



# Sustainability Appraisal

Incorporating the Strategic Environmental Assessment  
of the

## North Dorset Local Plan Part 1: Pre-submission Document



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The SEA Directive has several specific requirements. This table outlines where the relevant information can be found with more detail in Appendix A of this report.

SEA Directive requirement (as specified in Annex I of the SEA Directive)	Location (in this report, in the Initial SA Report (including its Addendum) or in the Scoping Report)
an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	Section 3 of this report
	Initial SA Report Section 3.0
	SA Scoping Report Appendix A to E
the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme	Section 4 of this report
	Initial SA Report Section 4.0
	SA Scoping Report Appendix C and D
the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	Section 4 of this report
	Initial SA Report Sections 4.0 and 6.0
	The SA Scoping Report
any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to areas of particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC	Sections 2 and 4 of this report alongside the Habitats Regulations Report produced to accompany the Plan
	Initial SA Report Section 5.0
	SA Scoping Report Appendix C and D
the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation	Section 3 and Appendix B of this report
	Initial SA Report Section 5.0
	SA Scoping Report Appendix C and D

SEA Directive requirement (as specified in Annex I of the SEA Directive)	Location (in this report, in the Initial SA Report (including its Addendum) or in the Scoping Report)
the likely significant effects <sup>1</sup> on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors	Sections 6 and 7 and Appendices D, E and F of this report
	Initial SA Report Section 7.0
the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme	Sections 7 and 8 of this report.
	Initial SA Report Sections 6.0, 7.0 and 8.0
an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information	Section 2, Section 5 and Appendix C and Appendix E of this report
	Initial SA Report Section 5.0, Section 6.0 and Appendix C and D
a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10	Section 10 of this report
a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	Section 1 of this report
	Initial SA Report Section 2.0

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<sup>1</sup> These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects.

# 1. Non-Technical Summary

- 1.1 This document forms a record of the Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1. The Local Plan sets out the planning policies to guide development across the district over the period 2011 to 2026. Part 1 of this Local Plan sets out the spatial approach to development and establishes a strategic set of policies to guide development. Local Plan Part 2 will subsequently allocate a number of sites for housing and employment uses as well as making changes to the proposals map, showing policy designations, for the district.
- 1.2 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a systematic process which seeks to predict the social, environmental and economic effects of implementing the Local Plan. A Sustainability Appraisal is required to be prepared alongside the Local Plan production by planning legislation.
- 1.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required by UK and European legislation and is a process similar to SA which considers the effects on the environment of implementing the Local Plan.
- 1.4 The aim of the SEA process is to provide a high level of protection of the environment and to integrate considerations of the environment into plan preparation with a view to promoting sustainable development.
- 1.5 The aim of the SA process is to ensure that social and economic factors are considered alongside the environmental factors, as part of the plan making process and in a systematic way before the plan is adopted.
- 1.6 Guidance suggests that the SA and SEA processes should be undertaken together as a single process. There are a number of stages to the SA/SEA process that need to be carried out as the Local Plan is produced. These are:
- Stage A: Scoping – setting the context and establishing the baseline position
  - Stage B: Assessment – developing options and appraising the likely effects of these options
  - Stage C: Production – preparing the report on the SA process
  - Stage D: Consultation – consulting on the SA Report alongside the Plan
  - Stage E: Monitoring – monitoring the implementation of the Plan
- 1.7 A summary of the SA process to date is available in Section 2.0 of this report

## North Dorset Context

- 1.8 North Dorset is situated in the south of England and covers a rural area of approximately 61000Ha. The district has five market towns which act as hubs serving their rural hinterlands and a large number of smaller rural settlements. Approximately half of the District's 69000 residents live within the main towns.

- 1.9 The dominant economic sector is the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing sector with approximately 17% of businesses being within this sector. The majority of businesses are however small employing fewer than five people.
- 1.10 The natural environment of the District is highly valued especially in relation to the historic environment, with approximately one third of the District’s area being designated as an AONB. This rural and highly attractive environment makes it an attractive but expensive place to live with high house prices, high cost of living and high levels of dependence on the private car to access facilities.

## Sustainability Issues for North Dorset

- 1.11 In 2007, the scoping stage of the SA was undertaken, identifying the key sustainability issues for the District. This Scoping exercise was revised and updated in 2009 with more up to date information. The key sustainability issues for North Dorset were identified as:

Social Progress that Recognises the Needs of Everyone	
Housing: High house prices, low wages, low affordability	Need to provide adequate housing and affordable housing to meet needs
Population: Population growth due to in migration, ageing population, relatively small working aged population (relative to England and Wales)	Need to provide for the ageing population
Health: Relatively healthy population, relatively high levels of diseases associated with age and poor lifestyles	Promote active lifestyles, offer opportunities to participate in exercise
Crime: Low crime rate, more concern about crime than actual crime	Design environments in which people feel safe, encourage community spirit
Access and Deprivation: Poor accessibility to services due to rurality, pockets of rural deprivation and areas of deprivation within towns	Provide essential services in tandem with housing development, address deficiencies
Equality: Predominantly White British, Christian population, low proportion of disabled people, balanced gender distribution, ageing population	Provide for the diverse needs of the population

Effective Protection of the Environment	
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna: Protect and enhance habitats and species by increasing connectivity and enhancing wildlife corridors, recognition of the wider importance of biodiversity	Protect designated sites and restore habitats when opportunities arise
Climate Change and Flooding: Avoid flood risk from all sources in new developments, adaptation to the unavoidable effects of climate change	Reduce risk to property by avoiding areas that are most likely to be affected by climate change, exploit opportunities that arise within environmental limits
Cultural Heritage, Landscape and Archaeology: Distinctive landscape areas within North Dorset, highly valued historic and rural heritage, highly valued settlement characters	Preserve and promote the rich heritage of North Dorset
Pollution: Prevent pollution of rivers, air and land, seek to improve underperforming areas	Protect high quality environment
Prudent use of Natural Resources	
Waste: Minimise waste and increase levels of recycling	Promote recycling and reuse of resources and land
Natural Resources, Water and Soil: Reduce pressure on undeveloped land through efficient use of land, protect important resources from development	Promote development on previously developed land, manage natural resources effectively
Energy Consumption and Energy Efficiency: Reduction in energy usage, promotion of non-fossil fuel based energy resources, reduction in CO <sub>2</sub> emissions	Promote energy efficient construction, promote renewable energy resources
Maintenance of Sustainable Levels of Economic Growth and Employment	
The Economy: Low paid workforce, prevalence of small firms, manufacturing, retail, defence and education are important sectors	Enhance competitiveness of firms so they can grow, increase earnings
Transport: Poor public transport network results in high car ownership and poor accessibility	Improve accessibility locally and to the national transport network Reduce the need to travel
Education, Training and Skills: High levels of educational achievement, significant level of people with poor literacy	Improve educational attainment of the most disadvantaged and improve access to high quality educational establishments

1.12 The identification of key sustainability issues for North Dorset enables a set of objectives to be derived to resolve the issue. These were used to test the Local Plan

at stages through its preparation to establish how it would help to address the issues.

- 1.13 The SA framework contained 16 objectives which were derived and consulted on through the scoping process. This consultation helped to further refine the objectives within the framework.

Sustainability Appraisal Objectives		
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments
Effective protection of the environment	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscape
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value
Prudent use of natural resources	10	Reduce impacts on the environment
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production
Maintenance of sustainable levels of economic growth and employment	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential

- 1.14 More information on the scoping stage of the SA is available in the SA Scoping report produced in 2009. A summary is also included in Section 4 of this report.

## Appraisal of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1

1.15 Each of the stages of the Local Plan’s production have been subject to SA with the appraisal utilising the SA objectives that make up the SA Framework. The appraisal was undertaken using six categories of predicted effects with predictions being made using professional judgement against the SA objectives.

Key to appraisal results

++	Strong positive impact
+	Positive impact
0	Neutral or no impact
-	Negative impact
--	Strong negative impact
?	Unknown or uncertain impact

1.16 The key stages in the Local Plan production and accompanying SA are:

- the draft New Plan produced for consultation in 2010 and accompanied by the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report
- the Key Issues for the Revision of the draft New Plan consultation undertaken in 2012 and consultation on the Addendum to the Initial Sustainability Appraisal report
- the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 Pre-submission Document and the Pre-submission Document Sustainability Appraisal Report (this report)

1.17 Throughout the process, consultations on the Local Plan and on the SA have been undertaken simultaneously. The results of these consultations, along with available evidence, have not only been used to refine the Local Plan but also to improve the SA.

### Appraisal of the draft New Plan 2010

1.18 The draft New Plan produced in 2010 was subject to SA alongside its production with options being tested against the SA objectives. The option that appeared to be the most appropriate was then worked up into a preferred approach which was also subject to SA. The Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report sets out the options considered and details the appraisal of the preferred approach for each policy and for the Plan as a whole.

1.19 The main options considered related to the level of growth to be assigned to each of the settlements within the District. These options included considerations of the quantum of residential and employment development and the level of affordable housing that would be sought.

1.20 A number of options were considered around each of the four main towns for accommodating growth. These looked at all available information and constraints

in relation to alternative sites around the towns to identify the most sustainable options for development. A summary of the outcomes of the options appraisal, including the reasons for eliminating options from further consideration, is included in Appendix D of this report.

- 1.21 The preferred options identified as part of this process were developed into draft policies and these were also appraised against the SA objectives both as standalone policies and in combination with the other draft policies in the draft New Plan. The results of which are included in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report 2010.

### **Addendum to the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report**

- 1.22 One of the results of the consultation on the draft New Plan and Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report was that some site options for delivering growth at Blandford and Gillingham has not been considered. In addition, the SA of the more detailed “Development Management” policies had not been undertaken as part of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report.
- 1.23 To cover these issues, further SA work was undertaken and consulted upon in 2010, alongside the consultation on Key Issues for the Revision of the draft New Plan. The options considered as part of this additional SA work suggest that the preferred approach included in the draft New Plan was the most appropriate.

### **Appraisal of the Local Plan Part 1 Pre-submission Document**

- 1.24 The draft New Plan has been revised in the light of the results of consultation, evidence gathered and the various pieces of SA work undertaken. The Local Plan Part 1 Pre-submission Document is the most recent version of the Plan. The SA of the Plan is detailed in this report, making reference to the other SA reports produced.

### **Results of the Appraisal**

- 1.25 During the assessment of the Plan, a number of gaps in data and uncertainties have been identified. It is also very difficult to accurately predict the effects of the implementation of the Plan and certain policies within the plan at a strategic scale. For example, impacts on biodiversity tend to relate closely to site characteristics and can more clearly be evaluated through information collected at the site level. Where uncertainties have been identified, they are highlighted in the appraisal matrices.
- 1.26 The majority of the effects of the plan have been identified as being positive. Significant positive effects relate to the provision of housing and employment, the creation of balanced communities and improvements in access to essential facilities. Achieving these is one of the key aims of sustainable development.
- 1.27 Although no significant negative effects have been identified, there is the potential for some negative effects resulting from the plan. The identified negative effects relate to climate change adaptation where the plan has not been assessed as being

proactive in reducing the impacts. Similarly the plan does not proactively encourage energy efficiency and renewable or low carbon energy generation especially where opportunities exist.

- 1.28 Mitigation of increased transport is thought to be encouraged effectively through the inclusion of infrastructure within developments that facilitates sustainable travel and through the location of the majority of development. Measures include improved cycle and foot path provision, improved access to public transport and the locating of development in the most accessible places.
- 1.29 An additional potential negative effects relates to improving the skills of the workforce. The main mechanism for achieving this is through further and higher education however there are limited establishments within the District and the links with those outside of the District are not specifically made.

### Recommendations and Monitoring

- 1.30 A number of recommendations have been made throughout the SA process to reducing the impact of the Plan's implementation. where these recommendations suggested a change to policy, that change has either been made or changes to the planning system have resulted in the recommendation being superseded. Where potential negative effects have been identified as part of the plan, additional policies and additional requirements have been included in the Plan to avoid, minimise or mitigate the potential impact.
- 1.31 Additional recommendations of the SA relate to monitoring of mitigation measures to ensure that they are having the desired effect. One example of such a recommendation is the monitoring of increased recreation on the Fontmell and Melbury Downs SAC. Mitigation proposed to offset the impact on the SAC includes the provision of attractive alternative recreation space within developments in nearby towns.
- 1.32 Monitoring of Local Plan implementation is required by legislation. Similarly there is a requirement to monitor the SA. A set of indicators have been developed as part of the Local Plan production which should enable comprehensive assessment of the impacts of its implementation. These indicators have been linked to the SA objectives and hence enable the monitoring of the SA alongside the Local Plan. The recommendations for monitoring indicators arising as part of the SA will form part of the final monitoring framework for the Local Plan.

### Next Steps

- 1.33 This SA has appraised the effects of implementing the policies and the overall effect of the whole Local Plan Part 1 Pre-submission Version against the SA objectives. The conclusion of this is that the Plan is the most appropriate strategy for meeting the development needs of the district. It is particularly strong in meeting the housing needs and in building communities. It also performs strongly in promoting

sustainable transport and mitigating the impact on the natural and historic environment.

- 1.34 The Local Plan Part 1 Pre-submission Document and this accompanying Environmental Report will be subject to public consultation prior to submission for public examination.

## 2. Introduction

- 2.1 Planning legislation requires that planning documents are subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) during their production. The SA is a systematic process which seeks to integrate consideration of the social and economic impact of plan implementation alongside consideration of the impact on the environment.
- 2.2 The European Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC), known as the “SEA Directive”, requires that the Local Plan is subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to consider the effects of the plan’s implementation on the environment.
- 2.3 The objective of the SEA process<sup>2</sup> is “to provide a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development”.
- 2.4 Government guidance suggests that the two assessments can be carried out together. It is however essential as part of this that a systematic set of stages are followed to ensure that the requirements of the two assessments are met.
- 2.5 This report documents the findings of the SA of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1. The SA has been undertaken in such a way that the requirements of the SEA Directive are incorporated into a single assessment. This report therefore constitutes the Environmental Report produced for the SEA and in support of the Local Plan. The SA process, the SEA process and the combined SA/SEA process are all covered by this single report.

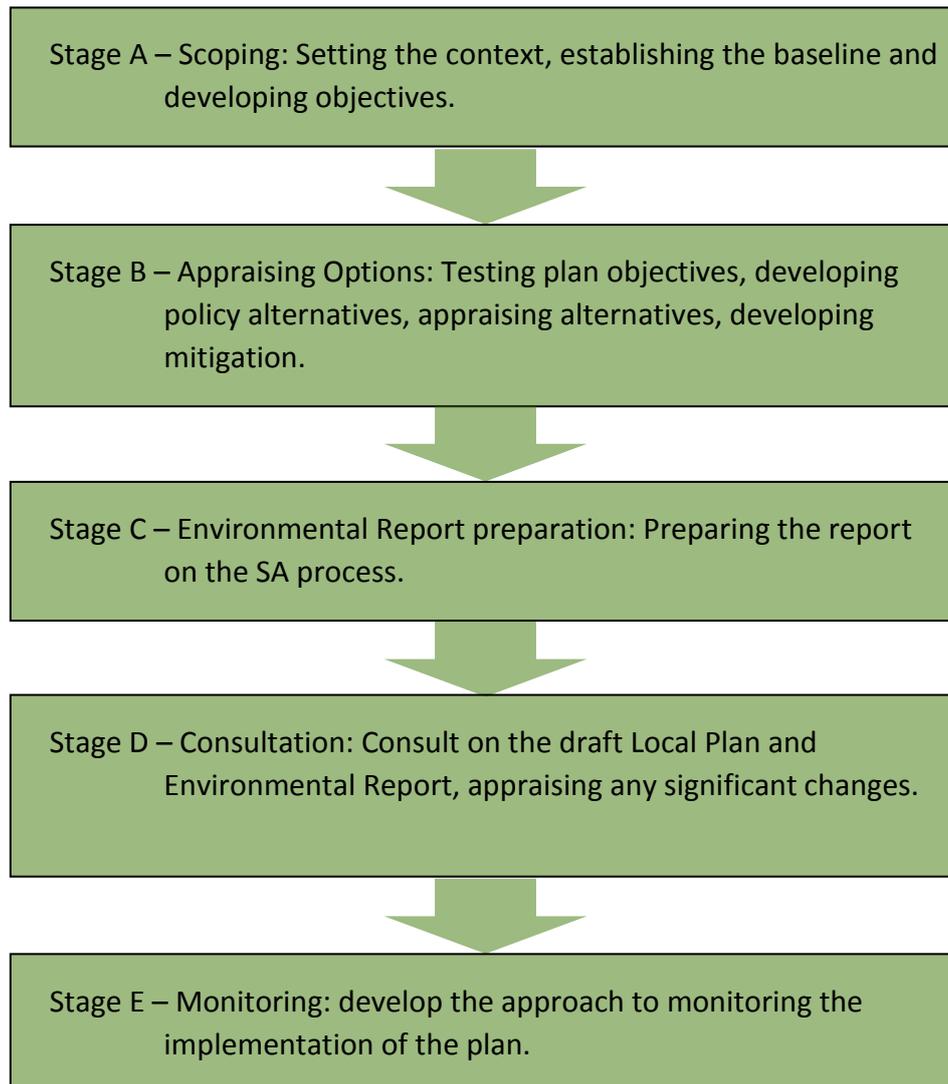
### The Appraisal Process

- 2.6 A Sustainability Appraisal is carried out at the plan level rather than at the project level and therefore contains information relevant to the strategic level of policy formation rather than detailed site and project information. Where it is evident that there are project level issues that may arise at a particular site, the SA should highlight further information that may need to be collected to fully assess the environmental impacts of the project. Where necessary, an environmental impact assessment will be carried out at the project level to take on board site specific environmental information.
- 2.7 The SA is an iterative process which involves several stages. These run alongside the Local Plan production process and influence the approach being taken. Several reports have been prepared to support the SA of the Local Plan. These report on the SA progress at each stage of consultation and identify how the plan has been influenced by the SA.

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<sup>2</sup> Annex 1 of the “SEA Directive” 2001/42/EC

Figure 2.1 – Sustainability Appraisal stages



2.8 This report is the environmental report covering the appraisal of the pre-submission version of the Local Plan Part 1. It pulls together all of this previous SA work and appraises the latest iteration of the Local Plan production process. The full Sustainability Appraisal incorporating the Strategic Environmental Assessment consists of a number of reports including this Environmental Report. These documents are:

- The Scoping Report produced in 2007
- The revised and updated Scoping Report produced in 2009
- The Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report produced in 2010
- The Addendum to the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report produced in 2012
- This Environmental Report.

## Summary of Sustainability Appraisal Method

- 2.9 The purpose of the SA is to take a long term view of the expected social, economic and environmental effects of implementing the plan, including over a longer time horizon than the plan itself. It should therefore check that the Vision, Objectives and Policies within the Local Plan are in line with the sustainability objectives relevant to the District and therefore influence the content of the Core Strategy.
- 2.10 The method used to undertake the SA of the Local Plan can be summarised as follows:
- The key sustainability issues that face the district were established through the scoping process. These sustainability issues were used to establish a framework of SA Objectives. This process was reported in the Scoping Report.
  - The SA Objectives were used to “test” the vision and objectives of the Local Plan to ensure consistency.
  - Policy and site options for moving towards the Local Plan objectives were tested against the SA objectives highlighting where potential impacts of each may occur and making recommendations as to which option should be chosen.
  - The preferred approach for the Local Plan in its entirety was appraised to assess the potential for cumulative, direct and indirect effects. The policy framework in each iteration of the Local Plan was appraised in a consistent way throughout.
- 2.11 The SA objectives (detailed in Section 4.0 of this report) were used as a basis for the SA of the Local Plan with professional expertise being used to make judgements on the likely effect of the plan implementation. The results of the SA consist of a commentary on the options considered, a commentary on the overall approach being taken forward in the Local Plan and a series of recommendations as to how effects of plan implementation could be avoided, mitigated or enhanced where appropriate.
- 2.12 The likely effect of the plan’s implementation was assessed against the SA objectives using the categories in Figure 2.2. These categories have been used throughout the appraisal process to enable comparison of the policy through its evolution and to enable comparison of the options considered.

Figure 2.2: Key to appraisal results

++	Strong positive impact
+	Positive impact
0	Neutral or no impact
-	Negative impact
--	Strong negative impact
?	Unknown or uncertain impact

- 2.13 It can be difficult to come to a view of the predicted effects on the environment without the plan's implementation as there are a number of external factors which will also have an impact locally. Continuation of the trends resulting from the adopted Development Plan would probably result in fewer houses being built than needed and less employment growth than needed. This may result in longer distance commuting and associated traffic problems. The result of an unmanaged approach to development would most likely result in a less sustainable pattern of development and greater impacts on the environment.
- 2.14 Similarly, it can be difficult to predict the effects on factors such as biodiversity and heritage when appraising policies at the strategic level as the impacts on these factors are often site-specific. More detailed information will be required at the project level primarily in relation to individual development sites proposed through the Local Plan.
- 2.15 At each stage of the Local Plan production and SA process, the relevant SA report and the Local Plan have been consulted upon alongside each other. This enables further expertise to be brought into the process to enable the SA to be more robust in its assessments.

### **Sustainability Appraisal Scoping**

- 2.16 The scoping process, which forms the background to the SA for North Dorset identifies the key sustainability issues relevant to development planning in the district. The scoping process reviewed the relevant plans and programmes within which the Local Plan would be implemented. In addition to this review, the baseline position was established by analysing the relevant contextual data available for the district.
- 2.17 The baseline position and the review of plans and programmes was used to help identify the sustainability issues which face the district. These were then used to identify a set of sustainability objectives against which the options and policies being developed as part of the Local Plan could be appraised. The detail of this process is contained in the Scoping Report produced in 2007 and the revised and updated Scoping Report produced in 2009. Section 4.0 provides a summary of this scoping stage of the SA.

### **Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan**

- 2.18 The SA of the Local Plan has been carried out at several stages during the Local Plan production and has informed its production in an iterative way. At each of these stages the SA process has been reported and consulted on alongside the Local Plan. Each report forms a part of the overall SA of the Local Plan and thus should be read together. Throughout the process, reasonable alternatives have been considered with the preferred option being taken forward to the next stage.

## Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report

- 2.19 In March 2010, the Council consulted on the draft New Plan for North Dorset. This draft plan contained a spatial portrait and the main issues and challenges that the district faces. These were developed into a vision and a set of objectives for the district as a whole. The plan included a set of strategic policies to guide development and a set of development management policies to add detail to this strategic approach. The Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report was produced alongside this draft New Plan, to report on the SA work that informed its production.
- 2.20 The SA checked the consistency of the draft New Plan's vision and objectives with the SA objectives established through the 2009 scoping process. It then compared alternative policy options for progressing the draft New Plan's objectives and appraised the Plan's preferred options as a whole. Recommendations were made as a result of the appraisal and are summarised in Section 5.0 of this report with more detail included in Appendix C.

## Addendum to the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report

- 2.21 As a result of consultation on the draft New Plan, a number of additional sites were suggested as possible options for delivering housing growth. These sites had not previously been subject to SA and hence were assessed as an addendum to the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report. In addition to the newly identified sites, the appraisal of alternatives to the Development Management policies was undertaken. A summary of this stage of the SA is included in Section 5.0 of this report with a summary in Appendix C.

## Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan Pre-submission Document

- 2.22 Since the draft New Plan was produced in 2010, planning policy at the national level has been revised and regional strategies have been abolished. The draft New Plan has therefore been revised to take on board these changes, new evidence, recommendations from the initial SA and to reflect the results of consultation on the draft policies.
- 2.23 This report summarises the previous SA work that has been undertaken (Section 5.0), sets out how the plan has been influenced by the SA (Section 5.0 and Appendices C to F) and appraises the pre-submission version of the Local Plan against the SA objectives (Appendices D to F). Section 10 outlines a range of indicators to be used to monitor the implementation of the Local Plan Part 1.

## Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 2.24 Under the European Habitats Directive and the UK Habitats Regulations, protection is given to animals, plants and habitats which are rare in a European context through the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). Similarly, through the European Birds Directive, protection is given to birds through the designation of

Special Protection Areas (SPA). Collectively these sites are known as Natura 2000 sites.

- 2.25 In addition to the Natura 2000 sites, the UK is a signatory to the Ramsar Convention which gives protection to wetland sites. In the UK, these Ramsar sites are given the same protection as SAC and SPA sites. The Habitats Regulations impose duties on Local Planning Authorities to assess the likely impact of plans or projects on the designated sites and protect them from the adverse effects.
- 2.26 The Habitats Regulations Assessment is an iterative process similar to SA/SEA but taking into account more detail on the internationally protected sites. Where a policy is highlighted as potentially having a significant effect on a site, alternative approaches should be considered or the policy approach should be modified to remove the significant effect.
- 2.27 Whilst SA enables a balance to be struck between the environmental, social and economic impacts of the plan, the Habitats Regulations Assessment applies strict tests to ensure that the protected sites are not significantly affected by the implementation of projects that result from the plan.
- 2.28 Within North Dorset, there are two sites which are designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). They are Fontmell and Melbury Downs and Rooksmoor.
- Fontmell and Melbury Downs is an inland site which includes large areas of species-rich chalk grassland.
  - Rooksmoor contains a particularly large population of marsh fritillary butterfly.
- 2.29 Just outside of North Dorset but within 5 kilometres there are other sites protected by International designations. These include:
- Holnest (SAC)
  - Cerne and Sydling Downs (SAC)
  - Dorset Heaths (SAC/SPA/Ramsar)
  - River Avon (SAC), Avon Valley (SPA/Ramsar)
- 2.30 Potential impacts from development within the District which may harm these internationally designated important habitats include:
- whether the increase in population would lead to increase in recreation on Fontmell and Melbury Downs (SAC), the Dorset Heaths (SAC/SPA/Ramsar), the Cerne and Sydling Downs (SAC) and other sites further afield;
  - whether water abstraction and discharge from new housing will impact on the River Avon (SAC);
  - whether increased traffic and therefore increased air pollution due to development in Blandford and Shaftesbury will adversely impact on the Fontmell and Melbury Downs (SAC);

- whether road improvements would be required as a result of development in Blandford and Shaftesbury and whether this would impact on the Fontmell and Melbury Downs (SAC);
- whether increased traffic and associated air pollution would impact on the Rooksmoor (SAC).

2.31 In addition, parts of the south of the District are within the catchment of Poole Harbour SPA and hence there is a pathway where developments could increase nitrogen loading on the harbour.

2.32 Whilst the SA/SEA has taken into account the potential for impact on biodiversity sites, the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Local Plan Part 1 has been undertaken separately to enable detailed site and species information to be taken into account for the internationally designated sites which may be impacted upon by development in the District. The SA/SEA may highlight where there is potential for impact due to Local Plan implementation but will not go into detail as such detail will be included in the Habitats Regulations Assessment.

## 3. The Local Plan: Contents and Structure

- 3.1 Delivering sustainable development is central to the purpose of the planning system. Planning policies setting out what sustainable development is in North Dorset are set out in the development plan. In North Dorset planning applications will be assessed against national policy namely the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>3</sup>, the North Dorset Local Plan, and neighbourhood plans produced by local communities.
- 3.2 In June 2007 North Dorset District Council published its Issues and Alternative Options Paper for consultation after a very early issues consultation in 2005. This was the beginning of the development of the then “Core Strategy” for the district, and provided an early opportunity for public involvement in the development of the plan.
- 3.3 In 2010, the Council produced the draft New Plan for North Dorset which set out the strategic policies that made up the Core Strategy and a number of Development Management policies which gave more detail for decision making purposes. Since the 2010 draft was produced, the plan has been revised to take on board changes to national policy, revocation of regional strategies and the introduction of Neighbourhood Plans. The plan is now referred to as the Local Plan.
- 3.4 The Local Plan will be made up of two parts. Part 1 (which this SA relates to) sets out the strategic planning policies for North Dorset with Part 2 (to be produced subsequently) reviewing sites and site boundaries to meet the growth needs of the District. In addition, a number of “saved policies” from the current Adopted Local Plan 2003 will remain in place until they are formally reviewed. Any subsequent neighbourhood plans produced by local communities will need to be in conformity with the Local Plan policies.
- 3.5 The Local Plan includes a vision and a number of objectives which it is trying to fulfil. The objectives are based on the physical characteristics of the district, the issues and challenges that exist and the vision for the district as a whole. Part 1 of the Local Plan contains a series of strategic policies which aim to guide development to aid in achieving the objectives and vision for the district and help to deliver sustainable development over the period 2011 to 2026.

### **The Local Plan Vision for North Dorset**

- 3.6 The vision for North Dorset is that in 15 years’ time North Dorset will:
- be a District that has played a positive role in addressing the causes and effects of climate change;

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<sup>3</sup> The National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012

- have more sustainable forms of development that are adequately served by infrastructure (including sustainable transport solutions) and make prudent use of natural resources (including previously developed land);
- have expanded thriving market towns collectively providing homes, jobs and services for those living within them and within the communities they serve;
- have sustainable smaller rural communities providing local services which enable day-to-day needs to be met locally;
- have a conserved and enhanced locally distinctive historic and natural environment that retains the qualities that make the District's urban and rural areas even more attractive and desirable places to live, work and visit;
- have more housing, and in particular more affordable housing, that better meets the diverse needs of the District;
- be a District: that has advanced towards more cohesive communities; that has recognised the needs of the older population; and where the life chances for children and young people have been enhanced;
- have a more robust and prosperous economy (including sustainable tourism) with high quality jobs and skills, focused in locations that best support the District's growing population; and
- have a range of community, leisure, cultural and recreational facilities in locations that are accessible to the local population.

### The Local Plan Objectives

- 3.7 The objectives link the vision for North Dorset to the policies in the Local Plan Part 1, by focussing on the key issues that need to be addressed. The District-wide objectives are:

#### Objective 1 - Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change

- The objective is to address the causes and effects of climate change by:
  - encouraging the use of sustainable construction techniques;
  - encouraging the use of renewable energy technologies appropriate to the local area; and
  - ensuring the wise use of natural resources, particularly previously developed land and water.

#### Objective 2 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic and Natural Environment

- The objective is to conserve and enhance the environment of North Dorset by:
  - ensuring that North Dorset's wildlife, landscape and cultural heritage are protected and well managed;
  - encouraging design that maintains the quality of the District's built and natural environment; and

- ensuring that the District’s residents are able to enjoy their homes and public places without undue disturbance or intrusion from neighbouring uses.

### Objective 3 - Ensuring the Vitality of the Market Towns

- The objective is to support the role and function of the market towns of Blandford Forum (and Blandford St. Mary), Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton as the main service centres for the District by:
  - making them the main focus in the District for housing development, including affordable housing;
  - enhancing their employment and training opportunities, particularly through the provision of sufficient employment land, to meet the growing needs of the towns and their hinterlands;
  - focusing an improved range of retail, cultural and leisure uses within the town centres;
  - improving health, education and community services to meet the needs of the towns and their rural hinterlands;
  - improving sustainable transport links and accessibility within the towns; between the towns and the villages in their rural hinterlands; and, through improved linkages with strategic transport networks;
  - securing the delivery of mixed use regeneration on previously developed land in accessible locations;
  - ensuring that housing development is delivered in step with employment opportunities, community facilities and infrastructure; and
  - taking account of the effects of any interaction between the towns themselves and with the large towns and cities in neighbouring districts.

### Objective 4 - Supporting Sustainable Rural Communities

- The objective is to enable a network of sustainable smaller rural communities where local services and employment opportunities enable day-to-day needs to be met locally by:
  - adopting a general policy of restraint outside the District’s four main towns, whilst also enabling essential rural needs to be met;
  - focusing on meeting local (rather than strategic) needs in Stalbridge and the District’s villages;
  - enabling individual rural communities to plan to meet their own local needs, especially through neighbourhood planning; and
  - securing the retention, enhancement and future viability of local community facilities and local services.

### Objective 5 - Meeting the District’s Housing Needs

- The objective is to deliver more housing, including more affordable housing, that better meets the diverse needs of the District by:

- meeting the vast majority of overall District housing needs by focusing provision at the District’s four main towns;
- focusing provision elsewhere on meeting local housing needs, especially the need for affordable housing;
- ensuring that all new dwellings contribute to overcoming the affordable housing shortfall;
- ensuring that the type, design and mix of housing reflects housing needs in up-to-date assessments;
- ensuring that housing is designed to support the changing needs of its occupants and users; and
- ensuring that sufficient, sustainably-located sites are provided to meet the needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling show people in the District.

### Objective 6 - Improving the Quality of Life

- The objective is to improve the quality of life of North Dorset’s residents, particularly the older population and the young, by:
  - encouraging the provision of viable community, leisure and cultural facilities both in the main towns and rural communities;
  - retaining the current range of healthcare and education services and ensuring that additional healthcare and education facilities are provided in accessible locations;
  - ensuring that a network of multi-functional Green Infrastructure including sport and recreation facilities, open and natural space, is provided across the district;
  - securing an integrated approach to private and public transport (including parking provision and management), which improves accessibility to services; and
  - ensuring that development makes a positive contribution to enhancing existing and providing new transport infrastructure.

3.8 More detail on the vision and objectives is given in the Vision and Objectives Background Paper. The vision and objectives were tested for compatibility with the SA Objectives as part of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal undertaken in 2010. This compatibility check concluded that the local plan vision and objectives were compatible with the SA objectives. The detail of this can be found in Section 5.0 and in Appendices A and B of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report.

3.9 A number of minor changes have been made to the objectives since produced in 2010 which are not considered to be significant. These changes along with commentary on the impacts on sustainability, are outlined in Appendix B of this report. The only major change has been to reflect the change in the spatial strategy for the district as a whole in the light of the revocation of regional strategies and

the introduction of neighbourhood planning. The appraisal of this approach has been covered through the appraisal of Policy 2 – The Core Spatial Strategy.

### **The Local Plan Policies**

- 3.10 Since the draft plan was produced for consultation in 2010 there have been a number of changes to the policy framework in which the Local Plan once adopted, will operate. These changes include the removal of the regional level of planning resulting in the revocation of the regional strategy for the South West (RPG10). The other significant change to the policy framework is the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework replacing the majority of national planning policy statements and guidance.
- 3.11 The Figure 3.1 shows how the strategic policies of the North Dorset Local Plan have evolved from the Draft Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (also known as the New Plan for North Dorset) published in March 2010. It traces the evolution of the core and development management policies from 'drafts' to policies taking into consideration the results of earlier stages of the Sustainability Appraisal, the views of local residents and businesses, the changing planning system, updated evidence and changing national policy. More detail on this is given in the appraisals of each individual policy in Appendices D, E and F.

Figure 3.1 – Evolution of Local Plan Policies

Draft Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (March 2010)		Changes	North Dorset Local Plan – 2011 to 2026 (Publication version November 2013)	
		The National Planning Policy Framework establishes a “presumption in favour of sustainable development”. The planning Inspectorate has prepared this “model policy” for inclusion in Local Plans which meets the requirements of this presumption.	Policy 1	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
Core Policy 1	Tackling Climate Change	This policy has been updated in light of changing national policy and revised to incorporate sections of draft Core Policy 2 below.	Policy 3	Climate Change
Core Policy 2	Delivering Sustainable Forms of Development	Elements of this policy and its supporting text have been reviewed and are now included in Policy 2, 3, 13, 24 and 25.		
Core Policy 3	Core Spatial Strategy for North Dorset	This revised policy is now within Section 3 - Sustainable Development Strategy and has been reviewed in light of changes to national policy and the concerns raised by the public during the consultation.	Policy 2	Core Spatial Strategy
Core Policy 4	Housing (including Affordable Housing) Distribution	This policy has been revised in light of updated evidence and national policy. It is the first policy under the new section titled Meeting Housing Needs.	Policy 6	Housing Distribution

Draft Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (March 2010)		Changes	North Dorset Local Plan – 2011 to 2026 (Publication version November 2013)	
Core Policy 5	Managing Housing Land Supply	This policy is no longer required, the AMR will report on Housing Land supply		
Core Policy 6	Economy	This policy has been revised in light of updated evidence and national policy.	Policy 11	Economy
Core Policy 7	Retail and Other Town Centre Uses	This policy has been revised in light of updated evidence and national policy.	Policy 12	Retail and Other Town Centre Uses
Core Policy 8	Housing Mix, Type and Density	This policy has been revised in light of national policy.	Policy 7	Delivering Homes
Core Policy 9	Affordable Housing	This policy has been revised in light of national policy.	Policy 8	Affordable Housing
Core Policy 10	Affordable Housing: Rural Exception Schemes	This policy has been revised and expanded in light of national policy.	Policy 9	Rural Exception Schemes
Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople		A specific policy for sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople has now been included.	Policy 10	Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
Core Policy 11	Grey Infrastructure	All infrastructure policies have been revised in light of updated evidence and national policy.	Policy 13	Grey Infrastructure
Core Policy 12	Social Infrastructure		Policy 14	Social Infrastructure
Core Policy 13	Green Infrastructure		Policy 15	Green Infrastructure

Draft Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (March 2010)		Changes	North Dorset Local Plan – 2011 to 2026 (Publication version November 2013)	
Core Policy 14	Protecting and Enhancing the Environment	This policy has been sub divided to enable greater detail to be included following the abolition of PPSs and PPGs. It is now included in the section titled Environment and Climate Change.	Policy 4	Natural Environment
			Policy 5	Historic Environment
Core Policy 15	Blandford	All of the town policies have been revised to reflect changes in the overall approach to growth in the District.	Policy 16	Blandford
Core Policy 16	Gillingham		Policy 17	Gillingham
Core Policy 17	Shaftesbury		Policy 18	Shaftesbury
Core Policy 18	Sturminster Newton		Policy 19	Sturminster Newton
Core Policy 19	Stalbridge and the Larger Villages	Due to the revised spatial approach this is now one policy.	Policy 20	The Countryside
Core Policy 20	The Countryside (Including Smaller Villages)			
		This is a new policy allocating and providing greater detail on the southern extension to Gillingham	Policy 21	Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation
DM Policy 1	Renewable Energy	Re-structured and now includes low carbon energy and revised in light of national policy.	Policy 22	Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
DM Policy 2	Transport Assessments, Travel Plans & Parking	Transport Assessments and Travel Plans are now included in Policy 13.	Policy 23	Parking

Draft Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (March 2010)		Changes	North Dorset Local Plan – 2011 to 2026 (Publication version November 2013)	
DM Policy 3	Design	This policy has been reviewed in the light of national policy and consultation responses.	Policy 24	Design
DM Policy 4	Amenity	The amenity policy has been updated in light of national policy and now includes reference to noise.	Policy 25	Amenity
DM Policy 5	Tourist Accommodation	Tourist accommodation within the four main towns is now included in Policy 11.	Policy 31	Tourist Accommodation in the Countryside
DM Policy 6	Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	Updated in light of national policy and the need to identify a supply of specific, developable sites.	Policy 26	Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
DM Policy 7	Retention of Community Facilities	Updated to include reference to the Localism Act and community rights.	Policy 27	Retention of Community Facilities
DM Policy 8	Open Space	Open space, trees, hedgerows and landscape design are now included in Policy 15		
DM Policy 9	Trees, Hedgerows and Landscape Design			
Agricultural, forestry and other occupational dwellings in the countryside		This section has now become a policy and has been widened to include financial and functional tests that were previously in national policy.	Policy 33	Occupational Dwellings

Draft Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (March 2010)		Changes	North Dorset Local Plan – 2011 to 2026 (Publication version November 2013)	
DM Policy 10	Existing Dwellings in the Countryside	All countryside policies have been updated to include reference to the amended GPDO.	Policy 28	Existing Dwellings in the Countryside
DM Policy 11	The Re-Use of Existing Buildings in the Countryside		Policy 29	The Re-Use of Existing Buildings in the Countryside
DM Policy 12	Existing Employment Sites in the Countryside		Policy 30	Existing Employment Sites in the Countryside
DM Policy 13	Equine-related Developments in the Countryside		Policy 32	Equine-related Developments in the Countryside

## 4. Sustainability Context

- 4.1 The first stages of the SA process involve gathering information on the context for the appraisal. This scoping stage involves a review of plans and programmes of relevance to the Local Plan and an analysis of data on sustainability topics. This information is used to identify the key sustainability issues and problems and establish a set of sustainability objectives against which the Local Plan would be tested.
- 4.2 In 2006, the Council published an early version of its SA Scoping Report which reviewed relevant plans and programmes and assessed relevant baseline data to establish a set of SA objectives. This was reviewed in 2009 to bring it up to date and to refine the SA objectives into broad themes.
- 4.3 The Scoping Report produced in June 2009 gives the detail of this process with the review of plans and programmes and the analysis of baseline data being undertaken on a topic basis. The topics where information was gathered were grouped into four themes as follows:
- Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone
    - Housing
    - Population and health
    - Crime
    - Access, equality and deprivation
  - Effective protection of the environment
    - Biodiversity, flora and fauna
    - Climate change and flooding
    - Cultural heritage, landscape and archaeology
  - Prudent use of natural resources
    - Waste
    - Natural resources, water and soil
    - Energy consumption and energy efficiency
  - Maintenance of sustainable levels of economic growth
    - The economy
    - Transport
    - Education, training and skills

### Relevant plans and programmes

- 4.4 A review of plans and programmes of relevance to the local Plan and the SA was undertaken as part of the scoping process. Several overarching plans were reviewed as well as those relating to the topics specified above.

- 4.5 Since this review was undertaken regional strategies have been revoked and the National Planning Policy Framework has been introduced. The previous national policy and the regional strategy all sought to promote sustainable development. Similarly the National Planning Policy Framework contains a “presumption in favour of sustainable development” which also seeks to promote sustainable development through the planning system. This alters the framework within which the Local Plan will be implemented but does not substantially alter the sustainability issues and challenges that face the district.
- 4.6 The detail of the plans and programmes reviewed can be found in the 2009 Scoping Report.

## Baseline conditions

- 4.7 On each of the topics above, the baseline position was assessed through analysis of relevant data. This information helped to identify the key sustainability issues that exist. Where possible the data collected indicated whether the situation was good or bad and whether it was getting better or worse.
- 4.8 The assumption is that the general trends identified in the baseline data are likely to continue along similar lines without implementation of the Local Plan with the exception of the delivery of housing and employment space to meet needs. These are likely to fall behind the need and as a result of the unplanned approach, result in unsustainable patterns of development. This in turn is likely to result in an impact on traffic levels and the provision of infrastructure.
- 4.9 The detail of the analysis of baseline information can be found in the 2009 Scoping Report.

## Sustainability issues and challenges

- 4.10 The Scoping Report details the existing character of the District including identification of key sustainability issues for each of the topic areas above. The existing characteristics were derived from the review of plans and programmes and the analysis of baseline data. This analysis also enabled trends to be identified.
- 4.11 Once the existing characteristics and trends were identified, the potential sustainability issues and challenges were derived. The main issues identified are set out in Figure 4.1.
- 4.12 Internationally designated sites that are covered by the Habitats Regulations Assessment were acknowledged as part of the scoping process however the detail about their condition and the potential for impacts upon them will be covered in detail in the Habitats Regulations Assessment. To avoid duplication, the SA will acknowledge this assessment but will not repeat its recommendations. The recommendations of the Habitats regulations Assessment will be incorporated into the Local Plan as a separate exercise.

## North Dorset District

- 4.13 North Dorset is situated in the south of England and covers a rural area of approximately 61000Ha. The district has five market towns which act as hubs serving their rural hinterlands and a large number of smaller rural settlements. Approximately half of the District’s 69000 residents live within the main towns.
- 4.14 The dominant economic sector is the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing sector with approximately 17% of businesses being within this sector. The majority of businesses are however small employing fewer than five people.
- 4.15 The natural environment of the District is highly valued with approximately one third of the District’s area being designated as an AONB. This highly attractive environment makes it an attractive place to live and has resulted in high house prices. In addition, due to its rural nature, the district is a relatively expensive place to live due to reliance on car ownership and areas which are off mains gas resulting in reliance on expensive fuels such as oil for heat.

Figure 4.1: Summary of Sustainability Issues for North Dorset

Social Progress that Recognises the Needs of Everyone
<p>Housing: High house prices, low wages, low affordability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to provide adequate housing and affordable housing to meet needs</li> </ul>
<p>Population: Population growth due to in migration, ageing population, relatively small working aged population (relative to England and Wales)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to provide for the ageing population</li> </ul>
<p>Health: Relatively healthy population, relatively high levels of diseases associated with age and poor lifestyles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote active lifestyles, offer opportunities to participate in exercise</li> </ul>
<p>Crime: Low crime rate, more concern about crime than actual crime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design environments in which people feel safe, encourage community spirit</li> </ul>
<p>Access and Deprivation: Poor accessibility to services due to rurality, pockets of rural deprivation and areas of deprivation within towns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide essential services in tandem with housing development, address deficiencies</li> </ul>
<p>Equality: Predominantly White British, Christian population, low proportion of disabled people, balanced gender distribution, ageing population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide for the diverse needs of the population</li> </ul>

## Effective Protection of the Environment

Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna: Protect and enhance habitats and species by increasing connectivity and enhancing wildlife corridors, recognition of the wider importance of biodiversity

- Protect designated sites and restore habitats when opportunities arise

Climate Change and Flooding: Avoid flood risk from all sources in new developments, adaptation to the unavoidable effects of climate change

- Reduce risk to property by avoiding areas that are most likely to be affected by climate change, exploit opportunities that arise within environmental limits

Cultural Heritage, Landscape and Archaeology: Distinctive landscape areas within North Dorset, highly valued historic and rural heritage, highly valued settlement character

- Preserve and promote the rich heritage of North Dorset

Pollution: Prevent pollution of rivers, air and land, seek to improve underperforming areas

- Protect high quality environment

## Prudent use of Natural Resources

Waste: Minimise waste and increase levels of recycling

- Promote recycling and reuse of resources and land

Natural Resources, Water and Soil: Reduce pressure on undeveloped land through efficient use of land, protect important resources from development

- Promote development on previously developed land, manage natural resources effectively

Energy Consumption and Energy Efficiency: Reduction in energy usage, promotion of non-fossil fuel based energy resources, reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

- Promote energy efficient construction, promote renewable energy resources

### Maintenance of Sustainable Levels of Economic Growth and Employment

The Economy: Low paid workforce, prevalence of small firms, manufacturing, retail, defence and education are important sectors

- Enhance competitiveness of firms so they can grow, increase earnings

Transport: Poor public transport network results in high car ownership and poor accessibility

- Improve accessibility locally and to the national transport network
- Reduce the need to travel

Education, Training and Skills: High levels of educational achievement, significant level of people with poor literacy

- Improve educational attainment of the most disadvantaged and improve access to high quality educational establishments

## Sustainability Appraisal Framework

- 4.16 The issues identified through the scoping stage of the SA were used to produce a “checklist” for assessing the potential impact of implementing the Local Plan. This checklist known as a “sustainability framework”, seeks to identify what measures may help achieve greater levels of sustainability in the District.
- 4.17 The sustainability framework includes 16 objectives each focused on particular aspects of sustainability. These included objectives related to social issues such as housing affordability and to economic issues such as jobs and skills but with the primary focus within the framework being on the protection of the environment. The sustainability objectives that make up the sustainability framework are shown in Figure 4.2.
- 4.18 Clearly there are conflicts between the different SA objectives particularly where objectives are “pro-growth” such as SA objective 1 and those which seek to protect the environment such as SA objective 7. Although this conflict is apparent, overall the SA objectives are considered to give a balance between social, economic and environmental objectives. More detail on the compatibility of the SA objectives is included in the SA Scoping Report produced in 2009.

Figure 4.2: Sustainability Framework for North Dorset

Sustainability Appraisal Objectives		
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments
Effective protection of the environment	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscape
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value
Prudent use of natural resources	10	Reduce impacts on the environment
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production
Maintenance of sustainable levels of economic growth and employment	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential

4.19 This framework of sustainability objectives was subject to consultation as part of the scoping stage of the sustainability appraisal with the responses to this consultation along with any changes to the objectives, being incorporated in the 2009 SA Scoping Report.

## 5. The Draft New Plan 2010

- 5.1 In March 2010, the Council consulted on the draft New Plan for the district. This Plan contained a set of Core Policies to establish the strategic approach to development and a set of associated Development Management policies. During their production the Core Policies were subject to SA with options being considered as part of this appraisal. The results of the appraisal are reported in detail in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report 2010 and are summarised below.
- 5.2 As a result of consultation and during revision of the policies in the New Plan, it became apparent that some alternative options had been overlooked in the initial SA work. These options, along with the associated Development Management policies, were subject to SA and reported on in the 2012 Addendum to the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report.

### Option Appraisal

- 5.3 SA requires the consideration of reasonable, realistic and relevant alternative options for addressing issues. Similarly the SEA Directive requires the likely significant effects of reasonable alternatives to be evaluated.
- 5.4 Options considered as part of the policy formation process were appraised using professional judgement and all available information to make recommendations as to which option was likely to have the least detrimental impact or the greatest benefits. For the Core Policies in the draft New Plan, the options considered are outlined and the detailed matrix based assessment of each option is reported in the Initial SA Report.
- 5.5 The main strategic options considered are summarised in Figure 5.1 with a summary of the results of the Initial SA options for each policy being included in Appendix C. The detailed results of the options appraisal are given in the Initial SA Report.

Figure 5.1: 2010 New Plan Policy Options Considered

Draft New Plan 2010 Policy	Options considered as part of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal 2010		Main draft New Plan 2010 objectives addressed by the policy
Core Policy 1 – Climate Change	Option 1(1)	Adopt the national and regional timetables for the introduction of the Code for Sustainable Homes and targets for energy from renewable sources or adopt a faster timetable supported by the required evidence. Gathering evidence would require an additional resource input from the District Council, slowing down the plan making process.	Objective 3 – Protecting and Managing the Environment
Core Policy 2 – Sustainable Forms of Development	No alternative options were considered as the policy sets out the requirements for development to deliver more sustainable forms of development		Objective 3 – Protecting and Managing the Environment
Core Policy 3 – Sustainable Development Strategy	The Spatial Strategy identifies the overall hierarchy of settlements within the district. The options considered related to the categorisation of settlements as RSS Policy B and Policy C settlements.		Objective 1 – Thriving Market Towns Objective 2 – Sustainable Rural Communities
	Option 3(1)	Should Sturminster Newton be an RSS Policy B or C settlement?	
	Where should the lower cut-off be for settlements that are assigned Policy C status?		
	Option 3(2)	Should settlements in the range 700 to 900 population be included as RSS Policy C settlements	
	Option 3(3)	Should settlements in the range 500 to 700 population as well as those in the range 700 to 900 population be included as RSS Policy C settlements?	
	Option 3(4)	Should settlements of less than 400 population receive some growth?	

Draft New Plan 2010 Policy	Options considered as part of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal 2010		Main draft New Plan 2010 objectives addressed by the policy
Core Policy 3 – (continued)	There are then two “anomalies” which, due to the level of service provision and the size of settlements, do not neatly fall within the characterisations above.		
	Option 3(5)	Should Fontmell Magna be included as an RSS Policy C Settlement?	
	Option 3(6)	Should Spetisbury be included as an RSS Policy C Settlement?	
Core Policy 4 – Housing (including Affordable Housing) Distribution	The overall quantum of development and the distribution of this development guided the options considered.		Objective 4 – Meeting the District’s Housing Needs
	Option 4(1)	Should the Plan seek to accommodate less than 7000 dwellings, 7000 dwellings in line with emerging RSS or more than 7000 dwellings	
	Option 4(2)	Deliver high proportion in the main towns (80% Policy B and 20% elsewhere), a medium proportion (70%:30% split) or a lower proportion (60%:40% split)	
Core Policy 5 – Managing Housing Land Supply	The geographical scale at which housing land supply would be managed and the approach to the prioritisation of brownfield land guided the options considered.		Objective 3 – Protecting and Managing the Environment
	Option 5(1)	Manage the supply of housing land at the district level or more locally	
	Option 5(2)	Adopt a brownfield target to reflect availability, a target to enable an unrestricted housing supply or a higher target restricting greenfield development	
Core Policy 6 – Economy	Growth of the economy is an important part of sustainable development. This is facilitated through the availability of sufficient jobs and land in the right locations.		Objective 1 – Thriving Market towns
	Option 6(1)	Plan to accommodate growth of about 2000 jobs based on a broad RSS interpretation, for growth or about 3300 jobs based on more detailed local assessment of evidence or for growth of greater than 3300 jobs.	

Draft New Plan 2010 Policy		Options considered as part of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal 2010	Main draft New Plan 2010 objectives addressed by the policy
Core Policy 6 – (continued)	Option 6(2)	Allocate enough land to meet need as identified in Workplace Strategy (approximately 25.3ha) or exceed the identified need.	
	Option 6(3)	Allocate the majority of the employment land at the RSS Policy B settlements (greater than equivalent in housing growth) or in proportion to proposed housing growth.	
Core Policy 7 – Retail and Other Town Centre Uses	Provision of retail space is an important factor in creating thriving town centres.		Objective 1 – Thriving Market Towns
	Option 7(1)	Continue with current primary and secondary shopping areas or expand these areas to allow for growth	
Core Policy 8 – Housing Mix, Type and Density	The density of new developments is an important factor that governs the way a development functions and how it fits into a settlement.		Objective 4 – Meeting the District’s Housing Needs Objective 3 – Protecting and Managing the Environment
	Option 8(1)	Incorporate a flexible density requirement into policy at between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare or ensure that all developments are built at at least 40 dwellings per hectare.	
	The size and type of dwellings to be built is important in supporting the needs of economy and meeting the needs of the District’s population.		
	Option 8(2)	Specify size of dwellings for all developments based on identified current need or specify an approach which would help to support the economy for example through the provision of dwellings to attract in-migrants.	

Draft New Plan 2010 Policy	Options considered as part of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal 2010		Main draft New Plan 2010 objectives addressed by the policy
Core Policy 9 – Affordable Housing	Site viability is altered by the level of affordable housing provision being sought however there is a high need for provision of affordable housing.		Objective 4 – Meeting the District’s Housing Needs
	Option 9(1)	Incorporate into the plan a requirement of 35% affordable on all schemes, a requirement for 40% affordable with the exception of Gillingham where 35% would be required to reflect viability or require 40% on all schemes	
	In addition, the options for the threshold at which affordable housing would be sought on a site were tested as follows:		
	Option 9(2)	Require affordable housing to be provided on schemes of 15 dwellings or more, on schemes of 3 dwellings or more or on all schemes	
Core Policy 10 – Affordable Housing: Rural Exception Schemes	Rural Exceptions provide affordable housing to meet identified need in areas where residential development would not normally be permitted		Objective 4 – Meeting the District’s Housing Needs
	Option 10(1)	Allow rural exception schemes in all settlements of 3,000 inhabitants or less, focus on settlements based on the level of services/population or restrict to RSS Policy C settlements only.	
Core Policy 11 – Grey Infrastructure	Four packages of transport measures were considered to promote sustainable patterns of travel. These were demand management measures, highway network improvements, public transport improvements and walking and cycling improvements.		Objective 5 – Improving the Quality of Life
	Option 11(1)	Should the Demand Management recommendations be supported? (management of the mix, location and density of developments, management of parking, promotion of community travel planning)	
	Option 11(2)	Should the Highway Network recommendations be supported? (management of freight on the network, provision of accurate and up to date information, undertake a review of road schemes, develop route management strategies)	

Draft New Plan 2010 Policy	Options considered as part of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal 2010		Main draft New Plan 2010 objectives addressed by the policy
Core Policy 11 – (continued)	Option 11(3)	Should the Public Transport improvements be supported? (Gillingham interchange improvements, real time bus information, additional bus services, integrated rail/bus ticketing)	
	Option 11(4)	Should the Walking and Cycling improvements be supported? (signage for pedestrians and cyclists, prioritise and timetable rights of way improvement schemes, implement walking and cycling improvements in towns, implement walking cycling and equestrian schemes)	
	In addition, the management of parking across each town can aid in influencing people’s travel behaviour.		
	Option 11(5)	Should an integrated Parking Strategy be produced to manage parking in public car parks, on street parking and residential parking?	
Core Policy 12 – Social Infrastructure	The provision of social infrastructure is important in improving the sustainability of settlements.		Objective 5 – Improving the Quality of Life
	Option 12(1)	Should the provision of social infrastructure be focused on the main towns or should provision be allowed at some of the larger villages	
Core Policy 13 – Green Infrastructure	Green Infrastructure can provide multiple benefits including for biodiversity, recreation and learning. Linking sites together can enable greater benefits to be realised.		Objective 5 – Improving the Quality of Life
	Option 13(1)	Should the provision of Green Infrastructure be coordinated across the district through the production of a Green Infrastructure Strategy or should standards be established to ensure delivery on a site by site basis.	
Core Policy 14 – Conserving and Enhancing the Environment	No alternative options were considered as the policy reiterates national and international policy for environmental protection interpreting it to the local case. In addition, greater protection is given to locally significant environmental features.		Objective 3 – Protecting and Managing the Environment

Draft New Plan 2010 Policy	Options considered as part of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal 2010		Main draft New Plan 2010 objectives addressed by the policy
Core Policy 15 – Blandford	Blandford is the largest town in the south of the District and acts as a local service centre. Options for the growth of the town were considered.		Objective 1 – Thriving Market Towns
	Option 15(1)	Should the town be expanded after 2016 and if so should the town be expanded to the north east or the south west?	
Core Policy 16 – Gillingham	Gillingham is the largest town in the north of the District and forms an important role serving this area. It has also seen rapid expansion over the recent past. Facilities in the town have failed to keep up with the pace of this recent development.		Objective 1 – Thriving Market Towns Objective 4 – Meeting the District’s Housing Needs
	Option 16(1)	Restrict growth to existing settlement boundary up until 2016 or allow for greenfield expansion before 2016.	
	Option 16(2)	Post 2016, should the town expand to the south and south east, expand to the north west or through smaller scale developments in both locations.	
	To enable and support the growth in population that will result from the proposed residential development; the provision of employment land, the level of town centre uses to be provided, the regeneration of the town centre and the range of transport improvements were considered.		
	Option 16(3)	Should an additional high quality strategic business park be allocated at Gillingham to enhance the towns role as an employment centre and to stimulate economic growth?	
	Option 16(4)	To meet the needs of the growing population should additional retail provision beyond anticipated need as identified in the retail study be provided for at Gillingham?	

Draft New Plan 2010 Policy	Options considered as part of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal 2010		Main draft New Plan 2010 objectives addressed by the policy
Core Policy 16 – (continued)	Option 16(5)	Should the additional retail provision be provided for in the town centre and the Station Road regeneration area or should a broader approach be used to join the disparate parts of the centre in a more coordinated way?	
	Option 16(6)	The level of growth that will be taking place at Gillingham is likely to result in impacts to the surrounding area primarily related to increased traffic on the roads. Should a package of measures be implemented to manage demand and make the best use of the existing road network?	
Core Policy 17 – Shaftesbury	Shaftesbury plays a supporting role to Gillingham in the north of the District. The growth of the town beyond the current allocated development level was considered.		Objective 1 – Thriving Market Towns
	Option 17(1)	Should Shaftesbury be restricted to growth within the current boundaries of the town or should further greenfield expansion be allocated?	
	The provision of social infrastructure could be clustered onto one site to provide a “community hub”.		
Core Policy 18 – Sturminster Newton	Option 17(2)	Should land be reserved in the town centre or should facilities be provided on other sites such as the development site to the east of the town.	Objective 1 – Thriving Market Towns
	Option 18(1)	Should growth be restricted within the current boundaries of the town, to encourage regeneration of the town centre or should the town expand onto greenfield land?	

Draft New Plan 2010 Policy	Options considered as part of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal 2010		Main draft New Plan 2010 objectives addressed by the policy
Core Policy 19 – Stalbridge and the Larger Villages	Outside of the main towns, a number of settlements are considered suitable for limited growth.		Objective 2 – Sustainable Rural Communities
	Option 19(1)	Should the growth at these settlements be restricted within the current settlement boundaries or should limited greenfield development be considered to reflect need?	
Core Policy 20 – The Countryside	No options were considered for Core Policy 20 as the general policy of restraint applied to the rural area as set out in the Regional Strategy.		Objective 2 – Sustainable Rural Communities

## Initial SA Consultation Summary

- 5.6 The results of the appraisal of the options reported on in the Initial SA Report are a key piece of the evidence to support the production of the Local Plan. They are however not the sole basis for decision making as other evidence, such as landscape and flood risk assessments and consultation responses are also taken into account.
- 5.7 The Initial SA Report, containing the results of the SA of the options considered (outlined in Figure 5.1 of this report) as part of the draft New Plan was subject to consultation alongside the draft New Plan in 2010. A number of comments were received on the Initial SA Report suggesting additional points to add to the SA results and recommendations. These comments and the actions taken are reported in Section 9 of this report.

## Initial SA Addendum Summary

- 5.8 Consultation on the draft New Plan and on the Initial SA Report highlighted additional sites as options for accommodating residential growth across the district. In addition, consultation highlighted the need for the Development Management policies to be subject to SA. The Addendum to the Initial SA Report reported on the results of these two additional pieces of SA work.
- 5.9 The method used to assess the additional options for residential growth was the same as detailed in the Initial SA Report where all available information was used to inform officer appraisal of the site against the SA Objectives. The assessment of the additional sites was compared against the results of the SA of the other sites considered as part of the initial SA work.
- 5.10 The draft Development Management Policies were assessed in a similar way to the draft Core Policies with each policy being assessed, using officer judgement, against the SA objectives. The option of continuing with the adopted Local Plan policy framework was considered for each of the proposed Development Management policies.

### **Additional Site Assessment**

- 5.11 Two additional sites were considered as well as those considered as part of the initial SA work. These were in Blandford and Gillingham. Whichever site is allocated for development, it will be important that detailed site specific information is collected to support the development of the site to ensure that the impact of their development is minimised.
- 5.12 In Blandford the option of expanding the town to the south east was considered alongside the previous options of expanding to the south west or to the north east. In Gillingham the option of expanding the town to the north east was considered alongside the previously considered options of expanding to the south and south

east, expanding to the north west or expanding through smaller scale developments in both locations.

- 5.13 The results of the assessment of the additional sites around Blandford and Gillingham are detailed in Section 3.0 of the Addendum to the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report.
- 5.14 The main conclusion of site assessment around Blandford was that the expansion of the town to the south west, as indicated in the draft New Plan, was still the preferred approach, with this approach being considered the most sustainable option.
- 5.15 The assessment of the newly identified site highlighted two main issues. Firstly, the site is on the opposite side of the Blandford bypass and hence would create severance issues where the future residents of the site would need to cross the bypass to access the facilities such as schools and shops. Secondly the site forms part of the reserved route of the Charlton Marshall, Spetisbury and Sturminster Marshall bypass and hence has the potential to prejudice its delivery. If this site was to be developed, these two issues, amongst others, would need to be overcome.
- 5.16 The results of assessing the additional site in Gillingham highlighted several issues. Access to the site to the north east of the town would be along existing narrow lanes and would require new bridges across the floodplain. There would also potentially be a conflict between traffic accessing the site and between traffic accessing the existing Riversmeet centre and The Gillingham School.
- 5.17 Additional issues relating to the site include flooding from the neighbouring rivers and landscape constraints due to the topography of the site. The potential of the site is also less than that proposed for the town as a whole and hence would necessitate further development elsewhere in the town or at an alternative settlement. In relation to the sites around Gillingham, the conclusions drawn in the Initial SA Report as backed up by the Atkins Report; were still valid with developing land to the south of the town being the option which offered the most benefits and opportunities to mitigate the impact.

### **Development Management Policy Appraisal**

- 5.18 The draft Development Management policies were assessed against the SA Objectives using all available evidence and officer's professional judgement. Options were considered included continuing with the existing Adopted Local Plan 2003 policy approach or replacing it with the proposed Development Management Policy. Direct comparison was made between these two options using the SA objectives in a matrix.
- 5.19 The preferred approach as set out in the draft New Plan 2010, reflecting changes to National Policy was generally shown to be the best approach for the majority of the draft Development Management Policies. In a few instances minor changes to

reflect the National Planning Policy Framework were suggested. The details of this assessment are included in the Addendum to the Initial SA Report.

## Initial SA Cumulative Effects Analysis

- 5.20 The cumulative effects of the draft Core Policies was assessed as part of the initial SA work and reported on in Section 7.0 of the Initial SA Report. This analysis looked at the cumulative impact of all of the draft Core Policies to identify potential areas where the policies could reinforce or neutralise each other and therefore have a greater or lesser effect overall. However, this analysis did not include any consideration of the potential impact of the draft Development Management policies alongside the draft Core Policies.
- 5.21 The analysis of the cumulative effects of the draft Core Policies as a set suggested a positive impact on the creation of balanced communities and improvements to the health and wellbeing of individuals. In addition, the cumulative impacts of the policies seems to suggest that a reduction in the need to travel will result from the policies in particular due to development location and the measures incorporated to provide safe cycling and walking routes. The creation of balanced communities and the increased social inclusion that will result are reinforced by the provision of social infrastructure within settlements.
- 5.22 The cumulative effects of the policies as a result of the development being promoted are likely to have a negative impact on the environmental SA objectives. Specifically, the development of sites is likely to have a negative impact on biodiversity unless measures are incorporated to make space for biodiversity within developments. Similarly, the promotion of development is likely to have a negative impact on landscape unless sites are carefully selected and trees, hedges and other landscape features are included within developments.
- 5.23 Several of the issues raised as a result of the cumulative effects analysis of the Core Policies are addressed through the inclusion of Development Management policies. For example, protection of trees and hedgerows on site are important for biodiversity and for reducing landscape impact and a Development Management policy has been included to secure this.
- 5.24 As the Development Management policies are criteria based, cover some of these more detailed issues and do not generally promote growth, the sustainability impact is minimal. It is however difficult to assess what the impact on each SA objective is as the policies relate to specific types of development, often not related to certain SA objectives.
- 5.25 The cumulative effects analysis included in Section 5.0 of the Addendum to the Initial SA reported on the “strongly negative” impact of the Development Management policies in relation to some of the SA objectives. As shown in Figure 5.2 of the Addendum to the Initial SA, the Development Management policies were shown to have “uncertain” impacts on the SA objectives rather than strongly

negative impacts. In this respect, the wording of the analysis in Section 5.0 of the Addendum is considered to be incorrect. However the conclusions drawn, namely that the overall effect of the Core and Development Management policies is positive; is still considered to be valid. Further analysis of the cumulative effect of the Local Plan Part 1 policies has been undertaken and is reported in Section 7.0 of this report.

## Initial SA Results and Recommendations

- 5.26 The Local Plan Part 1 and the earlier iteration of it (the draft New Plan) is a strategic level plan and therefore deals with strategic issues related to growth. For this reason the SA work seeks to identify the significant strategic impacts of the plan on the SA objectives rather than consider detailed impacts. It is considered that more detailed assessments will be required to accompany the site allocations work that will be included in Local Plan Part 2 and also to accompany individual project proposals. The exception to this is Policy 21 Gillingham Southern Extension which allocates a large mixed-use scheme on the edge of the town and hence is supported by more detailed SA work. The Gillingham Southern Extension will however still need to be subject of further site level analysis at the master planning and the project application stage.
- 5.27 The results of the SA of the draft New Plan 2010 are reported in the Initial SA Report and its accompanying Addendum. The SA undertook a full analysis of the options considered (as outlined in Figure 5.1) and the policies that resulted. The reasons for excluding some options and the options to be taken forward are also set out in the Initial SA Report and in the associated Addendum.
- 5.28 The recommendations in the Initial SA Report highlight areas where changes could be made to policies to enhance their positive effect or mitigate their negative impact. The main recommendations resulting from the SA are included in Section 8.0 of the Initial SA Report.
- 5.29 Since the Initial SA Report and its associated addendum have been produced, the policies have been rewritten to take on board changes to national policy, the introduction of Neighbourhood Planning and further evidence gathered on local issues. How the SA work and the other factors have been taken into account for each policy is set out in Appendices D, E and F.

### Potential Impacts on SEA Topics

- 5.30 The objective of the SEA Directive is to provide a high level of protection for the environment and to set out the likely significant effects on the environment. Specifically the directive sets out a number of topics, the impact upon which should be set out. These topics are listed in Annex 1(f) of the Directive and their interpretation in relation to the Local Plan is set out in Section 7 of the Initial SA Report.

5.31 The SEA Topics also relate to the SA objectives used to appraise the plan and therefore where a policy has a positive effect on a particular SA objective, it is also likely to have a positive effect on the corresponding SEA Topic and vice versa. The SA objectives and corresponding SEA Topics are set out in Figure 5.2.

5.32 The SEA Topics and their local interpretation are:

- Biodiversity:- Incorporating considerations of Flora and Fauna and the potential impacts on international, national and locally designated sites
- Population:- Incorporating crime, diversity and education and training
- Human Health:- Including the impact of housing, access to services and deprivation on human health
- (Fauna:- Included under biodiversity)
- (Flora:- Included under biodiversity)
- Soil:- Includes considerations of soil pollution and loss of productive soils
- Water:- incorporating flooding, water efficiency and water pollution
- Air:- including air pollution from traffic and industry
- Climatic Factors:- Including energy consumption and energy efficiency in relation to climate change
- Material Assets:- Including the use of natural resources and waste
- Landscape:- considerations of the impact of development on the landscape
- Cultural Heritage:- including architectural and archaeological heritage and the impact on the built and ancient environment

Figure 5.2: The SA objectives and SEA Directive Topics

SA Objective		SEA Topics
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone		
1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	Population, Human health
2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	Population, Human health
3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	Human health, Population
4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	Cultural heritage, Population, Human health
5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	Population, Human health, Cultural heritage

SA Objective		SEA Topics
Effective protection of the environment		
6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	Climatic factors, Biodiversity, Fauna, Flora, Water
7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	Biodiversity, Fauna, Flora, Landscape
8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes	Material assets, Landscape, Cultural heritage
9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	Landscape, Material assets, Biodiversity, Flora, Fauna, Cultural heritage, Soil, Human health
Prudent use of natural resources		
10	Reduce impacts on the environment	Biodiversity, Fauna, Flora, Soil, Water, Air, Climatic factors
11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	Soil, Material assets
12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	Water, Air, Climatic factors
Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment		
13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	None
14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	Population, Climatic factors
15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	Population, Material assets
16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	Population, Human health

5.33 The Section 7 of the Initial SA Report highlighted the difficulty in unpicking the interrelationship between the different SEA Topics. The key points identified at this early SA stage highlighted several potential impacts on the SEA Topics and recommended that monitoring of the implementation of the plan was undertaken

specifically with the aim of assessing the impact on the SEA Topics. Further assessment of the potential impact of the implementation of the full Local Plan is reported in Sections 7 and 8 of this report.

## 6. Local Plan Part 1 2013

- 6.1 The Local Plan Part 1 Pre-submission document as outlined in Section 3 of this report was produced for consultation prior to being submitted for examination in public. The policies in this Pre-submission Document have taken forward and refined the options chosen in the draft New Plan 2010.
- 6.2 The Local Plan Part 1 Pre-submission document also reflects the changes in planning that have occurred since the draft New Plan was produced. These changes include the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework in March 2013, the introduction of Neighbourhood Planning through the Localism Act and the revocation of Regional Strategies. In addition to these national changes, the policies in the Local Plan Part 1 Pre-submission document have taken on board the results of consultation and any new pieces of evidence that have been produced.

### Vision and Objectives

- 6.3 The draft Vision and Objectives included in the draft New Plan 2010 were tested in this way and reported on in Section 5 of the Initial SA Report. The conclusion of this initial SA work was that the Vision and Objectives were broadly compatible with the SA objectives with a few areas highlighted where care will be required to manage the potential impact of development. These were primarily related to the pro growth elements of the Vision and Objectives and the SA objectives which sought to protect the environment.
- 6.4 The Local Plan Part 1 version of the Vision and Objectives, as amended through stages of consultation and plan development were tested for compatibility with the SA objectives. This Vision and the Objectives are set out in Section 3 of this report. There have only been minor changes in the wording of the Vision and Objectives from that included in the draft New Plan but these changes have been tested for compatibility and are reported in Appendix B of this report. The conclusion of this compatibility assessment is that the minor changes have had little effect on compatibility with the SA objectives.

### Appraisal of Local Plan Part 1 Policies

- 6.5 The Local Plan Part 1 policies have evolved from those included in the draft New Plan 2010 through several stages of consultation and as a result of changes to the national policy position. These Local Plan policies have been subject to an assessment against the SA objectives in a similar way to the draft New Plan policies. Appendix D through to F sets out the detail of this appraisal and how the policies have evolved through the policy development process.
- 6.6 Local Plan Part 1 policy 1 through to policy 15 deal with strategic issues that cover the whole of the district. Policies 16 through to 20 deal with specific locations within the district, setting out the strategic approach in relation to these locations.

Policy 21 deals with the Southern Extension to Gillingham with policies 22 to 33 dealing with detailed issues associated with certain types of development.

- 6.7 These policies have all been assessed individually but also as a complete set to test for cumulative effects. The individual policy appraisal is included in Appendix D through to F of this report and summarised in this section. Appendix D deals with the strategic policies 1 through to 15, Appendix E deals with the locational policies (policies 16 through to 20) and includes policy 21 for the Gillingham SSA and Appendix F deals with the more detailed issues dealt with in policies 22 to 23. The cumulative effects analysis is detailed in Section 7 of this report.

### **Strategic Policies**

- 6.8 The detailed results of the appraisal of the Strategic policies are included in Appendix D of this report.

### **Policy 1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development**

- 6.9 The presumption in favour of sustainable development demonstrates compliance with the NPPF. It makes it explicit that the overarching approach to development is that it should improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area, helping to deliver more sustainable development. The overall conclusion is that the policy will have a positive effect over the long-term.

### **Policy 2 – Core Spatial Strategy**

- 6.10 The focus of growth on the four main towns, as set out in this policy is likely to strengthen their roles as service centres. This focus will see them grow as centres for employment and service provision, supporting the towns' population and the population that live in the surrounding rural areas. It will also offer increased opportunities for infrastructure to serve the towns and the District as a whole, to be provided which in turn supports the economy. This is likely to be a long-term positive synergistic effect.
- 6.11 Although there is the potential for a negative impact on smaller settlements, this is likely to be offset by the opportunity for communities to develop neighbourhood plans or for a settlement to "opt-in" to the site allocations process. This potential negative social impact of a focused pattern of growth was highlighted in the Initial SA work.
- 6.12 In addition, to help offset the potential for a negative impact on rural settlements it will be necessary for sustainable transport measures to be developed, linking rural areas with the towns. There is also a need to ensure that within towns, sustainable transport options are available such as safe cycling and walking routes. The overall benefits of the policy are however likely to offset this negative effect over the long-term.
- 6.13 The focus of growth on the four main towns is likely to have less of an impact on landscape and on biodiversity than a more dispersed approach.

### Policy 3 – Climate Change

- 6.14 This policy seeks to tackle the causes of climate change through measures such as increased energy efficiency in new buildings and the development of renewable energy. It also seeks to reduce the risks associated with the inevitable results of the onset of climate change by reducing resource consumption.
- 6.15 With the relaxation in requirements of the Government’s Zero Carbon Buildings policy, the overall impact of the policy will be less than the approach included in the draft New Plan policy. However as the Government require local planning policies to be in accordance with its Zero Carbon Buildings policy, the policy is felt to do as much as possible in reducing emissions within this restriction.
- 6.16 Through the appropriate location and design of developments, the policy is likely to have a positive impact on several economic and social SA objectives. It should also help to reduce the impact on biodiversity and reduce flood risk through the incorporation of space for wildlife and drainage within developments.
- 6.17 Overall, the policy is thought to encourage sustainable development within the external policy restrictions that exist. The impacts are likely to be felt in the long-term.

### Policy 4 – The Natural Environment

- 6.18 The inclusion of this policy to add more detail to the Local Plan in relation to the natural environment is likely to have a significant positive impact on the environment of the district. The approach, which recognises the inter-relationship between different elements of the natural environment through an ecosystems approach, adds to the policy highlighting the importance of its protection and the multiple benefits that result.
- 6.19 The policy highlights mechanisms for managing the potential impacts in internationally designated sites. These measures will need to be effectively implemented to secure no adverse effects on the designated sites. Effective monitoring arrangements need to be put in place accompanied by trigger points for action such as a review of the Local Plan.
- 6.20 The importance of the natural environment includes the benefits to people’s health and to the economy. The policy is thought to have an overall positive impact over the long-term whilst also having some positive effects realised in the short term.

### Policy 5 – The Historic Environment

- 6.21 The value of heritage assets is recognised by this policy. Benefits include the cultural well-being and community cohesion aspects associated with the sense of place that emanates from the historic environment. Consideration of the historic environment not only offers community benefits, it also helps to integrate development into the existing built environment, respecting local character.

- 6.22 As the policy seeks to protect heritage assets from harm resulting from development, it is considered to have multiple long-term benefits in terms of sustainability. It seeks to support cultural well-being of communities; it seeks to retain the character of settlements and the wider countryside and it seeks to encourage respect for the historic environment in regeneration schemes, recognising it as an asset rather than a constraint.
- 6.23 Drawing up of a local list of locally important heritage assets is one of the outcomes of the policy and it will be essential that this local list is drawn up reasonably soon and in a robust way.

### Policy 6 – Housing Distribution

- 6.24 This policy sets out the distribution of housing across the district with approximately 85% being delivered at the four main towns as identified in Policy 2 Core Spatial Strategy. This focused approach is likely to result in an enhanced role for the towns and also offer opportunities for the delivery of infrastructure to support their growth as a result of the size of development sites.
- 6.25 The policy establishes that the housing needs of rural areas will be met primarily through the neighbourhood planning route. It will be essential that the impacts of this are carefully monitored to ensure that the sustainability of rural communities is not harmed. This relates to affordable housing provision and to the provision of facilities within rural areas.
- 6.26 Development across the district has the potential to harm the natural and built environment. Potential impacts could be on biodiversity, on the landscape, on local character and on road traffic levels. The impacts of development on the environment will need to be carefully managed through the implementation of other relevant policies within the Local Plan. The impact on the environment is thought to be long-term but localised. It is thought that the overall impact of the plan will neutralise the impact from the development of housing.

### Policy 7 – Delivering Homes

- 6.27 In the light of the more flexible national policy on density and dwelling sizes, the policy has been revised to more closely reflect local character and needs. The flexible, community led approach to density standards will help to respect the character of an area and help to build strong communities. However, the efficient use of land helps reduce the amount of land required for development, with the converse ultimately putting pressure on greenfield land. This potential impact should be monitored to ensure the impact on the environment is minimised.
- 6.28 The close management of the size and type of dwellings to be built, reflecting both economic pressures and the needs of the community will not only result in appropriate housing being built for existing residents, but also will help to support the economy. This will offer both economic and social benefits.

### Policy 8 – Affordable Housing

- 6.29 This policy sets out the Council’s approach to delivering affordable housing on development sites, alongside the provision of market housing. The delivery of a mix of housing tenures is seen as positive in relation to building community cohesion and will definitely help to deliver housing to meet needs. The delivery of housing also will help to support the local economy through the provision of a workforce.
- 6.30 In general the approach being taken of maximising the delivery of affordable housing whilst offering mechanisms to reflect site viability is seen as the most appropriate policy approach however there will be a need to ensure that the necessary supporting infrastructure is delivered alongside housing growth. The delivery of infrastructure of all types to mitigate the impact of development will alter the viability of a site.

### Policy 9 – Rural Exception Affordable Housing

- 6.31 The revised policy sets out the Council’s approach to rural exception affordable housing enabling such schemes to incorporate an element of market housing. The policy also removes the spatial restriction to areas where affordable housing would be permitted. Both of these changes have implications for the results of the sustainability appraisal of the policy.
- 6.32 Although delivering affordable housing offers significant sustainability benefits, the removal of the restriction on location is likely to have environmental implications as it perpetuates the issue of housing in unsustainable locations. In addition, the cost of living in rural locations is greater as there is more reliance on car travel and the cost of fuel for heating is often greater.
- 6.33 The dispersed approach to affordable housing provision is also likely to result in a negative impact on the rural landscape and has the potential to have an impact on biodiversity.
- 6.34 The approach of permitting a small element of market housing on rural exception sites has the potential to result in rural exceptions being used as a route for delivering market housing, undermining the spatial approach to development that underpins the Local Plan. For this reason it is essential that the amount of market housing is kept low and at a level that enables the need for affordable housing to be met.

### Policy 10 – Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- 6.35 This policy sets out the Council’s position in relation to the provision of pitches for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. It commits the Council to producing a DPD to allocate specific sites to meet the need for pitches of different types. The provision of pitches through such an approach, meeting the identified need, is considered to offer significant sustainability benefits.

### Policy 11 – The Economy

- 6.36 The overall approach of focusing the majority of economic development in the four main towns is likely to offer the most significant gains in relation to reducing the need to travel, making the towns more self-contained. It will reinforce the role of the four main towns as hubs for their rural hinterlands and provide employment in parallel to the housing growth that will be delivered through other Local Plan policies. The inclusion of regeneration areas within the towns is likely to help reinforce the role of the town centres further as hubs for their rural hinterlands.
- 6.37 The development of employment land can potentially have an impact on the environment in terms of landscape and biodiversity. Effective mitigation measures need to be incorporated into schemes including all different types of SuDS and landscape planting. In addition there are opportunities for renewable energy to be incorporated into employment developments such as photo voltaic panels on the roofs of industrial buildings.
- 6.38 It is thought that the impacts of this policy on the environment will be felt locally however the negative impacts of this policy are thought to be cancelled out by other policies in the plan.

### Policy 12 – Retail, leisure and other commercial developments

- 6.39 Town centres act as the focus for retail and leisure uses. This helps to keep towns vibrant and encourages community activities which in turn make the towns more inclusive. The policy seeks to enhance the town centres maintaining them as the focus for growth and this approach will help to meet many economic and social aspects of sustainability.
- 6.40 As many of the existing town centres are located around the historic core of the towns, enhancement of them will help to protect and enhance the heritage assets that exist in these locations.

### Policy 13 – Grey Infrastructure

- 6.41 The provision of the necessary infrastructure to support growth is fundamental to achieving sustainable development. This includes travel and communications infrastructure, drainage and flood prevention infrastructure and also an enhanced public realm. The result is likely to reduce the need to travel over long distances through better non-car based communications; reduce the instances of pollution and reduce flood risk.
- 6.42 Care needs to be taken when development takes place to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is properly assessed and provided as an integrated part of development proposals. When infrastructure is put in place, it will also be essential to ensure the impact of the infrastructure for example on the landscape, is minimised. The benefits of grey infrastructure are likely to be felt over the mid to long term as and when developments are built out.

### Policy 14 – Social Infrastructure

- 6.43 Delivery of social infrastructure to support development will help in making towns more sustainable. In addition, enabling communities to develop facilities to meet their aspirations should build a sense of ownership and help to bring communities together. In sustainability terms the policy is likely to have a strong positive effect in the mid to long term and include synergistic effects in combination with other policies which seek to support communities.

### Policy 15 – Green Infrastructure

- 6.44 The policy seeks to coordinate the provision of green infrastructure across towns to deliver the multiple benefits that can be realised through its provision. As a result, the policy is judged to offer multiple sustainability benefits and have a synergistic effect with other policies. The impacts will be cumulative, long term and positive in relation to the natural environment and also in relation to social benefits.
- 6.45 The inclusion of standards within the policy and the clear timetable for the delivery of the Green Infrastructure Strategy are enhancements on the draft policy produced in 2010.

### Locational Policies

- 6.46 The detailed results of the appraisal of the locational policies are included in Appendix E of this report.
- 6.47 Within each policy, sites are identified for development to deliver housing, employment and facilities. For each of these sites, more detailed information will need to be collected to assess the sustainability of each site, not only at the application stage but also as part of the Local Plan Part 2 and any master planning work that is undertaken.
- 6.48 The locational policies as first drafted in 2010, were subject to SA. One of the recommendations of this SA work was to include reference to climate change to ensure that it was considered at the district wide and more local scale. This recommendation has been taken on board with each of the locational policies including a section on environment and climate change covering the natural and historic environment as well as climate change adaptation and mitigation.

### Policy 16 – Blandford

- 6.49 The policy approach to Blandford seeks to enable limited growth in the most accessible locations and to minimise the impact on the local environment. The growth of the town is acknowledged to have some localised impact such as impacts on the local landscape. However, through the careful selection of sites and the inclusion of appropriate mitigation measures on these sites, the impact has been minimised.

- 6.50 The approach to green infrastructure is likely to offer increased benefits in terms of biodiversity enhancement and informal recreation within the town. It will enable improved access (via the Trailway) to the countryside and neighbouring villages and enable residents of these villages to access the town in a sustainable way.
- 6.51 Overall the policy approach for Blandford has been assessed to offer the most sustainable strategy for the future growth of the town.

### Policy 17 – Gillingham

- 6.52 The main changes to the Gillingham policy have been appraised as having an overall positive effect on sustainability. The removal of the business park proposal at Wyke has resulted in a less significant positive impact on the District's economy however it is likely to have a more positive impact on the local environment.
- 6.53 In a similar way, the inclusion of the Strategic Site Allocation policy for the Southern Extension to the town enables infrastructure and other benefits to be proactively secured, delivering greater benefits rather than if development was left to an ad-hoc approach.
- 6.54 The community in Gillingham are developing a neighbourhood plan for the town to tackle local issues including detail on the town centre. This builds on their Town Design Statement and supports the regeneration proposed through the policy and will help to improve the town's role as a service centre and help to enhance its heritage assets. The neighbourhood plan will also help to build a strong community in the town.

### Policy 18 – Shaftesbury

- 6.55 Growth at Shaftesbury is constrained by its hilltop location. This will necessitate careful management of the development to ensure the landscape impact of development is minimised. The policy proposes the scaling back of development in sensitive locations to minimise this impact and this has been assessed as a positive improvement to the policy from the 2010 draft.
- 6.56 Specific mention of the environmental issues that face the town, such as localised surface water flooding due to the topography of the town and the high value historic environment, will help to see them being addressed through development. Again, this is seen as a positive improvement to the policy from the 2010 draft.
- 6.57 Overall, the approach to the limited growth of Shaftesbury is assessed as being the most appropriate in sustainability terms.

### Policy 19 – Sturminster Newton

- 6.58 Sites for growth at Sturminster Newton have been carefully selected to minimise the impact on the local landscape. In addition, the Community's Town Design Statement and design briefs help in ensuring development that does take place reflects the local character. The regeneration of the town centre will also help to

improve the appearance of the town, all contributing to protecting the local townscape and landscape.

- 6.59 The development of the Trailway, connecting towns and villages along its route will help to encourage sustainable travel in the local area, including through the proposed connection with North Dorset Business Park. In addition, the recognition of flooding and biodiversity issues within the policy will help with recognition of the importance of the local environment, contributing to the positive SA results.

### Policy 20 – The Countryside

- 6.60 The revised policy approach to the countryside is more restrictive in one sense as it prevents development over a wide area of the district. However the provisions for neighbourhood planning and the development of social infrastructure associated with Stalbridge and the villages, is more permissive as it enables community aspirations to be met.
- 6.61 The overall net effect of these changes will be to promote a more sustainable pattern of development across the district whilst enabling needs and community aspirations to be met. This approach will help to build stronger rural communities as community support for development is the only way needs will be met.
- 6.62 The approach of enabling exceptions to the policy of restraint will enable the rural economy to function and grow whilst still protecting the rural landscapes and character. However this needs to be carefully controlled to avoid unsustainable patterns of development.
- 6.63 The expansion of the policy of restraint, allowing for community led growth, has been appraised as offering significant sustainability benefits over the approach put forward in the 2010 draft New Plan.

### Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation

- 6.64 The locations for development at each of the four main towns have been assessed within the assessment of the overall policy approach for each town with the exception of Gillingham. In Gillingham, options for the direction of growth at the town have been considered as has the detailed strategy for the town itself.
- 6.65 The detailed assessment of the expansion of Gillingham has been assessed differently due to the inclusion of the detailed Strategic Site Allocation policy for the Southern Extension to the town. The Strategic Site Allocation policy has been assessed separately, looking at the detailed information that is available for this site. The detailed appraisal matrices and explanation of the results of the appraisal are included in Appendix E of this report.
- 6.66 The results of the appraisal of the policy highlighted several concerns which have been addressed. In relation to the principal street, the consideration of options highlighted the need to avoid areas liable to flood to build in resilience to climate

change and to avoid Cole Street Lane to respect its rural character. It is also important that this route enables bus penetration into the site.

- 6.67 Clustering of formal green infrastructure across the site will enable ease of management of each facility in the most cost effective way enabling higher quality facilities to be provided. The provision of informal green infrastructure, primarily along the river corridors, will enable the biodiversity associated with the rivers to be protected and enhanced.
- 6.68 Provision of a local centre, incorporating small scale retail, community uses, a surgery, a new primary school and employment uses will help to build a viable community hub. It will be essential to connect this local centre with the existing town and neighbouring residential areas via a network of safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle routes.
- 6.69 To avoid negative impacts on the amenity of neighbouring areas of the Kingsmead Business Park, the uses at this site should be restricted to B1 Business uses rather than more general employment uses.
- 6.70 It will be essential that the subsequent masterplan framework produced to guide the development of the Southern Extension site is subject to an appraisal of its sustainability and impacts on biodiversity. This will need to consider all aspects of the development across the whole of the site and the impact on the town and neighbouring areas. It should cover the environmental impacts alongside the economic and social impacts and should avoid negative impacts or suggest appropriate mitigation.

### **Development Management Policies**

- 6.71 The detailed results of the appraisal of the Development Management policies are included in Appendix F of this report. It was difficult to assess in detail the potential impact of these policies across all of the SA objectives as their focus is narrow and not necessarily relevant to all of the SA objectives. Uncertainties have been highlighted in the appraisal.

### **Policy 22 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy**

- 6.72 The revised policy clearly sets out how the Council will assess renewable and low carbon energy proposals having regard to relevant issues. This will enable the relevant information to be provided up front with a planning application in an open approach, enabling engagement with the local community. This approach has been appraised as having environmental benefits; through enabling appropriate renewable energy developments and community benefits; and through engaging communities in the application process.

### **Policy 23 – Parking**

- 6.73 The policy sets out upfront the requirements for parking provision associated with various types of development. This approach gives clear information to developers

enabling parking provision to be incorporated into a scheme from the outset. This should speed up appropriate development and therefore will help to deliver key social and economic benefits whilst also reducing the impact of developments on the environment.

### Policy 24 – Design

- 6.74 The policy sets out the principles of good design, encourages community engagement and requires an understanding of local context in developing the design of a scheme. The approach as set out in the policy has been assessed through good design to offer sustainability benefits.

### Policy 25 – Amenity

- 6.75 Protection of amenity helps to create attractive places to live and work by minimising the impact of neighbouring uses on each other. The resultant minimising of light, noise and odour pollution will also have a positive impact on the natural environment.

### Policy 26 – Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- 6.76 The establishment of criteria to assess site proposals and the management of sites within the policy is thought to not only offer benefits in terms of the protection of the local environment but also help to meet the needs of particular groups. In addition, by providing well managed sites, the occupiers are more likely to be accepted in the local community. Overall it is considered to offer substantial sustainability benefits.

### Policy 27 – Retention of Community Facilities

- 6.77 Retention of community facilities helps to maintain the sustainability of settlements and helps businesses to grow through diversification. This will help to reduce the need to travel and help to build strong inclusive communities. Overall the policy offers significant benefits in terms of sustainability.

### Policy 28 – Existing Dwellings in the Countryside

- 6.78 Recognition in the policy that there are instances when development is needed in the countryside to amend, extend or replace an existing dwelling makes it perform relatively well in sustainability terms. The inclusion of criteria to restrict such developments makes the policy score well against several of the SA objectives, in particular those relating to the protection of the environment.

### Policy 29 – The Re-use of Existing Buildings in the Countryside

- 6.79 The policy seeks to make the best use of existing buildings in the countryside and seeks to secure their use to bring benefits to the local area. This could be for community uses or for economic uses and hence the policy seeks to secure sustainability benefits.

- 6.80 In exceptional circumstances the policy would permit the re-use for non-occupational residential uses. Development resulting in intensification in the use of a site will perpetuate unsustainable patterns of development and increase reliance on car travel to meet everyday needs. On balance however, the policy is considered to have a positive sustainability outcome by making good use of previously developed land and resources.

### Policy 30 – Existing Employment Sites in the Countryside

- 6.81 The policy will help to facilitate the growth of the rural economy whilst protecting the landscape of the rural area. It will however be important to ensure that unsustainable travel patterns are not perpetuated by the policy and that businesses are encouraged to relocate to more sustainable locations where appropriate.

### Policy 31 – Tourist Accommodation in the Countryside

- 6.82 Tourist accommodation in a countryside location not only meets a need, it also helps to support the local economy, providing jobs and enabling farm diversification. There is however the potential for impacts on the local environment necessitating control of such schemes however overall the policy is thought to offer sustainability benefits.

### Policy 32 – Equine related Developments in the Countryside

- 6.83 The policy effectively balances the positive economic and social aspects of equine related developments with the potential for environmental harm. It may be necessary however to include mitigation measures in equine developments to reduce the impact on bridleways, especially having regard to other users of such routes.

### Policy 33 – Occupational Dwellings in the Countryside

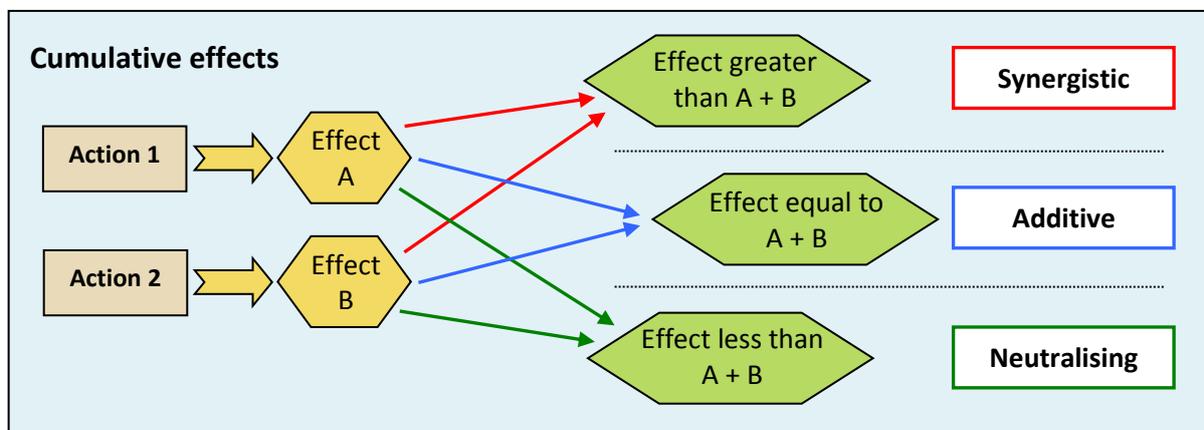
- 6.84 The approach in Policy 33 is thought to offer sustainability benefits to the rural economy through the support it gives to rural enterprises. It should also help to reduce travel for workers who need to live at their place of work. The restrictions placed on the location and size of proposed dwellings should help to minimise the impact on the landscape.

## 7. Summary and Cumulative Effects 2013

7.1 The SEA Directive requires the assessment of the cumulative and secondary effects of a plan being implemented. Cumulative effects are a result of incremental changes occurring from more than one action and the interactions between these changes. These incremental effects can have a small effect individually, but can accrue to have significant environmental effects. Figure 7.1 illustrates the type of cumulative effects which could occur. Such interactions have an impact on the magnitude of the effect produced.

- Additive effects are equivalent in magnitude to the simple addition of the two impacts. For example the additional parking spaces needed in a street if housing is built on a parking area
- Synergistic impacts are greater than that of the addition of the two composite effects. An example could be the loss of a species from an area due to the continued fragmentation of its habitat.
- Neutralising effects produce a lesser effect than the sum of the individual actions that produce the effects in the first place. Examples include the increase in biodiversity resulting from habitat creation provided to offset the impact of housing development

Figure 7.1: Cumulative effects



7.2 Secondary effects are those which may occur but are not directly related to actions being taken as a result of the plan and which occur away from the original action. An example of a secondary effect would be the degradation of a wildlife site as a result of recreational pressure arising from increased population due to a housing development.

7.3 The SEA Directive specifically highlights the need to consider the possible duration and permanency of the effects. This is particularly important when assessing the overall effect of the plan.

7.4 In addition to these intra-plan effects, good practice would necessitate the assessment of inter-plan effects where the policies in the plan are considered in

combination with policies in other plans. The prime area for such inter-plan effects will be the interaction between the Local Plan policies and those contained in Neighbourhood Plans.

- 7.5 The Local Plan sets the framework within which other projects will take place. These projects will require planning permission to be granted having regard to the policies in the plan. In many instances, project proposals will need to be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment which should set out detail in relation to the impacts of the proposal. This is the stage where detailed information rather than strategic issues should be assessed.
- 7.6 As the Local Plan sets the framework for other projects of a permanent nature which will take place at some point in the future, it is likely that the effects of the plan are long-term. There are certain effects that will be felt locally which will be short term and temporary in their nature, such as the disruption during the construction phase of a development. Temporary effects such as this have not been considered in detail as they last over a relatively short period of time and the developments will bring about other sustainability benefits that outweigh the temporary inconvenience.

## Intra-plan Cumulative Effects

- 7.7 The interactions between policies within the Local Plan Part 1 have the potential for cumulative effects. These can be positive, negative or be mitigated as a result of other policies within the plan.
- 7.8 Appraisal of the potential effect of the district wide policies has been undertaken separately from the locational policies. This is because the locational policies generally add more detail to that set by the strategic policies and have a much more localised effect.

### District-wide Policies

- 7.9 The District-wide policies (policies 1 through to 15 and policies 22 through to 33) have been appraised as a set to identify cumulative effects that may require mitigation. Figure 7.2 sets out the results of this cumulative effects assessment.
- 7.10 From the results of the cumulative effects analysis of the strategic policies, it can be seen that overall the effect is positive across all of the SA objectives. There are a few instances where a negative effect has been identified primarily relating to policies which promote growth or permit development in rural locations. These negative effects are generally offset by “mitigation” promoted by other policies or by the positive effects that result from the policy itself.
- 7.11 Since the SA was undertaken of the draft policies contained in the New Plan 2010, the policies now show a greater positive effect and less of a negative effect. In addition there is less uncertainty in relation to the potential impact of the strategic policies but with the more detailed Development Management policies displaying a

higher degree of uncertainty. This uncertainty primarily relates to narrow focus of the more detailed Development Management policies hence they do not cover the whole range of SA objectives.

- 7.12 The plan now contains a new section on Environment and Climate Change which contains detailed policies to protect and enhance the natural and historic environment and help tackle climate change. The inclusion of this detail along with the national standard Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development policy is seen as a positive enhancement of the plans environmental sustainability. One particular aspect is the inclusion of an ecosystem approach in The Natural Environment policy. This gives a more holistic approach to the management of the natural environment which highlights the multiple benefits it brings.
- 7.13 The key areas where a significant positive effect has been suggested by the appraisal are in relation to the creation of balanced communities, improving access to essential services and delivering housing in line with jobs and community facilities. This is the essence of sustainable development, reducing the need to travel and therefore one of the key aims of the Local Plan.
- 7.14 Similar to the creation of balanced communities, the reduction of barriers to community participation and the creation of vibrant and inclusive communities are important to the creation of truly sustainable settlements.
- 7.15 Through the environmentally protective policies, the Local Plan is assessed as helping to reduce pressure on natural resources. This includes wise use of the water resource, energy efficiency and the reuse of previously developed land. Although there is little previously developed land in the district, regeneration areas have been identified within the towns for the provision of community facilities, retail and housing.
- 7.16 Potential negative impacts resulting from the plan include reductions in the impacts of climate change and the environment more generally for example through pollution. Although the Local Plan does not allocate development in areas liable to flooding, it is not seen as being proactive in reducing risk and capitalising on opportunities to mitigate flood risk through development or reduce heat stress in the towns.
- 7.17 Similarly the plan is not seen as being positive in promoting energy efficiency and the production of clean energy. There are opportunities across the district for clean energy production both within developments and as standalone projects however policies do not seek to encourage them beyond the national approach.
- 7.18 Increased pollution resulting from traffic arising from the residential and economic development proposed by the plan will primarily be mitigated through the promotion of sustainable travel options promoted by the infrastructure policies. Similarly development will have a localised impact on townscapes and landscapes which will be mitigated through good design which recognises of the positive

contribution made by the character of an area to its attractiveness and the provision of green infrastructure as part of development schemes. These mitigation measures need to be as strong as possible to minimise the impact of development.

- 7.19 In relation to improving the skills and incomes of the lowest paid and the provision of satisfying work opportunities, the plan performs negatively as links between educational establishments are not made beyond the state school system. This is primarily as a result of no higher or further education facilities being present within the District.

Figure 7.2 Cumulative Effects Analysis of District-wide Policies

Policy		SA Objectives															
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
2	Core Spatial Strategy	++	++	+	+	0	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	++	+	0
3	Climate Change	+	+	+	0	+	++	+	0	0	+	++	+	0	+	0	0
4	The Natural Environment	0	0	+	0	+	+	++	0	++	++	+	0	0	0	+	0
5	The Historic Environment	0	0	0	+	++	0	0	++	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	0
6	Housing Distribution	++	++	+	+	0	0	+	0	+	-	+	0	+	++	+	0
7	Delivering Homes	++	+	+	++	+	0	0	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0
8	Affordable Housing	++	+	+	++	+	0	0	+	0	0	+	0	+	0	0	0
9	Rural Exception Affordable Housing	++	+	+	+	0	0	?	0	-	-	?	0	0	-	0	0
10	Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	++	++	+	++	+	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	0

Policy		SA Objectives															
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
11	Economy	0	++	+	+	+	0	-	+	-	-	+	0	+	++	++	++
12	Retail, leisure and other commercial developments	0	++	+	++	0	?	0	+	0	+	++	0	+	++	+	++
13	Grey Infrastructure	0	++	+	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	+	0	++	+	++	0
14	Social Infrastructure	0	++	+	++	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	+
15	Green Infrastructure	0	+	++	+	++	+	++	+	++	++	+	0	0	+	+	0
22	Renewable and Low Carbon Energy	?	?	?	+	+	++	++	++	++	++	+	++	+	+	0	?
23	Parking	?	++	+	++	+	0	0	++	0	+	+	+	++	+	0	0
24	Design	+	++	++	+	++	+	++	++	++	++	+	+	0	0	+	0
25	Amenity	?	0	+	0	++	0	+	++	++	++	0	0	?	?	0	?
26	Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	++	++	++	++	++	0	?	?	?	+	0	0	0	+	?	?
27	Retention of Community Facilities	?	++	+	++	+	0	0	+	0	+	++	?	?	++	++	0

Policy		SA Objectives															
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
28	Existing Dwellings in the Countryside	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	++	++	++	++	+	0	0	+	?
29	The Re-Use of Existing Buildings in the Countryside	+	-	0	0	+	0	0	+	+	+	++	+	0	-	+	0
30	Existing Employment Sites in the Countryside	0	-	0	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	0	-	++	+
31	Tourist Accommodation in the Countryside	0	?	0	?	0	0	+	+	+	0	+	0	0	+	+	0
32	Equine-related Developments in the Countryside	0	0	+	0	+	0	?	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+
33	Occupational Dwellings in the Countryside	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	+	0	+	+

## Locational Policies

- 7.20 Policies 16 through to 20 deal with specific locations within the district, setting out the strategic approach in relation to each location. The cumulative effects analysis of these policies is included in Figure 7.3.
- 7.21 The locational policies focus on each of the four main towns with one policy focusing on the Countryside. There is little direct interaction between the four main towns and as a result of the proposals for each town, it is thought that the levels of interaction are unlikely to change significantly.
- 7.22 The only area where there is the potential for an impact is in the Gillingham / Shaftesbury area where the growth at Gillingham may have an impact on the area both in terms of traffic but also having an impact on service provision in the towns. It will be essential that traffic management measures and the relief of pinch points on the road network are implemented. In addition, the impact on the accessibility of facilities in the area needs to be monitored with enhanced public transport put in place to offset any decline in provision, particularly in Shaftesbury.
- 7.23 The inclusion of the sections on climate change and the environment in each of the locational policies has strengthened the environmental sustainability of the plan as a whole. This is seen as a significant positive improvement to the plan from the draft New Plan produced in 2010 as it highlights the opportunities and threats that exist within each of the areas and this has been reflected in the appraisal.
- 7.24 In general, the results of the appraisal of the town policies suggest that there will be significant positive effects in relation to the provision of housing to meet needs. Similarly, the appraisal indicated that the policies will help in the creation of balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered alongside each other. This will help to enable everyday needs to be met locally, reducing the need for travel.
- 7.25 As the policies recognise the character of the natural and historic environment and encourage regeneration of underutilised space, the overall effect on the built environment has been assessed as being positive.
- 7.26 Despite these positive effects, the policy appraisal highlighted some negative effects. These primarily relate to the promotion of energy efficiency and clean energy production as there are no specific measures included in any policy other than the reliance on the national approach. Opportunities exist within new developments to incorporate renewable energy and to build buildings to high levels of energy efficiency, exceeding the national approach. This should be encouraged where possible within the policy however national policy is restrictive in relation to this.
- 7.27 Along a similar line, adaptation to the impact of climate change is not actively promoted through the policies hence they score poorly against this SA objective. Again opportunities exist within the towns for action to reduce flood risk and to

introduce planting and green space to encourage biodiversity and provide a cooling effect. Tree planting and green space provision is however highlighted in the Green Infrastructure policy where the multiple benefits of its provision are highlighted.

- 7.28 As the policies promote development, some of which will be on greenfield land, the impact on the environment will be noticeable, both in terms of biodiversity and in relation to local character. Green infrastructure can help to offset some of this impact.
- 7.29 One of the other areas where the appraisal has highlighted a deficiency in the policy framework is in relation to education and skills. The policies only refer to school provision, primarily by virtue of the lack of higher and further education facilities within the district. Connections to nearby further and higher education establishments in larger towns should be sought to improve the skills of local people.

Figure 7.3: Cumulative effects analysis of Locational Policies

SA Objectives			16: Blandford	17: Gillingham	18: Shaftesbury	19: Sturminster Newton	20: The Countryside	21: Gillingham Southern Extension
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	++	++	++	++	++	++
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	++	++	++	++	+	++
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	++	++	+	++	0	+
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	++	+	+	+	+	+
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	+	+	++	++	+	+
Effective protection of the environment	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	+	+	-	+	0	++
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	?	+	+	++	+	+
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	+	++	++	++	+	+
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	+	+	++	+	?	+

SA Objectives			16: Blandford	17: Gillingham	18: Shaftesbury	19: Sturminster Newton	20: The Countryside	21: Gillingham Southern Extension
Prudent use of natural resources	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	0	+	-	+	+	0
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	++	+	+	+	?	+
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	-	-	-	+	+	0
Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	+	+	+	++	+	++
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	++	++	+	++	+	+
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	+	+	++	++	+	+
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	?	+	++	+	0	+

## Inter-plan Cumulative Effects

7.30 The interactions between plans produced by different bodies can result in some unintended cumulative effects. Where plans have already been produced, the effects can be assessed however where these plans are to be produced or revised, the interactions between the plans are more difficult to assess. Figure 7.4 although not an exhaustive list outlines where some cumulative effects may result and what steps may need to be taken to ensure that there are no significant negative impacts.

Figure 7.4: Inter-plan Cumulative Effects

Other plans, programmes or projects	Examples of potential positive effects	Examples of potential negative effects	Possible measures to reduce or avoid cumulative effects
Other plans or strategies that will result from the Local Plan Part 1:- the Masterplan Framework for the Gillingham Southern Extension.	Potential to enhance biodiversity through provision of green space	Potential negative impacts relating to transport works.	Ensuring that the relevant document is subject to an appraisal of its sustainability and cross refers to the Local Plan Part 1 policies to ensure they are compatible.
Other plans or strategies that will result from the Local Plan Part 1:- the Green Infrastructure Strategy.	Potential to enhance biodiversity, potential to enhance quality of life.	Potential to restrict growth through onerous green infrastructure requirements.	Ensure that the proposals focus on the role of green infrastructure but have consideration for the wider purpose of development.
The Local Plan Part 2 Site Allocations Document.	Opportunities to reinforce some of the objectives of the Local Plan such as the delivery of sustainable communities.	Potential to harm the landscape, biodiversity, and the wider environment.	Need to ensure that the Local Plan Part 2 considers in detail all site specific information and considers the wider impact of the site allocations.

Other plans, programmes or projects	Examples of potential positive effects	Examples of potential negative effects	Possible measures to reduce or avoid cumulative effects
Neighbouring authorities' Local Plans and strategies.	Potential to mitigate some of the impacts of development through complementary policies and cross border working.	Potential cumulative effect on internationally designated habitats such as the Dorset Heathlands or Poole Harbour.	Ensure that plans consider the impact on internationally designated sites and complement the Local Plan policies by influencing plan production and cross border working as part of the Duty to Co-operate.
Neighbourhood Plans produced by local communities.	Potential to make settlements more sustainable through improved facilities and limited local growth.	Increased traffic, increased recreational pressure on internationally designated sites, increased pressure on local facilities arising from additional housing growth allocated through Plans.	Ensure that Neighbourhood Plans are in general conformity with the Local Plan and that where they allocate sites, are subject to SEA and HRA.

## Impact on SEA Topics

7.31 One of the requirements of the SEA Directive is to assess the potential impact of the plan's implementation on a range of topics. These SEA topics are:

Biodiversity	incorporating considerations of Flora and Fauna and the potential impacts on international, national and locally designated sites
Population	incorporating crime, diversity and education and training
Human Health	including the impact of housing, access to services and deprivation on human health
(Fauna	included under biodiversity)
(Flora	included under biodiversity)
Soil	includes considerations of soil pollution and loss of productive soils
Water	incorporating flooding, water efficiency and water pollution
Air	including air pollution from traffic and industry

Climatic Factors	Including energy consumption and energy efficiency in relation to climate change
Material Assets	Including the use of natural resources and waste
Landscape	considerations of the impact of development on the landscape
Cultural Heritage	including architectural and archaeological heritage and the impact on the built and ancient environment

- 7.32 Figure 5.2 sets out how these topics relate to the SA objectives used to undertake the appraisal of the Local Plan. Although this relationship allows an assessment of the implications of the plan's implementation, many of the topics are interrelated and therefore unpicking the impacts of the plan can be very difficult. Due to the interrelationship between the topics and the difficulty in unpicking the impacts, monitoring the plan's implementation is essential to ensure that action is taken if the impacts are not what are expected. If this is the case, action should be taken to minimise negative impacts and enhance positive ones.
- 7.33 The assessment of the cumulative impacts of the plan suggests that the plan is likely to have a positive impact on all of the SA objectives and therefore is likely to be positive against each of the SEA topics. The plan performs poorly in relation the SEA topics of Climatic Factors, Air and Water.
- 7.34 Climatic Factors relate to energy efficiency, clean energy production and the impacts of climate change. As the plan adheres to national policy on energy efficiency of new buildings and is not proactive in relation to renewable and low carbon energy, it scores poorly against this topic. Monitoring of greenhouse gas emissions and a more concerted effort to encourage the take up of renewable and low carbon energy is needed. It may also be appropriate to highlight the opportunities for community benefits from renewable energy to encourage further take-up. In addition, Allowable Solutions may be a way of improving energy efficiency of existing buildings or to deliver more community owned renewable or low carbon energy schemes.
- 7.35 The plan's assessed poor performance against the topics of Air and Water relates to the growth proposed within the district. This is likely to result in increased traffic and therefore increased air pollution, similarly increased water usage and the potential for water pollution. SuDS and Water efficient appliances and fittings can help reduce the impact on the water resource but there is still a need to reduce pollution of air and water particularly resulting from road traffic. Encouraging sustainable transport can help to do this.

## 8. Recommendations

- 8.1 The SA process has appraised the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1, endeavouring to identify the likely social, environmental and economic effects of the plan’s implementation. As part of this, the SA has highlighted a number of opportunities for mitigating adverse effects and for enhancing the sustainability of the plan overall.
- 8.2 The majority of the recommendations contained in the Initial SA Report have been incorporated into the plan. In addition the changes that have occurred within the planning system and to national policy have made some of these initial recommendations redundant. Recommendations that are still of relevance to the revised Local Plan Part 1 policies are set out in Figure 8.1.

Figure 8.1: Relevant recommendations from earlier SA work

Recommendations from the 2010 Initial SA Report	Action going forward
Mitigation measures need to be put in place to reduce the impact on the Greater Horseshoe bat population at Bryanston resulting from development at West Blandford	Measures are incorporated within the policy but it is essential that they are delivered on the ground
Improvements to walking and cycling links across the railway in Gillingham	Where opportunities exist, these have been highlighted in the policy however, it is important that pedestrian and cycle linkages are provided as part of the package of measures delivered by the Southern Extension to the town.
Regeneration of the different parts of Gillingham town centre in a coordinated way	This is being addressed through the Neighbourhood Plan but must ensure that particularly the designated heritage assets are not harmed by regeneration of other parts of the town centre.
The development of the Market Fields site in Sturminster Newton needs to incorporate wildlife corridors into the development.	When the site is developed, connecting the Butts Pond LNR with the wider countryside needs to form part of the overall scheme.
Economies of scale associated with larger developments should be exploited to deliver higher energy efficiency across a scheme through the use of renewable and low carbon energy and energy efficiency measures	The revised climate change policy encourages the use of energy efficiency measures and renewable and low carbon energy in developments but there is little requirement to do so due to the restrictive National policy.

Recommendations from the 2010 Initial SA Report      Action going forward

When infrastructure development takes place for example transport improvements, it is essential that environmental mitigation measures are built into the scheme.	The requirement for mitigation measures should be incorporated into the Grey Infrastructure policy and a link made to the provision of green infrastructure. An example of appropriate mitigation could be the provision of wide verges alongside a road which incorporate wild flower planting and the provision of underpasses for wildlife.
The negative impacts on biodiversity should be mitigated through the provision of adequate green infrastructure both on and off site, including through buffer strips to trees and hedgerows.	The Green Infrastructure policy addresses this but it is essential that the consideration of multi-functional green infrastructure is incorporated into the scheme at the design phase and not as an add-on.
There is a need to ensure the opportunities offered by developments (such as increased permeability through a town, increases in biodiversity, renewable energy serving a wider area) are capitalised upon.	This is an issue that will be dealt with at the individual project stage rather than the strategic stage. It will be essential that the policies in the plan are followed to achieve this.
Economic development in a countryside location should be the exception rather than the rule.	The approach of relying on Neighbourhood Plans to deliver development outside of the four main towns has the potential to undermine the spatial strategy. If economic development is to be permitted in the countryside, it should be of small scale so as to not diminish the functions of the main towns as centres for such activity.

8.3 In addition to these outstanding recommendations from the Initial SA Report, several recommendations have emerged from the SA of the Local Plan Part 1. The majority of these recommendations, as set out in Figure 8.2, relate to ensuring that the policies are implemented thoroughly and do not propose additional changes to the strategy. Any changes to policy are minor and involve the insertion of additional wording rather than major rewording of the policy.

8.4 In relation to the new Gillingham SSA policy, options were considered for addressing some of the issues related to the development. These options generated a number of recommendations as set out in Appendix E of this report. These recommendations have been taken on board in the formulation of the policy with any outstanding recommendations being set out in Figure 8.2.

Figure 8.2: Recommendations for Local Plan Part 1

Recommendation	Reason for recommendation
Connections to nearby further and higher education establishments should be sought in the larger towns. These could be via enhanced public transport or through the provision of a satellite campus within the District.	To enhance training opportunities and the skills of residents, opening up more satisfying job opportunities and better pay
Consideration of landscape character, local built environment character, biodiversity, green infrastructure, design etc. as part of neighbourhood plans.	To ensure that Neighbourhood Plans do not conflict with the Local Plan or cause unwanted consequences when implemented alongside the Local Plan.
Ensure that Neighbourhood Plans are in general conformity with the Local Plan and that where they allocate sites, are subject to SEA and HRA.	
Ensuring that documents produced supplemental to the Local Plan are subject to an appraisal of their sustainability and cross refers to the Local Plan Part 1 policies to ensure they are compatible. Examples include the Gillingham Masterplan Framework and the Green Infrastructure Strategy.	To ensure that these documents are prepared in the context of the Local Plan and that their sustainability / environmental impact is assessed and mitigated effectively.
Ensure that the proposals contained in the Green infrastructure Strategy focus on the role of green infrastructure but have consideration for the wider purpose of development in delivering growth.	The viability of development proposals may be called into question if green infrastructure requirements are too onerous.
Ensure that the Local Plan Part 2 considers in detail all site specific information and takes into account the wider impact of the site allocations.	Local Plan Part 2 will add site specific detail to that contained in Local Plan Part 1. It will therefore need to ensure that all available information is used to arrive at the best approach for each development site.
Engage with neighbouring local authorities to ensure that cumulative impacts of neighbouring plans are not negative.	Cross boundary issues need to be considered in plan preparation to ensure that significant effects do not result from the interactions between plans.

Recommendation	Reason for recommendation
<p>Policy 2 – Core Spatial Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate wording on the provision of sustainable transport options into the policy, cross-linking to the policy on Grey Infrastructure.</li> </ul>	<p>The focus on the main towns as service centres will result in areas outside of these towns relying on them for the provision of services and facilities. Provision of sustainable transport options such as cycleways, footpaths and public transport into the towns, will help to improve the sustainability of the spatial approach to growth.</p>
<p>Policy 4 – The Natural Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure monitoring and review mechanisms are in place to make sure the impact on biodiversity is effectively mitigated.</li> </ul>	<p>Impact on wildlife sites needs to be minimised and measures are proposed in the policy to achieve this. It will be important to monitor these to ensure that there is no degradation in biodiversity resulting from development.</p>
<p>Policy 5 – The Historic Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A local list of heritage assets should be established early on and in consultation with local communities to recognise and protect important, non-protected local heritage assets.</li> </ul>	<p>Non-designated heritage assets contribute to the cultural heritage and character of an area in a similar way to those which benefit from a designation. It will be important to manage a local list of these to offer protection from harmful development.</p>
<p>Policy 6 – Housing Distribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor the sustainability of rural areas including the level of service provision and the delivery of housing to meet needs to check the effectiveness of neighbourhood planning.</li> <li>Ensure that policies to mitigate the impact of development are implemented effectively alongside the delivery of growth.</li> </ul>	<p>Neighbourhood Planning is being relied upon to meet the needs of rural areas. To ensure that this growth is sustainable as possible, accessibility to services should be monitored alongside residential growth brought forward through neighbourhood plans.</p> <p>To mitigate the impact of development, it is important to ensure that protection is given to significant environmental assets and that mitigation is put in place.</p>
<p>Policy 7 – Delivering Homes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor the pressure on greenfield land which may result from low density development.</li> </ul>	<p>Lower density development, although respecting the character of the District's settlements, can result in inefficient use of land. This will in turn put pressure on greenfield land to deliver the required amount of residential development. Monitoring of this effect is important.</p>

Recommendation	Reason for recommendation
<p>Policy 11 – The Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specifically mention within the policy the mitigation that is needed to minimise the impact on the landscape and on biodiversity.</li> <li>The policy should refer to the opportunities that exist on employment sites for the co-location of renewable energy within and alongside industrial buildings.</li> </ul>	<p>Employment sites generally contain large buildings which can have a significant landscape impact. In addition large areas of hard standing and the potential pollution from run-off will have an impact on biodiversity. These impacts need to be considered in employment developments. Employment uses are often large users of energy and hence there are opportunities for such developments to generate their own decentralised heat and power. Excess heat and power could then be exported to neighbouring users, increasing efficiency.</p>
<p>Policy 13 – Grey Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The policy should specifically mention the need for infrastructure schemes to minimise their impact on the environment through careful design.</li> </ul>	<p>Large infrastructure schemes such as roads, can often have a significant local impact on biodiversity and landscape. It is essential that this impact is mitigated for example through hedge and tree planting.</p>
<p>To mitigate the impact of the Gillingham Southern Extension, it will be essential that traffic management measures and the relief of pinch points on the road network are implemented.</p>	<p>The Gillingham Southern Extension will increase traffic levels in the Gillingham area. A package of measures is proposed and it is important that these are implemented and monitored to minimise the impact on the local road network and to ensure their effectiveness.</p>
<p>Monitoring the impact of the Gillingham Southern Extension on the accessibility of facilities in the area is important. Appropriate mitigation measures, such as enhanced public transport should be put in place to offset any decline in provision, particularly in Shaftesbury.</p>	<p>The enhancement of Gillingham as a service centre through the growth of the town may result in a decline in the provision of services in nearby towns such as Shaftesbury. It is important that mitigation is put in place to offset this effect, such as the provision of high frequency bus links between the town and Shaftesbury.</p>

## 9. How the SA has been taken on board

- 9.1 The Initial SA Report produced in 2010 set out the results of the appraisal of the draft New Plan. The Addendum to the Initial Sustainability Appraisal supplemented this report with the appraisal of additional sites and appraisal of the Development Management policies. These reports made recommendations as to which of the alternatives considered should be taken forward to form the final strategy.
- 9.2 Since the 2010 draft New Plan was produced, a number of changes have taken place to the planning system. These changes include the introduction of the NPPF, the revocation of Regional Strategies and the introduction of Neighbourhood Planning. In addition, further pieces of evidence have been produced to help refine the approach being taken. These have necessitated changes to policies which make it more difficult to identify how the SA has influenced the policy formulation.
- 9.3 The SA process has been undertaken as an iterative process with a full assessment of the policy approach being undertaken at key stages in the policy formulation process. These policies and the associated SA work have also been subject to consultation. Recommendations made as part of the SA and the results of the consultation have been taken on board, influencing the formulation of the policies in the Local Plan Part 1.
- 9.4 The progression of the policies from the draft New Plan produced in 2010 to the Local Plan Part 1 policies that form the Pre-submission Document is set out in appendices D, E and F of this report. In addition, the options considered and the results of the appraisal of these alternatives, is included in Appendix C. The consultation responses received on the Initial SA Report and how the SA / policies have been affected, is set out in Figure 9.1.

Figure 9.1: Initial SA Report Consultation Responses

Respondent	Comment	How SA and policies have been affected
Natural England	The SA and policies need to recognise the contribution made by car travel to greenhouse gas emissions. Supports the need to meet local needs locally, reducing the need to travel.	Sustainable travel objectives have been incorporated into Policy 13 – Grey Infrastructure
Natural England	Support the aims of focusing growth on three main towns and Sturminster Newton as sustainable locations.	Strategic need now being met within main towns only with Neighbourhood Planning being the primary route for delivering locally identified need.

Respondent	Comment	How SA and policies have been affected
Natural England	Agrees with the SA recommendation in paragraph 8.63 of the Initial SA Report regarding the re-use of sustainably located buildings only	National policy is now more permissive towards the re-use of buildings in the countryside. The Council's approach reflects national policy but focuses the reuse of buildings towards economic and community uses.
Natural England	Support the focusing of rural exceptions schemes on the more sustainable locations	Rural exceptions need to be justified by identified local need. Limited scope for need to be identified in very small settlements but if there is a need, it should be met. Approach nationally (NPPF Para 54) is to allow small amounts of market housing on rural exception schemes to cross-subsidise them. Only sufficient market to make scheme viable and not the other way round
Natural England	Clarification on the status of the SW Nature Map	SW Nature Map is now referred to as a "project" which will be used to inform the GI strategy and to identify areas where habitat enhancement/creation could be facilitated through development.
Natural England	Support the suggestion of the SA that mitigation of impacts on internationally designated sites should be put in place prior to development taking place	Approach to mitigation of impacts on internationally designated sites has been developed alongside Natural England and jointly with neighbouring Local Planning Authorities. Mitigation will form part of an overall coordinated approach rather than up-front for example the mitigation of development impact on Dorset heathlands

Respondent	Comment	How SA and policies have been affected
Environment Agency	Highlighted that the definition used for Grey Infrastructure includes flood mitigation measures and hence Grey Infrastructure policy is likely to have a positive impact on SA objective 6	Recognise this influence however flood mitigation is only one element of Grey Infrastructure. This comment has been taken on board as part of the SA of the revised policies.
Environment Agency	Highlighted that there may be a need for a level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) to accompany some of the proposals which are within areas liable to flood.	Subsequent meetings with the Environment Agency have set out the parameters within which policies could be included for areas liable to flood. These have been taken on board in the revised policies
Environment Agency	Flood prevention infrastructure identified as part of any Level 2 SFRA should be mentioned in policy and in the SA.	The revised policy mentions flood prevention as part of the infrastructure to support development. Specific pieces of infrastructure to support the development of a site will be highlighted as part of the site allocations in Local Plan Part 2.
Environment Agency	Highlighted a potential approach to resolve uncertainty around the risk of flooding in Gillingham regeneration area.	Further information on flood risk will be gathered as part of the Local Plan Part 2 when the exact boundaries of the regeneration area will be formally established.
Wessex Water	Highlighted the importance of separate sewerage and surface water systems and the importance of SuDS in all schemes for managing surface water. In addition to reducing the risk of foul flooding in extreme weather conditions, separate systems require less pumping and treatment at sewage treatment works.	SuDS and separate foul and surface water drainage systems are required in policy. In addition, the policy requires the SuDS schemes should be appropriate for the underlying ground conditions and designed to an adoptable standard.
Natural England	Support given for efforts to introduce higher levels of energy efficiency rather than relying on national timetable	National policy does not now permit the introduction of energy efficiency measures faster than the national timetable.

Respondent	Comment	How SA and policies have been affected
English Heritage	Responder notes considered approach to the assessment of impact on the historic environment and is pleased to note an emphasis on the positive role of the historic environment (rather than as merely a constraint) in shaping managed change (place shaping).	This is an element that the SA will reiterate so that the positive role of the historic environment is integrated into policy.
Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB	Suggested that the Local Plan needs to be able to respond to the most extreme forms of change that will result from climate change.	Revised policies will seek to tackle climate change, being informed by the SA. Tackling climate change is an objective of the SA and the Local Plan
Fontmell Magna Parish Council	<p>Disagreement with the classification of Fontmell Magna as an RSS Policy C Settlement. The following reasons were stated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the village has received growth in the recent past</li> <li>• disagree with the assumption that growing the village will support its service centre function</li> <li>• the level of growth is restricted due to topography</li> <li>• there is a lack of evidence to support the assumption that the village is a service centre</li> </ul>	The approach to development outside the four main towns is to rely on Neighbourhood Planning to bring forward growth to meet the needs of the village. As such, if the local community wish to see their village grow then they will be able to bring growth forward themselves
Responses by individuals	<p>Objections to the development of the West Blandford site. Suggested several other options around the town (Similar comments were also received as part of the consultation on the Core Strategy document.)</p>	Issues raised in relation to the West Blandford site have been investigated in more detail as part of the Local Plan production process. Further site specific work will be required at the application stage specifically in relation to Greater Horseshoe Bats.

## 10. Monitoring

- 10.1 To enable the implementation of the Local Plan to be monitored a framework of indicators needs to be established. This will not only provide a mechanism for verifying the results of the SA but also highlight where unwanted or unexpected effects of the plan's implementation occur. Monitoring is required by the SEA Directive to enable early identification of adverse effects of plan implementation.
- 10.2 The Initial SA Report included a draft list of suggested indicators based upon the SA objectives. Similarly, the Local Plan includes a monitoring framework based on the Local Plan objectives. This monitoring framework within the Local Plan is linked to possible remedial actions if plan implementation is shown as having unexpected or unwanted effects.
- 10.3 To avoid duplication the monitoring arrangements for assessing the delivery of the plan against Local Plan objectives will also be used to help identify adverse effects as required by the SEA Directive. The aim of this monitoring will be to:
- highlight where significant effects are occurring;
  - highlight effects which differ from those that were predicted in the SA; and
  - provide a useful source of baseline information for future analysis of the issues.

### Monitoring framework for Local plan

- 10.4 The monitoring framework set out in Section 11 of the Local Plan Part 1 links the Local Plan objectives with indicators, outcomes and targets. Many of these indicators relate to the SA objectives and hence can be used to monitor the outcomes of the SA. Figure 10.1 shows the indicators that are proposed to monitor the Local Plan and how these can be linked to the SA objectives.

### Recommendations for monitoring

- 10.5 The indicators summarised in Figure 10.1 provide a comprehensive monitoring framework for the implementation of the Local Plan however they also need to enable effective monitoring of the SA objectives especially where uncertainties have been identified for the potential effects on SA objectives.
- 10.6 The Natural Environment policy sets out a number of measures to avoid and mitigate the impact of growth on internationally designated wildlife sites. The HRA also highlighted the importance of ensuring the effectiveness of these mitigation measures. To ensure that the impact on the internationally designated wildlife sites is effectively mitigated, it will be important to monitor the impacts upon them. Potential impacts that would need monitoring include:
- The recreational impact on the Dorset Heathlands and the effectiveness of the mitigation measures undertaken to reduce recreational pressure

- The impact on Poole Harbour, ensuring that development within the catchment is Nitrogen neutral
- The recreational impact on Fontmell and Melbury Downs and the monitoring of the impact of trampling
- The increase in air pollution resulting from increased traffic through Rooksmoor and Fontmell and Melbury Downs
- The impact on the Greater Horseshoe Bats at Bryanston resulting from development at the town

10.7 In addition to the impacts on wildlife, there is a need to monitor the impacts on accessibility to services and facilities, especially within rural areas. This is covered by the indicator relating to travel time to key facilities. Along similar lines to this, there is a need to ensure that neighbourhood plans are delivering the housing and facilities needed to improve the sustainability of the rural areas.

10.8 The SA highlighted the potential for an increased pressure on greenfield land to meet the housing requirements of the district resulting from a flexible density requirement. The monitoring of development pressure on greenfield land is proposed as part of the Local Plan monitoring framework.

10.9 Due to the large amount of development that is proposed for Gillingham, there is a specific need to monitor the impacts on the surrounding area. Collection of information related to the following issues would be beneficial.

- The effectiveness of efforts to regenerate the town centre and enhance the level of facilities and service provision within the town. This also has an implication for the town centre heritage assets including the conservation area which is identified as being at risk.
- The effectiveness of implementation of sustainable transport measures in the town, specifically related to travel across the railway line to gain access from the southern extension site to the town centre facilities.
- The potential impact on Shaftesbury resulting from the development at Gillingham. This could include an impact on the facilities and services in Shaftesbury and the potential for increased traffic through the town.

Figure 10.1: Local Plan Monitoring Framework and links to SA objectives

		SA objectives															
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
<b>Objective 1 – Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change</b>																	
<b>address the causes and effects of climate change by:</b>																	
encouraging the use of sustainable construction techniques	Greenhouse gas emissions (CO <sub>2</sub> equivalent)																
encouraging the use of renewable energy technologies appropriate to the local area	Renewable energy generation by installed capacity and type																
	Percentage of total energy consumption from renewable sources																
ensuring the wise use of natural resources, particularly previously developed land and water	% of dwellings with water meters installed																
	Number of planning applications approved contrary to Environment Agency advice																
	Amount of housing development on previously developed land																

		SA objectives															
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
<b>Objective 2 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic and Natural Environment</b>																	
<b>conserve and enhance the environment of North Dorset by:</b>																	
ensuring that North Dorset’s wildlife, landscape and cultural heritage are protected and well managed	Changes in areas of international, national and local biodiversity importance																
	Number of new SSSIs designated																
	Number of planning applications approved against Natural England advice																
	Condition of international sites / SSSIs																
	Number of declared Local Nature Reserves																
	Extent of Local Nature Reserves																
	Number of planning applications approved against AONB Management Board advice																

	Number of occurrences of unauthorised works to protected trees																		
	Number of new TPOs made																		
	Number of heritage assets on the national at risk register																		
encouraging design that maintains the quality of the District's built and natural environment	Number of new Conservation Areas designated																		
	Number of Conservation Areas with up to date Appraisals and Management Proposals																		
ensuring that the District's residents are able to enjoy their homes and public places without undue disturbance or intrusion from neighbouring uses	Number of noise nuisance complaints received																		
	Number of cases of dust or other types of pollution received																		

		SA objectives															
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
<b>Objective 3 - Ensuring the Vitality of the Market Towns</b>																	
<b>support the role and function of the market towns of Blandford Forum (and Blandford St. Mary), Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton as the main service centres for the District by:</b>																	
making them the main focus in the District for housing development, including affordable housing	Distribution of new housing development across district																
	% new development in main towns																
	Overall annual average provision of new dwellings in North Dorset																
enhancing their employment and training opportunities, particularly through the provision of sufficient employment land, to meet growing needs of towns and hinterlands	Provision of employment land																
	Amount of employment land lost to non-employment uses																
	Amount of employment land developed per annum																
	Net commercial floorspace completions																
focusing an improved range of retail, cultural and leisure uses within	Net industrial/ commercial floorspace completions within town centres																



on previously developed land in accessible locations																	
ensuring that housing development is delivered in step with employment opportunities, community facilities and infrastructure	Number of residential planning applications approved which include a Section 106 planning obligation providing a contribution towards necessary on-site services / infrastructure																
	Number of identified infrastructure schemes delivered on time																
	Amount of developer contributions received																
	Cost of identified infrastructure schemes delivered																
	Integrated and co-ordinated development of strategic site in Gillingham according to development programme/phasing plan																
taking account of the effects of any interaction between the towns themselves and with the large towns and cities in neighbouring districts	Implementation of, and adherence to, working arrangements, protocols etc. involving other authorities																

		SA objectives															
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
<b>Objective 4 - Supporting Sustainable Rural Communities</b>																	
<b>enable a network of sustainable smaller rural communities where local services and employment opportunities enable day-to-day needs to be met locally by:</b>																	
adopting a general policy of restraint outside the District's four main towns, whilst also enabling essential rural needs to be met	Distribution of new development across district																
	% new development in Stalbridge, the villages and the countryside																
	Number of dwellings granted planning permission on rural exception sites																
	Number of dwellings granted planning permission as replacements more than 50% larger than original																
	% of applications for dwellings with residential occupancy conditions attached granted planning permission																
	% of applications for removal of residential occupancy conditions granted																



		SA objectives															
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
<b>Objective 5 - Meeting the District's Housing Needs</b>																	
<b>deliver more housing, including more affordable housing, that better meets the diverse needs of the District by:</b>																	
ensuring that all new dwellings contribute to overcoming the affordable housing shortfall	Number of affordable homes approved																
ensuring that the type, design and mix of housing reflects housing needs in up-to-date assessments	Proportions of 1/2 and 3/3+ bedroom dwellings granted planning permission																
ensuring that housing is designed to support the changing needs of its occupants and users	% of dwellings granted planning permission subject to occupancy age restriction																
	Number of schemes achieving green lights in Building for Life assessment																

ensuring that sufficient, sustainably-located sites are provided to meet the needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling show people in the District	Number of authorised public and private sites (both permanent and transit) and numbers of pitches on them																
	Number of unauthorised sites																

		SA objectives															
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
<b>Objective 6 - Improving the Quality of Life</b>																	
<b>improve the quality of life of North Dorset’s residents, particularly the older population and the young, by:</b>																	
encouraging the provision and retention of viable community, leisure and cultural facilities both in the main towns and rural communities	Loss of local sports pitches and recreation grounds																
	Amount of community building floorspace																
	Number of facilities listed as 'Asset of Community Value'																
retaining the current range of healthcare and education services and ensuring that additional healthcare and	Number of new facilities/ extended facilities available																
	Number of GPs in North Dorset																
	Proportion of new housing within 30 minutes by public																



## 11. Conclusions

- 11.1 This SA of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 Pre-submissions Document has appraised the potential effects of the individual policies and the whole plan's implementation. It considered reasonable alternatives through the Initial SA Report and its associated Addendum. The results of this appraisal suggest that the plan will increase the sustainability of the District through the delivery of housing and employment growth whilst protecting the natural environment.
- 11.2 The SA process has been undertaken in an iterative way alongside the Local Plan preparation. This process has been reported on through various reports as outlined in Section 2 of this report. Although several changes to the planning system have taken place since the Local Plan production started, the SA has tried to draw a thread through each policy as it has progressed from the assessment of reasonable alternatives, through consultation and revision to final policy.
- 11.3 At each stage of Plan preparation, the SA has been consulted upon alongside the Plan. Copies were sent to the three consultation bodies of Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency. In addition, the SA and the Plan were made available electronically via the Council's website. Drop-in sessions were held in the District's main towns to enable local people to ask questions of officers about the Plan and the SA.
- 11.4 The SA has recommended changes to the Local Plan which have been taken on board alongside consultation responses during the revision process. The SA has also recommended indicators for monitoring the potential impacts of the implementation of the Local Plan.
- 11.5 The Local Plan Part 1 Pre-submission Document will be subject to consultation with this SA Report being consulted upon alongside the Local Plan. Any significant changes to the Local Plan will be subject to further appraisal. Where this is considered necessary, a subsequent SA report will be prepared to support the Local Plan submission version.





Planning Policy  
North Dorset District Council  
Nordon  
Salisbury Road  
Blandford Forum  
DT11 7LL

[www.dorsetforyou.com](http://www.dorsetforyou.com)

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