1.58 A decision maker would need to make an informed judgement based on the situation on the ground (primarily in terms of the presence / absence of buildings) as to whether a site fell within the built-up area of a settlement or not. In the vast majority of cases making such a judgement would be straightforward. The approach seeks to guide rural exception schemes to the most sustainable locations (generally within built-up areas), but does not preclude them adjacent to built-up areas, so it is unlikely that the application of this part of the policy would result in a rural exception scheme being rejected. However, failure to apply this part of the policy could result in a scheme being provided in a less sustainable location.
- 1.59 This approach is considered to strike the right balance between meeting the need for affordable housing in rural areas whilst ensuring that such rural affordable housing has some access to services to minimise the costs associated with living in rural locations. It also seeks to minimise encroachment into the countryside. Given the issues that exist in relation to rural isolation and the impact on the countryside, the approach proposed in Policy 9 is considered to be the most appropriate and therefore justified.

Question 1.11: Is the relationship between LP1 and any future Neighbourhood Plans (as outlined in Chapter 1) sufficiently clear? Do the strategic policies of LP1 provide sufficient and appropriate 'hooks' on which to 'hang' neighbourhood plans?

Relationship between the LP1 & Neighbourhood Plans

- 1.60 The Localism Act 2011 introduced the right for communities to draw up neighbourhood plans for their areas. Communities can shape development through the production of Neighbourhood Development Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders. LP 1 sets out an innovative and integrated approach to neighbourhood planning by providing a

framework for strategic planning decisions and for the preparation of neighbourhood plans focusing on non-strategic planning decisions. The Council has also committed to preparing a Local Plan Part 2 (LP 2), which will tackle issues not covered through the neighbourhood planning process.

- 1.61 New Paragraph 1A summaries this approach: *“The two-part approach will see a strategic policy framework put in place in advance of specific sites being allocated (with the exception of the Strategic Site Allocation at Gillingham) and more detailed policies being reviewed. This approach ensures that sufficient provision is made to meet objectively assessed needs, through the identification of broad locations for development in Part 1, whilst also providing some flexibility in Part 2. It also provides choice to local communities in the four main towns to decide whether they want to lead on defining sites and reviewing detailed policies through their neighbourhood plans, or whether the Council should lead on these matters in taking forward Part 2.”*
- 1.62 At the time LP 1 was submitted, there were nine designated neighbourhood areas in North Dorset covering 13 parishes and more than 60% of the District’s population. All four main towns are actively preparing neighbourhood plans and in five of our larger more sustainable villages local communities are shaping the places in which they live and work. There are designated neighbourhood areas for: Blandford + (this includes the parishes of Blandford Forum, Blandford St Mary and Bryanston); Bourton; Gillingham; Milborne St Andrew; Okeford Fitzpaine; Pimperne; Shaftesbury, Melbury Abbas and Cann; Shillingstone; and Sturminster Newton.
- 1.63 The role of neighbourhood plans in meeting the needs of the four main towns, Stalbridge and the villages (and their relationship of such plans with LP 1) is set out in the supporting text to Policy 2 - Core Spatial Strategy, as explained below.

Neighbourhood Planning in the Four Main Towns

- 1.64 The approach for the four main towns is set out in paragraphs 3.41 to 3.45 of LP 1. These paragraphs explain that any future neighbourhood plans for these towns would need to accord with the proposals for growth set out in LP 1, in particular Policies 16 to 19. Paragraph 3.45 advises that a neighbourhood plan centred on a town could not promote less growth than LP 1, but could allow for more development through additional site allocations.

Neighbourhood Planning in the Countryside

- 1.65 The approach for the countryside (including Stalbridge and the villages) is set out in paragraphs 3.46 to 3.54. This section explains that where a local community wishes to see growth to meet local needs that are not covered by the countryside policies alone they can prepare a neighbourhood plan. Paragraph 3.50 clarifies that *“a neighbourhood plan should not put forward strategic levels of growth, as that is the role of the Local Plan”*. It is the Council’s expectation that the preparation of

neighbourhood plans will enable communities to identify local issues and needs; develop a vision and objectives for the future; and consider different options for meeting local needs.

Strategic Policies

- 1.66 LP 1 paragraphs 1.11 and 1.12 clarify that all the policies within LP 1 are ‘strategic policies’. The topic-based policies establish an overall sustainable development strategy (Policies 1 and 2) and set out a strategic approach to: environment and climate change; meeting housing needs; supporting economic development; and infrastructure (Policies 3 to 15). A strategic approach to development in the District’s four main towns and in the countryside is provided by policies 16 to 20. The largest single area of development in North Dorset will be the Gillingham Southern Extension, a strategic allocation (Policy 21). Part 1 also includes strategic Development Management Policies (Policies 22 to 33) which provide more detail on a range of issues and types of development, including development in the countryside.

Neighbourhood Planning ‘Hooks’

- 1.67 This overarching spatial approach is reinforced throughout LP 1 with a series of references or ‘hooks’ that highlight issues that communities could choose to cover in their emerging neighbourhood plans. These ‘hooks’ not only appear within the four town policies but are also written into the topic-based policies, where appropriate. For example, Policy 5 - The Historic Environment states that *“the Council will work with communities to secure heritage-led regeneration, where suitable opportunities arise. A community-led design and development brief for the Station Road area in Sturminster Newton seeks to secure heritage assets associated with the town’s dairy farming and railway past. Other proposals for heritage-led regeneration may be worked up in neighbourhood plans.”*
- 1.68 These ‘hooks’ can then be collated to form a framework of policy options, which communities can use to take forward their neighbourhood plans. Examples of neighbourhood planning frameworks prepared for Sturminster Newton and Shaftesbury are included within Appendix 1, alongside an earlier version for Gillingham. Using Sturminster Newton as an example, the ‘framework’ identifies a list of specific issues which a neighbourhood plan could choose to tackle or not.
- 1.69 The ‘hooks’ for neighbourhood plans in the countryside differ from those for the towns to reflect the spatial strategy in Policy 2 and are reinforced through Policy 20 – The Countryside. Paragraphs 8.190 – 8.191 explain that:

“Countryside policies apply to Stalbridge and all of the District’s villages but the production of neighbourhood plans will also enable communities to take forward proposals to meet local needs and influence the planning of the area in which they live and work. Neighbourhood plans can help local communities: to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood; choose where new homes, shops, offices

and other development should be built (in addition to development that is permitted under countryside policies, as discussed above); identify and protect Local Green Spaces or include policies to protect local character; and influence what new buildings should look like.”

- 1.70 Mirroring the Government’s intention that communities can decide what issues to consider within their neighbourhood plan, and that no two plans need to be the same, LP 1 clarifies that neighbourhood plans can enable local needs to be met in different ways. For example, some communities may seek to meet local needs by re-instating settlement boundaries while others may prefer to meet local needs by allocating a specific site for housing or employment.
- 1.71 As with the neighbourhood plans for the towns, there are specific ‘hooks’ for neighbourhood plans in the countryside throughout LP 1 and within some topic-based policies. As an example, Policy 6 - Housing Distribution states: *“Outside the four main towns, affordable housing may be delivered through neighbourhood planning or on rural exception sites, in accordance with the policies relating to its provision in this Local Plan.”*
- 1.72 In conclusion, it is the Council’s view that LP 1 has sufficient and appropriate ‘hooks’ on which to hang future neighbourhood plans and that these ‘hooks’ have been drafted to provide guidance both for plans being prepared for the towns and those prepared in the countryside. The Council has also demonstrated that these ‘hooks’ are sufficient and appropriate having used them to collate frameworks for the main towns, which have in turn helped to inform the vision and objectives for all the emerging neighbourhood plans.

Question 1.12: What is the justification for progressing with a plan that once adopted would only have a lifespan of about 11 years? Paragraphs 2.45 and 2.46 refer to the vision for 15 years time, so why is the plan period not 15 years from submission or likely adoption (as referred to in paragraph 157 of the NPPF)?

- 1.73 National policy (NPPF paragraph 157) only requires local plans to *“be drawn up over an appropriate time scale, preferably a 15-year time horizon”*. The 15 year time horizon is, therefore a ‘preference’, but not a requirement of national policy. In any event LP1 is consistent with paragraph 157 of the NPPF as it is drawn up over a 15-year time horizon (i.e. 2011 to 2026). It is accepted that the plan will not run for 15 years from submission or adoption, but paragraph 157 of the NPPF provides no guidance on what should be used at the ‘start date’ for a local plan.
- 1.74 The currently adopted 2003 Local Plan makes provision up to 2011 and the start date for the new plan follows on directly after that date. The alternative would be to have a ‘gap’ between plan periods, which would create uncertainty about how housing land supply (and any shortfall in delivery) should be calculated. This was an

issue that the Council carefully considered when regional strategies were being revoked and the ‘start date’ of 2011 for the ‘new plan’ was agreed in its Interim Position Statement on Housing Provision and Housing Land Supply (COD033).

- 1.75 Paragraph: 12-008-20140306 of the PPG states that “*most Local Plans are likely to require updating in whole or in part at least every five years*”. This reflects the need to respond to new household projections (likely to appear every 2 years) and new SHMAs (probably required once every 5 years). Given the national policy requirement for frequent review (to respond flexibly to changing circumstances – NPPF paragraph 153); if the Local Plan is adopted later in 2015, the expectation in the PPG is that it should have been reviewed twice before 2026 in any event.
- 1.76 LP1 already makes some level of provision beyond 2026 at Gillingham. Policy 21 indicates that the site has capacity for about 1,800 homes, 1,240 of which will be delivered by 2026. It is envisaged that the remaining 560 units would be delivered by 2031. Elsewhere in North Dorset additional provision beyond 2026 will be made in a review of LP1, as required by paragraph: 12-008-20140306 of the PPG.
- 1.77 The vision for North Dorset was largely developed from Shaping Our Future, Dorset Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-2020, which was produced by the Dorset Strategic Partnership in November 2010. The 15-year time horizon set out in the vision reflects the plan period, which is 2011 to 2026. If the wording in relation to the 15-year time horizon is considered to be unclear, paragraph 2.46 could be amended by the deletion of “*In 15 years’ time North Dorset will:*” to be replaced with “*By 2026 North Dorset will:*”

Question 1.13: The Planning Practice Guidance (paragraph 012 under Local Plans) confirms that while additional local plans can be produced, for example a separate site allocations document, there should be a clear justification for doing so. What is the clear justification in this case?

- 1.78 The justification is set out in proposed change 1/INT/3 (on page 3 of SUD015) where the addition of paragraph 1A is proposed following paragraph 1.7. The proposed new paragraph is set out in full in the response to Q1.11 (see paragraph 1.61). More detail on the relationship of LP 1 to neighbourhood plans is also provided in the answer to Q1.11.
- 1.79 It is also proposed to add some text to paragraph 1.17 under proposed change 1/INT/7 (on page 4 of SUD015) to explain that nine neighbourhood plans are now in production covering thirteen parishes (including the four main towns) and more than 60% of the District’s population.

Question 1.14: Although not necessarily a matter of soundness, LP1 is over 400 pages long. Planning Practice Guidance (paragraph 010 under Local Plans) advises that ‘local plans should be as focused, concise and accessible as possible’. Are there any opportunities which the Council could take to streamline the document?

- 1.80 It is not considered that LP1 could be streamlined to any significant extent without making it less accessible. In the Council’s view it is important to provide sufficient reasoned justification to all policies and with four main towns and extensive rural areas, it is important to have separate policies which are focused on each of these areas.
- 1.81 As set out in Figure 1.1 on page 6, LP1 includes: topic-based policies; place-based policies; policies for a strategic site allocation at Gillingham; and a set of development management policies, all of which are considered necessary to provide the policy framework for North Dorset.
- 1.82 About 20% of LP1 is made up of: introductory chapters; a chapter on monitoring; and appendices. Whilst these sections of LP1 do not contain any policies, they are nevertheless important in setting out the overall framework for decision-making and could not realistically be moved to a separate document (or documents).
- 1.83 Whilst LP1 contains 401 pages, it should be noted that: the font size is quite large; the spacing between lines and paragraphs is generous; and there is considerable white space at the margins of the pages. A different graphics treatment would enable each page to accommodate more text, but this could potentially make hard copies of LP1 less easy to read and consequently less accessible.

Appendix 1 – Neighbourhood planning frameworks

Shaftesbury, Melbury Abbas and Cann Neighbourhood Plan – Policy Options			
	North Dorset Local Plan - 2011 to 2026 Part 1	North Dorset Local Plan - 2011 to 2026 Part 2 (Site Allocations)	Shaftesbury, Melbury Abbas and Cann Neighbourhood Plan
Role of policies/Plans	<p>Local Plan Part 1 explains the context within which the planning policies for the District have been developed. It describes the spatial characteristics of the local area, identifies the key issues and challenges and includes a vision and objectives to tackle the issues and challenges.</p> <p>Topic based policies establish the scale and broad location of future development. They establish an overall sustainable development strategy (Policies 1 and 2), set out a strategic approach to environment and climate change, meeting housing needs, supporting economic development and infrastructure (Policies 3 to 15).</p> <p>Topic based policies are explored in more detail in individual town policies (Policy 18 Shaftesbury) and the countryside (Policy 20). Part 1 also includes strategic Development Management Policies (Policies 22 to 33) which provide more detail on a range of issues and types of development, including development in the countryside. Part 1 concludes by establishing a framework for monitoring.</p>	<p>Local Plan Part 2 allocates specific sites for housing and employment growth in the main towns and includes a review of other land allocations and settlement boundaries.</p> <p>Sites to be allocated will include the broad locations for development at the four main towns as shown in the Local Plan Part 1. In general the land allocations to be reviewed are those saved policies from the North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (1st Revision) that was adopted in 2003 that have not been replaced by policies in Local Plan Part 1 (in general those listed on pages 368 to 379).</p> <p>Local Plan Part 2 will contain an O/S base map showing reviewed policies and new allocations.</p>	<p>A Neighbourhood Plan is a planning document that will guide future development of the area. It is about the use and development of land and associated social, economic and environmental issues. It can be detailed or simply set general principles but it cannot deal with non-planning matters.</p> <p>In general for the neighbourhood area of Shaftesbury, Melbury Abbas and Cann the neighbourhood plan can play a key role in enabling local communities to shape strategic growth in the town whilst it is a tool to meet local needs in the countryside.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plan can set out the community's overall vision for the area of Shaftesbury, Melbury Abbas and Cann. Ideally it will give a local focus to the more general district wide vision set out in the Local Plan Part 1.</p>
	Policy 18 - Shaftesbury		
Sustainable Development Strategy	<p>Shaftesbury will maintain its role in supporting Gillingham to serve the needs of the northern part of the District through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> development and regeneration within the existing built up area; extensions, primarily of housing, to the east and north; and an extension to meet employment needs to the south east. <p>Growth will be taken forward in ways which respect the town's environmental constraints, support its role, function and identity, and contribute to making it more self-contained. Shaftesbury's distinctive natural and historic character will be retained and enhanced and the town's reputation as a centre for arts, culture and tourism will be reinforced.</p>	<p>The Sustainable Development Strategy summarises the policy approach in the towns. Specific allocations and actions are explained in more detail in the policies below.</p>	<p>The Sustainable Development Strategy sets the overall strategy for future development in the town of Shaftesbury. The Neighbourhood Plan needs to positively support the Local Plan Part 1 by reflecting and being in general conformity with the sustainable development strategy and all strategic policies.</p>

NOTE Policy options marked in **red/bold** can either be undertaken by North Dorset District Council through site allocations in Part 2 of the Local Plan or through the neighbourhood planning process

Shaftesbury, Melbury Abbas and Cann Neighbourhood Plan – Policy Options			
	North Dorset Local Plan - 2011 to 2026 Part 1	North Dorset Local Plan - 2011 to 2026 Part 2 (Site Allocations)	Shaftesbury, Melbury Abbas and Cann Neighbourhood Plan
Environment and Climate Change (Policies 3, 4 and 5)	<p>The impact of climate change on the town will be addressed with measures put in place to reduce risk through:</p> <p>d. the provision of sustainable drainage systems in all developments; and</p> <p>e. the protection and management of valuable groundwater resources; and</p> <p>The town’s natural and historic built environments will be protected and enhanced.</p>	<p>Review saved Policy 1.16 (Groundwater Source Protection) of the Local Plan 2003 in association with the Environment Agency.</p> <p>Review the Shaftesbury Conservation Sub Area Policies (Local Plan 2003 saved policies SB2 to SB6). This is not a review of the Conservation Area boundary or Sub Area Boundaries, these are determined through separate legislation, it is a review of the policies themselves.</p>	<p>Consider local community actions that will help to mitigate and adapt to climate change (Paragraph 4.35).</p> <p>Identify Local Green Spaces as defined in Paragraphs 76 and 77 of the NPPF (also see Infrastructure – Green below).</p> <p>Consider principles of design and development form based on an understanding of local context (Paragraph 10.57). Working with Conservation Officers from NDDC the Neighbourhood Plan could undertake a review of natural and built environment in the town as a whole and identify character areas where design principles for future development could apply (For example see the Sturminster Newton Town Design Statement).</p> <p>Review the Shaftesbury Conservation Sub Area Policies (Local Plan 2003 saved policies SB2 to SB6).</p> <p>As part of this review non-designated heritage assets could be identified for the Councils 'local list' (Paragraph 4.168).</p>
Meeting Housing Needs (Policies 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10)	<p>About 1,140 homes will be provided at Shaftesbury during the period 2011 – 2026. In addition to infilling and regeneration within the settlement boundary, Shaftesbury’s housing needs will be met through the development of land:</p> <p>f. to the east of the town (including the Hopkins land); and</p> <p>g. to the south east of Wincombe Business Park; and</p> <p>h. to the west of the A350 opposite Wincombe Business Park.</p>	<p>Review saved Policy 1.7 (Settlement Boundary) of the Local Plan 2003 for the town of Shaftesbury (Inset Map 37).</p> <p>Allocate the number and location of houses on the sites to the east of the town, south east of Wincombe Business Park and west of the A350 on an O/S base map.</p>	<p>Review saved Policy 1.7 (Settlement Boundary) of the Local Plan 2003 for the town of Shaftesbury (Inset Map 37).</p> <p>Based on a review of the natural and built environment the Neighbourhood Plan could propose design principles based on character areas.</p> <p>Suggest design principles for the strategic allocations.</p> <p>Allocate additional non-strategic housing sites in the town.</p>

Shaftesbury, Melbury Abbas and Cann Neighbourhood Plan – Policy Options			
	North Dorset Local Plan - 2011 to 2026 Part 1	North Dorset Local Plan - 2011 to 2026 Part 2 (Site Allocations)	Shaftesbury, Melbury Abbas and Cann Neighbourhood Plan
Supporting Economic Development (Policies 11 and 12)	<p>Employment needs of the town for the period up to 2026 will be met through:</p> <p>i. the development of land to the south of the A30; and j. the development of vacant sites on existing industrial estates; and k. the retention of existing employment sites.</p> <p>Mixed use regeneration will be encouraged on land within and to the east of the existing town centre. Within the town's settlement boundary, opportunities for tourist-related development that is sensitive to the landscape and historic setting of the town will be considered favourably.</p>	<p>Review saved Policy 3.2 (Defined Employment Areas) and SB12 (Land South of Salisbury Road) of the Local Plan 2003 on an O/S Base Map.</p> <p>Allocate regeneration area on an O/S base map.</p> <p>Review saved Policies 3.16 and 3.17 (Primary and secondary shopping frontages) of the Local Plan 2003.</p> <p>Defining Town Centres, Primary Shopping Areas and Shopping Frontages (Paragraphs 6.47 to 6.50).</p>	<p>Allocate additional non-strategic sites for employment.</p> <p>Allocate regeneration area on an O/S base map.</p> <p>Propose design principles for allocated employment sites based on character areas.</p> <p>Explore options for the regeneration area and consider land use, layout and design in more detail. One option is a development brief that identifies land for a community hall, parking, public toilets, tourist related development etc.</p> <p>Defining Town Centres, Primary Shopping Areas and Shopping Frontages (Paragraphs 6.47 to 6.50).</p> <p>Review uses in the primary shopping area (Paragraph 6.54-6.55) and consider encouraging/supporting an outdoor market.</p> <p>Explore how land use planning can help promote the town reputation as a centre for arts, culture and tourism. Further town centre enhancements could be considered.</p>
	<p>l. the provision of a new road link from the B3081 to the A30 at Enmore Green, north of Shaftesbury; and m. improved walking and cycling links between the town centre and residential development to the east of the town.</p> <p>The route of the Shaftesbury Outer Eastern By-pass will continue to be protected from development that would prejudice its implementation in the longer term.</p>	<p>Review saved Policy SB17 (Enmore Green Link) of the Local Plan 2003 and the route of the road with DCC Highways.</p> <p>Review saved Policy SB9 (Access requirements for land east of Shaftesbury), Policies SB15 and SB16 of the Local Plan 2003. Review Paragraphs 37.6.14/15 Linkages with the Town Centre/Role of Christy's Lane.</p> <p>Review saved Policies 5.21 and 5.22 (Safeguarding Land/A350 Corridor) and SB18 (A350 Outer bypass) of the Local Plan 2003 with DCC Highways.</p>	<p>Review saved Policy SB9 (Access requirements for land east of Shaftesbury), Policies SB15 and SB16 of the Local Plan 2003. Review Paragraphs 37.6.14/15 Linkages with the Town Centre/Role of Christy's Lane.</p> <p>Consider foot and cycle path provision in the town as a whole and how it links to the surrounding countryside.</p> <p>Explore additional parking opportunities in the town (Paragraph 8.123) based on evidence.</p>
Infrastructure	<p>n. the provision of a new community hall for the town; and d. a new two form of entry primary school, an extension to the secondary school and expanded further and adult education provision in the town; and p. a new doctor's surgery, or the expansion or relocation of the existing doctor's surgery.</p>	<p>Review saved Policy 4.3 (Community Buildings) of the Local Plan 2003.</p> <p>Identify land for new primary school in liaison with DCC.</p> <p>Identify land for new doctor's surgery or expansion or relocation of existing.</p> <p>Review future cemetery and burial ground needs in the town.</p>	<p>Review saved Policy 4.3 (Community Buildings) of the Local Plan 2003.</p> <p>Identify land for new doctor's surgery or expansion or relocation of existing.</p> <p>Review future cemetery and burial ground needs in the town.</p>
Social			

Shaftesbury, Melbury Abbas and Cann Neighbourhood Plan – Policy Options			
	North Dorset Local Plan - 2011 to 2026 Part 1	North Dorset Local Plan - 2011 to 2026 Part 2 (Site Allocations)	Shaftesbury, Melbury Abbas and Cann Neighbourhood Plan
Green	<p>A network of green infrastructure will be developed in and around Shaftesbury focussing on linking existing sites, such as the Slopes, and providing new sites and links to serve the residents of both the new and existing development in the town. This will include:</p> <p>q. informal recreation space associated with the development of sites to the east of the town to reduce recreational pressure on nearby high value wildlife sites.</p>	<p>Identify network of green infrastructure including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of saved Policy 1.9 (IOWA) of the Local Plan 2003. • Identifying informal recreation space associated with the development of site to the east of the town. • Identifying additional allotments. 	<p>Identify network of green infrastructure including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of saved Policy 1.9 (IOWA) of the Local Plan 2003. • Identifying informal recreation space associated with the development of site to the east of the town. • Identifying additional allotments. <p>Consider designating Local Green Spaces.</p>
	Policy 20 – The Countryside		
	<p>Outside of the settlement boundary of Shaftesbury development will only be permitted if:</p> <p>a. it is of a type appropriate in the countryside (as set out in the relevant policies of the Local Plan as summarised in Figure 8.5), or</p> <p>b. for any other type of development if it can be demonstrated that there is an 'overriding need' for it to be located in the countryside.</p>	<p>Part 2 of the North Dorset Local Plan does not include any specific allocations in the countryside.</p>	<p>Consider the local needs for those people who live in the countryside (outside of the settlement boundary of Shaftesbury). The Shaftesbury, Melbury Abbas and Cann Neighbourhood Area contains a number of smaller villages and hamlets and there may be a local need for housing, employment or other forms of development including new commercial community facilities or cultural facilities in these areas. Remember any growth proposed in the countryside will need to be based on evidence.</p>

Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Plan – Policy Options based on the pre-submission document			
	North Dorset Local Plan - 2011 to 2026 Part 1	North Dorset Local Plan - 2011 to 2026 Part 2 (Site Allocations)	Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Plan
Role of policies/Plans	<p>Local Plan Part 1 explains the context within which the planning policies for the District have been developed. It describes the spatial characteristics of the local area, identifies the key issues and challenges and includes a vision and objectives to tackle the issues and challenges.</p> <p>Topic based policies establish the scale and broad location of future development. They establish an overall sustainable development strategy (Policies 1 and 2), set out a strategic approach to environment and climate change, meeting housing needs, supporting economic development and infrastructure (Policies 3 to 15).</p> <p>Topic based policies are explored in more detail in individual town policies (Policy 19 Sturminster Newton) and the countryside (Policy 20). Part 1 also includes strategic Development Management Policies (Policies 22 to 33) which provide more detail on a range of issues and types of development, including development in the countryside. Part 1 concludes by establishing a framework for monitoring.</p>	<p>Local Plan Part 2 will allocate specific sites for housing and employment growth in the main towns and will include a review of other land allocations and settlement boundaries.</p> <p>Sites to be allocated will include the broad locations for development at the four main towns as shown in the Local Plan Part 1. In general the land allocations to be reviewed are those saved policies from the North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (1st Revision) that was adopted in 2003 that have not been replaced by policies in Local Plan Part 1 (in general those listed on pages 368 to 379).</p> <p>Local Plan Part 2 will contain an O/S base map showing reviewed policies and new allocations.</p>	<p>A Neighbourhood Plan is a planning document that will guide future development of the area. It is about the use and development of land and associated social, economic and environmental issues. It can be detailed or simply set general principles but it cannot deal with non-planning matters.</p> <p>In general for the neighbourhood area of Sturminster Newton the neighbourhood plan can play a key role in enabling local communities to shape strategic growth in the town. It can also be used as a tool to meet local needs in the countryside.</p> <p>A Neighbourhood Plan can set out the community's overall vision for the area and ideally it will give a local focus to the more general district wide vision set out in the Local Plan Part 1.</p>
	Policy 19 – Sturminster Newton		
Sustainable Development Strategy	<p>Sturminster Newton will continue to function as the main service centre in the rural west of the district through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> development and redevelopment within the existing built up area; and development of the greenfield land at Market Hill to the north of the former livestock market; and small greenfield extensions to the north and east of Sturminster; and development of North Dorset Business Park at Newton. <p>All developments will need to reflect the policies, principles and design concepts identified through the Town Design Statement and design and development briefs produced by the local community.</p>	<p>The Sustainable Development Strategy summarises the policy approach in the towns. Specific allocations and actions are explained in more detail in the policies below.</p>	<p>The Sustainable Development Strategy sets the overall strategy for future development in the town of Sturminster Newton. The Neighbourhood Plan needs to positively support the Local Plan Part 1 by reflecting and being in general conformity with the sustainable development strategy and all strategic policies.</p>

NOTE Policy options marked in **red/bold** can either be undertaken by North Dorset District Council through site allocations in Part 2 of the Local Plan or through the neighbourhood planning process

Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Plan – Policy Options based on the pre-submission document			
	North Dorset Local Plan - 2011 to 2026 Part 1	North Dorset Local Plan - 2011 to 2026 Part 2 (Site Allocations)	Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Plan
Environment and Climate Change (Policies 3, 4 and 5)	<p>The impact of climate change on the town will be addressed with measures put in place to reduce the risk of flooding from the River Stour and from surface water within the town through the provision of sustainable drainage systems in all development.</p> <p>The town’s natural and historic built environments will be protected and enhanced.</p>	<p>Review saved Policy 1.12 (River Valley) of the Local Plan 2003 that recognises the importance of the landscape feature in the District.</p> <p>Review the saved Sturminster Newton Conservation Sub Areas Policy (SN3) of the Local Plan 2003.</p>	<p>Review saved Policy 1.12 (River Valley) of the Local Plan 2003 that recognises the importance of the landscape feature in the District.</p> <p>Review the saved Sturminster Newton Conservation Sub Areas Policy (SN3) of the Local Plan 2003. This is not a review of the Conservation Area boundary or Sub Area Boundaries, these are determined through separate legislation, it is a review of the policies themselves. The TDS and its character areas may be useful here.</p> <p>Review Town Design Statement and its design principles for the town in light of the more recent development.</p> <p>Consider local community actions that will help to mitigate and adapt to climate change (Paragraph 4.35).</p> <p>Identify Local Green Spaces as defined in Paragraphs 76 and 77 of the NPPF (also see Infrastructure – Green below).</p> <p>As part of this review non-designated heritage assets could be identified for the Councils 'local list' (Paragraph 4.168).</p>
Meeting Housing Needs (Policies 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10)	<p>About 380 dwellings will be provided at Sturminster Newton during the period 2011 – 2026. Housing needs will be met through:</p> <p>e. infilling and redevelopment within the settlement boundary, including the redevelopment of land in and around the Station Road area;</p> <p>together with the development of the following greenfield sites:</p> <p>f. land to the north of the former livestock market at Market Hill; and</p> <p>g. land to the to the north of Northfields; and</p> <p>h. land to the east of the former Creamery site.</p>	<p>Review saved Policy 1.7 (Settlement Boundary) of the Local Plan 2003 for Sturminster Newton (Inset Map 47).</p> <p>Allocate the number and location of houses for the land to the north of the former livestock market at Market Hill. Review Policy SN4 of the Local Plan 2003 in relation to this site.</p> <p>Also allocate the number and location of houses to the north of Northfields and to the east of the former Creamery site on an O/S base map.</p> <p>Consider allocating committed housing sites having regard to extant planning consents.</p>	<p>Review saved Policy 1.7 (Settlement Boundary) of the Local Plan 2003 for Sturminster Newton (Inset Map 47).</p> <p>Review Policy SN4 of the Local Plan 2003 in relation to the Market Hill site. Suggest design principles and linkages for the strategic allocations based on TDS evidence base.</p> <p>Suggest design principles for the other allocated sites in the town.</p> <p>Consider allocating committed housing sites having regard to extant planning consents.</p> <p>In addition allocate additional non-strategic housing sites in the town.</p>

Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Plan – Policy Options based on the pre-submission document			
	North Dorset Local Plan - 2011 to 2026 Part 1	North Dorset Local Plan - 2011 to 2026 Part 2 (Site Allocations)	Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Plan
Supporting Economic Development (Policies 11 and 12)	<p>Employment needs in the town for the period up to 2026 will be met through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the development of North Dorset Business Park; and j. the retention of Butts Pond Industrial Estate. <p>Any development on North Dorset Business Park should be designed to reflect both the design and development brief and the masterplan for the site.</p> <p>The main focus for additional retail provision and other town centre uses will be the existing town centre and the redevelopment of the Station Road area. Any scheme for the Station Road area should be designed in accordance with the design and development brief for the area.</p>	<p>Review saved Policy 3.2 (Defined Employment Areas) of the Local Plan 2003 on an O/S Base Map.</p> <p>In relation to North Dorset Business Park review the boundary/policy of Local Plan 2003 policy SN6 having regard to the development brief for the site.</p> <p>Allocate Station Road regeneration area on an O/S base map.</p> <p>Define the Town Centre and if required a Primary Shopping Area.</p> <p>Define Shopping Frontages (Paragraphs 6.47 to 6.50) following a review of saved Policies 3.16 and 3.17 (Primary and secondary shopping frontages) of the Local Plan 2003 (Inset Map 47A).</p>	<p>Allocate additional non-strategic sites for employment.</p> <p>Include specific policies for North Dorset Business Park based on the development brief.</p> <p>Allocate Station Road regeneration area on an O/S base map.</p> <p>Review the Station Road design brief and explore options for the regeneration area.</p> <p>Define the Town Centre and if required a Primary Shopping Area.</p> <p>Define Shopping Frontages (Paragraphs 6.47 to 6.50) following a review of saved Policies 3.16 and 3.17 (Primary and secondary shopping frontages) of the Local Plan 2003 (Inset Map 47A).</p> <p>Consider policies to encourage/support the outdoor market.</p> <p>Consider if further town centre enhancements are necessary.</p>
	<p>k. improved walking and cycling links between the town centre and new developments; and</p> <p>l. the extension of the North Dorset Trailway to the north west of the town, including the provision of a pedestrian / cycle bridge over the River Stour; and</p> <p>m. the improvement of pedestrian / cycle links between Sturminster and North Dorset Business Park</p>	<p>Review saved Policy SN10 (Cycle routes) of the Local Plan 2003</p> <p>Review saved Policy 4.11 (The Use of Redundant Railway Lines) of the Local Plan 2003</p>	<p>Review saved Policy SN10 (Cycle routes) of the Local Plan 2003</p> <p>Review saved Policy 4.11 (The Use of Redundant Railway Lines) of the Local Plan 2003</p> <p>Consider foot and cycle path provision in the town as a whole and how it links to the surrounding countryside.</p>
Infrastructure	<p>n. the promotion of The Exchange building as a community and cultural hub; and</p> <p>o. the retention and expansion of the leisure centre; and</p> <p>p. an extension to the secondary school and expansion and possible relocation of the primary school.</p>	<p>Identify and allocate, if required, land for new primary school in liaison with DCC.</p>	

Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Plan – Policy Options based on the pre-submission document			
	North Dorset Local Plan - 2011 to 2026 Part 1	North Dorset Local Plan - 2011 to 2026 Part 2 (Site Allocations)	Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Plan
Green	<p>A network of green infrastructure will be developed in and around Sturminster town and Newton village based on existing sites, such as Butts Pond Local Nature Reserve, and strategic links such as the North Dorset Trailway. In the period up to 2026, green infrastructure to support growth will include:</p> <p>q. a green buffer between Butt’s Pond Industrial Estate and new housing development on land north of the former livestock market; and</p> <p>r. additional allotments on land between Elm Close and the Trailway.</p>	<p>Identify network of green infrastructure including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of saved Policy 1.9 (IOWA) of the Local Plan 2003. • Allocating a site for additional allotments on land between Elm Close and the Trailway 	<p>Identify network of green infrastructure including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of saved Policy 1.9 (IOWA) of the Local Plan 2003. • Allocating a site for additional allotments on land between Elm Close and the Trailway <p>Consider designating Local Green Spaces.</p>

	Local Plan Core Policy for Gillingham (CP16)	Local Plan Strategic Site Allocation (SSA) Policy	Neighbourhood Plan Below is a guide to the possible issues a Neighbourhood Plan could address. Matters not dealt with in the Neighbourhood Plan may be addressed in a subsequent Site Allocations DPD
ROLES OF POLICIES/ PLANS	Core Policy 16 is the strategic policy that guides future development at Gillingham. The Neighbourhood Plan and any Site Allocations must be in general conformity with this policy.	The SSA is the strategic policy that guides the future development of the proposed growth of the town to the south of Gillingham. It will identify specific areas for different uses and include a more detailed 'concept plan' showing how the different elements will link together. The Neighbourhood Plan and any Site Allocations must also be in general conformity with this policy.	The Neighbourhood Plan should positively support CP16 and the SSA policy, by reflecting and being in general conformity with them. Outside of these strategic elements the Neighbourhood Plan should shape and direct sustainable development in the town.
HOUSING	Specify overall number of new homes and location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land south of Ham between Shaftesbury Road and the floodplain of the River Lodden, on the southern edge of town Land east of Ham, south of the floodplain of the River Lodden and Kings Court Land adjacent to Lodden Lakes Land to south & south west of Bay Mixed use regeneration of land at Station Road Infilling and regeneration 	Specify the number and location of new homes in the SSA in more detail <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land south of Ham between Shaftesbury Road and the floodplain of the River Lodden, on the southern edge of town Land east of Ham, south of the floodplain of the River Lodden and Kings Court Land adjacent to Lodden Lakes 	Guide the design of new homes in the town and SSA Guide the design of the housing element in the regeneration of land at Station Road Identify sites for housing in addition to those in the Local Plan which could include a review of the settlement boundary
EMPLOYMENT	Specify the quantum of employment land and location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brickfields Park Farm Station Road Neal's Yard 	Specify the quantum of employment land at Brickfields/Park Farm and provide detailed plans the development of these sites	Guide the design employment areas Identify sites for employment in addition to those in the Local Plan
TOWN & LOCAL CENTRES	Outline the overall town and local centres policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regeneration of the town centre Mixed use regeneration of land at Station Road A new local centre in land east and south of Ham 	Identify the location and scale of a new local centre with in the SSA	Guide and plan for the town centre regeneration Guide and plan for the mixed use regeneration of land at Station Road which could include defining the town centre and primary and secondary shopping frontages
GREY INFRA-STRUCTURE	Specify grey infrastructure to take forward growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new link road between B3081 and B3092 Enhancement of the railway station Improved foot and cycle path linkages between existing facilities and destinations and the proposed areas of growth 	Identify the route and type of road that will link the B3081 and B3092 Identify foot and cycle path linkages between existing facilities in the town and the SSA Consider SUDS	Identify foot and cycle path linkages between existing facilities and the proposed areas of growth (including SSA and other allocated sites)
SOCIAL INFRA-STRUCTURE	Specify social infrastructure to take forward growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leisure and community hall for the town New local centre for the SSA New doctors surgery New and extended primary school Extension to secondary school 	Identify the location for a new local centre Provide details on a new doctor's surgery Identify the location of a new primary school Provide details on the expansion of the existing primary school	Guide the location and type of new and/or extended leisure facilities Support community hall plans Guide the design and influence the types of facilities to be located at a new local centre
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE	Outline the strategic approach to green infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sports pitches at secondary school Town Park Green corridors Areas for formal and informal play 	Identify green corridors within/adjoining SSA Identify areas for formal and informal play Identify new allotments	Plan for a New Town Park Identify and protect green corridors Identify areas for formal and informal play Identify new allotments

The Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan Group is a key stakeholder and will be invited to work with the Council and the developers in taking forward CP16, the SSA Policy and subsequent Site Allocation DPD