



Sustainability Appraisal - Appendix D and E
Incorporating the Strategic Environmental Assessment
of the
**North Dorset Local Plan Part 1: Pre-submission
Document**

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Appendix D: Strategic Policy Matrices

- D.1 Since the draft New Plan 2010 was produced, the policies have been revised to take on board the results of consultation, changes in national policy including the revocation of regional strategies, the introduction of Neighbourhood Planning through the Localism Act, the recommendations from the Initial SA and the recommendations from the Habitats Regulations Assessment.
- D.2 For each of the Local Plan Part 1 policies, a brief report has been prepared (included in this Appendix) which sets out the main changes that have taken place. Each of the revised Local Plan Part 1 policies has been subject to appraisal against the SA objectives with the results being detailed in these individual policy reports.

Policy 1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

The draft Core Strategy 2010

- D.3 The draft Core Strategy was published in March 2010, before the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012, which included the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’. There was, therefore, no comparable policy in the draft Core Strategy.

The Local Plan Part 1 2013

- D.4 The Planning Inspectorate has produced a ‘model policy’ relating to the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which essentially reflects Paragraph 14 of the NPPF. Local planning authorities are strongly encouraged to include the model policy in their local plans. The model policy has been included unchanged in the Local Plan Part 1 together with some supporting text providing guidance on how ‘the presumption’ will be applied in North Dorset.
- D.5 The Government produced an impact assessment of the NPPF in July 2012 and Section B1 of this assessment (pages 17 to 31) deals with the issue of sustainable development. One of the options (Option 2 – the preferred option) considers whether the Government should “set out a presumption in favour of sustainable development as a central feature of the Framework”. In relation to this option, the assessment considers: the benefits of the more efficient delivery of sustainable development; the benefits from additional development; and the environmental implications of additional development resulting from ‘the presumption’.

- D.6 Policy 1 states that the Council “will always work proactively with applicants ... to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area”. This approach reflects Paragraph 17 of the NPPF, which states that “to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought simultaneously through the planning system”.

Assessment Conclusions

- D.7 Since the policy simply takes forward ‘the presumption’ in national policy, which has been subject to an impact assessment at the national level, it is not considered necessary or appropriate to undertake a detailed assessment of Policy 1. Since the fundamental aim of Policy 1 is to achieve sustainable development, it is considered to be sustainable.

Policy 2 – Core Spatial Strategy

The draft Core Strategy 2010

- D.8 The spatial strategy sets out the broad locations for residential and economic growth across the district. Draft Core Policy 3 applied the ‘spatial hierarchy’ of the RSS Proposed Changes to North Dorset. It defined Blandford (Forum and St. Mary), Gillingham and Shaftesbury as RSS Development Policy B Settlements, which would “function as the main service centres in the District” and would be “the main focus for growth”. Sturminster Newton, Stalbridge and 18 larger villages⁴ were defined as RSS Development Policy C Settlements, which would be “the main focus for sustainable growth outside the main service centres”. The draft policy also proposed to apply countryside policy (a policy of restraint) to all other ‘smaller villages’ and hamlets.
- D.9 Key options explored in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report were:
- Should Sturminster Newton be an RSS Policy B or C settlement?
 - Where should the lower cut-off be for settlements that are to be assigned Policy C status? The various options assessed considered settlements in the population range of 700 to 900 inhabitants, settlements with a population in the range of 500 to 700 inhabitants and whether settlements where the population was less than 400 inhabitants whether they should receive any growth at all?
 - Due to two anomalies in the level of services within settlements options also explored whether the two villages of Fontmell Magna and Spetisbury should be included or excluded as Policy C Settlements.
- D.10 From the Initial Sustainability Appraisal it was concluded that:
- Sturminster Newton was judged to fall better into the role of a Policy C settlement due to its current size, location relative to other settlements and function in the wider area and due to the constrained and historic nature of the town.
 - Settlements with a population in the range of 700 to 900 inhabitants and 500 to 700 inhabitants both offered a good level of services and that additional population growth would help to support existing services. Settlements in this size category were identified as RSS Development Policy C Settlements. However, settlements with a population of less than 400 inhabitants had few

⁴ The 18 larger villages listed in draft Core Policy 3 are Bourton, Charlton Marshall, Child Okeford, East Stour, Fontmell Magna, Hazelbury Bryan, Iwerne Minster, Marnhull, Milborne St Andrew, Milton Abbas, Motcombe, Okeford Fitzpaine, Pimperne, Shillingstone, Stourpaine, Winterborne Kingston, Winterborne Stickland and Winterborne Whitechurch

everyday services and that to support these services additional population growth would need to be significant. It was considered that significant growth in these smaller settlements would harm the character of the area and would be detrimental on the services in neighbouring villages. For these reasons settlements with fewer than 400 inhabitants were not identified as RSS Development Category C Settlements.

- Fontmell Magna was an important service centre along the A350 corridors and that allowing growth at this village would support existing services and enhance the provision of services in the surrounding area. Therefore it was included as a Development Policy C Settlement.
- Spetisbury with its limited services but reasonably high population was considered environmentally constrained and that any growth would not support existing services but merely encourage commuting to Poole or Blandford. Therefore it was not included in the final selection of Development Policy C Settlements

Explanation of Changes

- D.11 The NPPF now provides a much less rigid ‘higher level’ policy framework compared to RSS Development Policies A, B and C only requiring planning to “focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable”⁵. It also states that in order “to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities”⁶. In addition to the introduction of the NPPF, the Regional Spatial Strategies have been abolished; removing the rigid Policy A, B and C settlement hierarchy and neighbourhood planning has been introduced. Together these enable a more flexible approach to growth to be adopted.
- D.12 The results of consultation on the draft Core Strategy showed a high level of objection to draft Core Policy 3. The main concerns with the approach were that:
- the assessment is ‘broad-brush’ and does not look in detail at more ‘fine-grained’ local sustainability issues;
 - the assessment requires a simple ‘yes/no’ judgement to be made on whether individual settlements are sustainable or not; and

⁵ Penultimate bullet point of Paragraph 17, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

⁶ Paragraph 55, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

- this ‘one-off’ sustainability judgement provides the basis for decisions to be made about the future distribution of housing growth (it determines which settlements receive growth and which don’t).

D.13 In the light of these concerns and the changing higher level policy framework, the Council revised the core spatial strategy to be more responsive and flexible. Through consultation communities expressed a clear preference for the Council to develop a ‘light touch’ strategic policy approach and showed a considerable appetite for the preparation of neighbourhood plans to provide a more locally-based framework for decision-making.

D.14 The Council’s response is a ‘light touch’ strategic policy framework for the rural areas that will give greater local choice to communities in deciding how to meet their future development needs. However, some parishes raised concern that in rural areas local communities recognised that they had development needs but either did not have the resources to take forward neighbourhood plans, or that they may encounter difficulties in getting a neighbourhood plan adopted. The Council response in such circumstances is that a local community has the opportunity to ‘opt in’ to the site allocations process which will form part of the Local Plan Part 2. The Council will prepare this document once the Local Plan Part 1 is adopted. In the event that a local community choose this course of action, the Council would work closely with local people to develop proposals that enabled them to meet their needs.

The Local Plan Part 1 2013

D.15 The revised core spatial strategy, now known as Policy 2, acknowledges the abolition of regional planning, the introduction of neighbourhood planning and takes into consideration the concerns of local communities. The policy:

- identifies the four main towns of Blandford, Gillingham Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton as centres for growth;
- enables Stalbridge and the villages to focus on meeting local (rather than strategic) needs, which will be delivered primarily through neighbourhood planning; and
- gives local communities in the rural area the choice to ‘opt in’ to the Local Plan Part 2, which would be prepared by the Council, as an alternative to meeting local needs through neighbourhood planning.

Policy 2 Core Spatial Strategy			Assessment
SA 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	0
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 townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	0
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	+

Policy 2 Core Spatial Strategy			
SA Objectives			Assessment
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	0

Assessment Conclusions

- D.16 The approach of focusing the majority of growth at the four main towns within the district is more likely to give a situation where these larger centres grow and thrive than if a more dispersed approach to growth was implemented as tested through the Initial Sustainability Appraisal. There is the potential for a negative impact on smaller settlements but this is likely to be offset by the enhanced service centre function of the four main towns and the opportunity for neighbourhood planning and site allocations opt-in.
- D.17 There is a need to ensure that the towns maintain a good level of basic service provision proportionate to their size and that sustainable transport measures (public transport or cycle routes such as the Trailway) to these centres are as good as they can be.
- D.18 By focusing growth in the four main towns the impact on the environment in general will be reduced as development will make the best use of available land, including brownfield sites. The location of the towns means that development will be concentrated in fewer locations with less overall impact on the sensitive landscapes across the District.
- D.19 Focused growth, rather than a more dispersed provision, will increase opportunities for infrastructure to be provided that will ultimately help the District's economy. The more compact growth will promote alternative transport solutions, such as walking and cycling, that are not only environmentally beneficial but encourage a healthier lifestyle for local residents.

Policy 3 – Climate Change

The draft Core Strategy 2010

- D.20 Meeting the challenge of climate change is one of the objectives of the Local Plan. Draft Core Policy 1 along with draft Core Policy 2 set out the Council's approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change through a range of measures. The main measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions were encouraging energy efficiency; requiring the use of sustainable construction techniques; and supporting the production of energy from renewable sources. The policy framework also proposed measures to reduce the pressure on the District's water resources and reduce hazards in relation to flooding and land stability.
- D.21 The key option explored in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report was:
- to implement the Code for Sustainable Homes at a rate faster than the national timetable or to rely on the national timetable.
- D.22 From the Initial Sustainability Appraisal it was concluded that:
- using a faster timetable for the implementation of the Code for Sustainable Homes would offer greater sustainability benefits; however, there is a cost associated with this which may have an impact on the delivery of affordable housing and infrastructure;
 - the adaptation issues of flooding, water stress and heat stress need to be incorporated into the policy framework;
 - a list of sustainability criteria should be incorporated into Core Policy 2 to improve the environmental performance of developments. Criteria should include the use of SuDS, passive ventilation, renewable energy and green infrastructure to offer benefits to the wider area; and
 - all policies should be made more proactive in efforts to mitigate climate change.

Explanation of Changes

- D.23 Since the 2010 policy framework was written, the subject of climate change and the national policy approach to renewable energy and energy efficiency of new buildings has progressed as research and understanding has advanced. Building Regulations are now the main route being used for increased energy efficiency of new buildings and renewable energy is incentivised through schemes such as feed in tariffs. National Planning Policy highlights the role of planning in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to climate change and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy. The environmental

performance of new buildings is prescribed by the Government's Zero Carbon Buildings policy and the Local Plan needs to be consistent with this approach.

D.24 The results of consultation on the draft Core Strategy showed general support for the approach being taken in draft Core Policy 1 and draft Core Policy 2. The main points raised were:

- that all buildings, not just residential buildings, should incorporate all measures to improve their energy efficiency;
- that the policy should explicitly make the connection between transport emissions and climate change;
- that renewable energy developments need to be appropriate to the location and the available energy resource;
- that retro-fitting measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the existing building stock should be encouraged including in relation to listed buildings;
- the fact that it is not always practical and viable to incorporate energy efficiency measures into developments; and
- the need for a package of measures to be built in to policy to tackle transport related greenhouse gas emissions.

D.25 In the light of these comments and the changes in the national picture, some elements of draft Core Policy 2 have been incorporated into other policies as set out in Section 3. The majority of draft Core Policy 1 and draft Core Policy 2 have, however, been retained within the Local Plan policy framework.

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D.26 The revised policy on climate change, Policy 3, reflects the changing national picture in relation to climate change adaptation and mitigation including as set out in Section 10 of the National Planning Policy Framework and, in the light of this, takes on board many of the relevant Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report recommendations and the relevant consultation responses.

D.27 The policy encourages the mitigation of climate change through:

- encouraging the retrofitting of energy efficiency and renewable energy measures to existing buildings including sympathetic fitting of such measures to listed buildings;
- locating development where local needs can be met locally, reducing the need to travel in line with Policy 2 – Core Spatial Strategy;
- designing developments in a way which facilitates the use of sustainable transport modes and maximises passive design principles in line with Policy 24 – Design;

- incorporating the highest standards of construction into development proposals including the use of renewable energy where appropriate, in line with the Government's Zero Carbon Buildings policy; and
- supporting the production of energy from renewable and low carbon sources at both the large scale and the micro scale.

D.28 The policy encourages adaptation to anticipated climate change through:

- encouraging water efficiency to reduce the impact of drought;
- reducing the impact of flooding including surface water flooding; and
- providing green infrastructure to reduce the impact of warmer weather.

Policy 3 Climate Change			Assessment
SA Objectives			Assessment
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	0
	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 townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	0
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	0

Policy 3 Climate Change			
SA Objectives			Assessment
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	0
	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	0
	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

Assessment Conclusions

- D.29 The approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change is in line with the Government’s Zero Carbon Buildings policy and therefore does not place undue costs on developers. The policy should, therefore, not restrict the delivery of homes but should help to deliver homes that people can afford to run, tackling fuel poverty.
- D.30 However, the energy efficiency targets in the Zero Carbon Buildings policy have been relaxed, resulting in buildings being required to be less efficient than would have been required under the previous policy. In addition, the Local Plan is not able to reflect local opportunities for improving energy efficiency by setting higher targets than those set out in the national approach. The result of this is that the rate of reduction in greenhouse emissions from new buildings will be less than the optimum.
- D.31 Through the adaptation elements of the policy, it will clearly help to reduce the risk of flooding, help to preserve water resources and build space for biodiversity within developments. Through measures such as water efficiency and renewable energy generation, the policy should help to reduce the impact of development on the environment.
- D.32 As the policy seeks to focus development in accessible locations and facilitate sustainable transport options, it should help to reduce the need for residents to travel longer distances to meet their everyday needs, benefiting the local economy.

Policy 4 – The Natural Environment

The draft Core Strategy 2010

- D.33 The protection of the natural environment is fundamental to the wellbeing of the area with the ecosystem services it provides supporting the way we live. It is important that the natural environment is therefore protected for the wellbeing of residents and for the economic benefits the high quality environment brings.
- D.34 In the draft Core Strategy 2010, a single policy was included for protecting and enhancing the environment. This included protection of biodiversity and geodiversity; landscape character; and heritage assets. In relation to biodiversity and geodiversity, the main measures were to maintain, enhance and restore:
- internationally, nationally and locally designated sites;
 - priority habitats within the district as identified in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan;
 - ancient woodlands;
 - features within the landscape which are important for migration of species;
 - wildlife interests on development sites; and
 - legally protected and other important species.
- D.35 No alternative options were considered as part of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal as the approach mirrored that contained in national and regional policy.
- D.36 From the Initial Sustainability Appraisal, it was highlighted that:
- developments should avoid the most sensitive environmental areas;
 - hedgerows, trees and buffer strips should be retained within developments to create wildlife corridors;
 - habitats such as those identified in the Southwest Nature Map should be restored where possible; and
 - measures to enhance the natural environment should be integrated into development proposals from the outset and not as an add-on.

D.37 In addition to the Sustainability Appraisal of the draft Core Strategy 2010, a draft Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) was produced which set out a number of mitigation measures based on the draft strategy. One of the recommendations of the initial Sustainability Appraisal was for the recommendations of the HRA to be incorporated into the revised policies.

Explanation of Changes

D.38 Since the 2010 draft policy framework was written and in the light of slimmed down national policy, a decision was made to add more detail on the Natural and Historic Environment by separating the topics and creating two separate policies. The elements of the draft Core Strategy Policy 14 relating to biodiversity and geodiversity and also in relation to landscape character as set out above; have been incorporated into a new policy on the Natural Environment (Policy 4). The elements of draft Core Policy 14 relating to heritage assets have been incorporated into a new policy on the Historic Environment (Policy 5)

D.39 Overall the results of consultation on the draft Core Strategy showed general support for the approach being taken in draft Core Policy 14. The main points raised in relation to this policy were:

- that the recommendations of the HRA be taken on-board and built into revised policies , revising the strategic approach if necessary; and
- that mature trees and orchards should be referred to in the policy.

D.40 In the light of these comments, the changes to national policy and the recommendations of the draft HRA in relation to internationally designated sites the Natural Environment Policy has been written. The revised policy aims to give a high level of protection to landscape, biodiversity and geodiversity elements, recognising the interconnected nature of the different elements of the natural environment.

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D.41 The revised approach to the Natural Environment, Policy 4 reflects the ecosystems services approach to managing the natural environment. This approach reflects the interrelationship between different elements of the natural environment and takes a strategic approach to their protection, management and enhancement. The policy:

- outlines a strategic approach to the management of ecosystem services through a landscape scale approach where appropriate;

- proposes mitigation measures for each of the internationally designated sites where there is the potential for an impact resulting from developments within the district;
- protects nationally designated sites in line with the reasons for their designation;
- protects locally designated sites in a way appropriate to their importance;
- seeks to coordinate the restoration and enhancement of habitats as part of the wider green infrastructure network
- seeks to protect landscapes from harm by protecting their important features; and
- conserves the natural beauty of the AONB whilst recognising the social and economic needs of the area.

Policy 4 The Natural Environment			Assessment
SA Objectives			Assessment
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	0
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	0
	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	0
	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 townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	0
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	++

Policy 4 The Natural Environment			
SA Objectives			Assessment
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	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	0
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	0
	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

Assessment Conclusions

- D.42 The natural environment and the multiple, interconnected ecosystem services it supports contribute to our everyday lives. It provides raw materials for industry; flood management; clean drinking water; food; and education. If one part of the ecosystem is degraded, there will be an impact on another, potentially harming the services the natural environment provides. The policy aims to protect and where possible enhance the natural environment.
- D.43 Protection of the natural environment will improve people’s health including their mental health through the recreation opportunities and through the protection of natural beauty. Building consideration of the natural environment into development proposals also helps to create attractive developments and is an important part of good design.
- D.44 The proposals within the policy, in relation to the international designated sites have been designed to protect them from significant harm. Where residual impacts may remain, mitigation has been proposed to reduce or offset the harm. This approach should maintain the integrity of the international sites however, it will be important to monitor the mitigation measures to ensure that they are effective and that any harm is not significant. Effective monitoring arrangements need to be put in place accompanied by trigger points for action such as a review of the Local Plan.
- D.45 In relation to other designated sites, the policy protects and seeks to enhance biodiversity. It also seeks to incorporate biodiversity considerations and landscape features into proposals to reduce the overall impact of development. Enhancing the built and natural environment in this way will help to preserve the high quality environment of the district which in turn will help to attract businesses and tourists to the area, strengthening the economy.
- D.46 This Policy no longer includes elements related to the Historic Environment and therefore has little impact on the built environment.

Policy 5 – The Historic Environment

The draft Core Strategy 2010

- D.47 The protection of heritage assets is important to provide enjoyment and a contribution to quality of life. They also enable opportunities for learning about our shared past. Once heritage assets are lost, they cannot be recovered hence the importance of their protection.
- D.48 The draft Core Strategy 2010 included one single policy Core Policy 14, for the protection of the natural and historic environment. In relation to Heritage Assets, this policy proposed to protect nationally important assets in line with national policy and to have regard to the impact on locally significant assets. National heritage assets included listed buildings, scheduled monuments, conservation areas and historic parks and gardens. Locally significant assets such as landmark buildings or locally important parks and gardens were also to be given some protection.
- D.49 No alternative options were considered as part of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal as the approach mirrored that contained in national and regional policy. It was considered that there were no realistic alternatives to consider.
- D.50 In relation to the historic environment, the appraisal of the policy in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal concluded that:
- the policy helps to integrate the consideration of heritage assets, both nationally recognised and those of more local significance, into the decision making process; and
 - all developments should integrate on-site heritage assets into development schemes and use these assets through heritage led regeneration.

Explanation of Changes

- D.51 Since the 2010 policy framework was written, national policy for heritage assets has changed significantly. In summary, national policy now requires an assessment of the significance of the heritage asset and an assessment of the impact of development proposals on that significance. It also indicates that a Local Plan should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment.

- D.52 Consultation on the draft Core Strategy highlighted the need for a more strategic approach to be taken in relation to the protection of heritage assets. Comments also highlighted the need to develop an approach to more locally significant assets and a mechanism for listing these.
- D.53 In the light of these comments and the changes in national policy, a new policy has been included in the Local Plan 2013 to protect the historic environment.

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- D.54 Within the legislative framework the new policy on The Historic Environment sets out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment with the conservation of heritage assets being central to this strategy. The policy sets out an approach to establishing the significance of heritage assets. It then sets out a mechanism for assessing the impact of a development proposal on a heritage asset. The policy goes on to propose a number of actions that would be taken to protect or enhance the historic environment as part of an overall strategy. One action is to establish a local list of heritage assets to be considered alongside those with a national designation.

Policy 5 The Historic Environment			
SA Objectives			Assessment
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	0
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	0
	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	0
	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	+

Policy 5 The Historic Environment			
SA Objectives			Assessment
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	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	0
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	0
	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

Assessment Conclusions

- D.55 The protection of the historic environment is important to the cultural well-being of communities and therefore helps to build community cohesion through a sense of place. Consideration of and respect for the historic environment also helps development to integrate into the built environment. The policy approach in Policy 5 seeks to achieve protection and enhancement of the Historic Environment and therefore will help to achieve these two outcomes. The mechanism for achieving this is to require an assessment of the significance of a heritage asset and the likely impact of development proposals on that significance with a view to protecting the most important assets.
- D.56 The revised policy approach includes a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, part of which is to establish a mechanism for identifying locally significant heritage assets and for the assessment of the impact on them when making decisions. This includes the input of local communities and hence further strengthens communities associations with their past.
- D.57 As this policy relates only to the historic environment, it is difficult to draw comparison with the policy position in 2010. However, as the approach in this policy is similar to that in the 2010 draft Core Strategy but with greater local detail, it is thought to aid in achieving the cultural aspects of sustainability to a greater extent than the 2010 draft.

Policy 6 – Housing Distribution

The draft Core Strategy 2010

- D.58 The Core Spatial Strategy contained in draft Core Policy 3 set out the broad locations for residential and economic growth across the district. This spatial hierarchy formed the basis for the distribution of the housing requirement as set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) proposed changes.
- D.59 The RSS proposed changes produced in July 2008, included a housing requirement of 7000 new dwellings over the 20 year plan period; equal to 350 new dwellings per annum. The spatial hierarchy within the RSS proposed changes set out a framework for establishing where individual settlements sat within the hierarchy. The distribution of housing within this framework was set out in draft Core Policy 4 with the aims of delivering more sustainable communities through increased self-containment; the environmental constraints at each settlement; the availability of suitable land; and the need to avoid dispersed populations in line with the RSS proposed changes. The policy made provision for approximately 71% of new homes at the three main towns with 29% elsewhere based on the following breakdown:
- about 1500 (21%) dwellings at Blandford;
 - about 2300 (33%) dwellings at Gillingham;
 - about 1200 (17%) dwellings at Shaftesbury;
 - about 500 (7%) dwellings at Sturminster Newton;
 - about 1200 (17%) shared between Stalbridge and the 18 largest villages; and
 - about 300 (4%) in the countryside.
- D.60 Taking into account viability across the district, draft Core Policy 4 also set out that at least 40% of all housing should be affordable housing except in Gillingham where at least 35% should be affordable. The aim was to deliver about 37.5% of all new dwellings across the district as a whole as affordable.
- D.61 Key options explored in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report were:
- should the plan aim to deliver less than 7000 dwellings as required by the RSS proposed changes, deliver the 7000 dwellings or deliver more than the 7000 dwellings; and

- to deliver 80% of all houses at the three main towns, to delivery 70% (as set out above) or to deliver 60% of all housing at the three main towns.

D.62 The conclusions of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal were that:

- delivery of around 7000 homes, to meet the RSS estimated housing requirement for the district is likely to be the most sustainable option and should deliver appropriate levels of housing to meet social and economic needs whilst minimising environmental impact;
- the most sustainable approach to distributing housing would be to focus on the main towns whilst enabling housing to delivered to support the rural economy with 70% being delivered in the towns and 30% being delivered in the rural area.

Explanation of Changes

- D.63 Since the 2010 policy framework was written, consultation has taken place, national policy has changed, regional strategies have been abolished and new household projections have been produced. These factors have been used in the revision of the policy.
- D.64 The results of the consultation on the draft 2010 policy gave support to the provision of affordable housing. However the split between urban and rural areas raised a significant level of objection with the proposed level of provision in villages being too high.
- D.65 Revised national policy states that local planning authorities should have an understanding of the housing needs of their area and prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to assess these needs. There is a need to meet the objectively assessed needs for housing within the housing market area working with neighbouring authorities to achieve this.
- D.66 The RSS proposed changes established a need for 7000 new dwellings to be provided within the district area. With the abolition of the RSS the council jointly produced an updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment in 2012 based on revised household projections. This established a housing requirement for 4200 dwellings up to 2026 which equates to 280 dwellings per annum over the 15 year period from 2011 to 2026.
- D.67 In the light of the revised Core Spatial Strategy as included in Policy 2, the housing distribution to meet the district wide requirement of 280 dwellings per annum will be based on the four main towns of Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton. Outside of these towns, the delivery of housing will be primarily achieved through the neighbourhood planning route.

D.68 Consultation in 2012 on the proposed changes of reducing the overall level of housing provision and distributing this housing to the four main towns, received general support.

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D.69 The revised housing distribution, now included in Policy 6, acknowledges the abolition of the regional strategy and the new evidence produced to establish an overall housing requirement of 4200 dwellings over the period 2011 to 2026.

D.70 In reflecting the Core Spatial Strategy established in Policy 2, the advent of neighbourhood planning and reflecting the concerns expressed by the district's rural communities, this housing is proposed to be distributed primarily amongst the four main towns with locally identified need being delivered through the neighbourhood planning route. The proposed distribution is for:

- about 960 (23%) dwellings at Blandford;
- about 1490 (35%) dwellings at Gillingham;
- about 1140 (27%) dwellings at Shaftesbury;
- about 380 (9%) dwellings at Sturminster Newton; and
- at least 230 (6%) shared between Stalbridge and the 18 largest villages and the countryside.

D.71 This revised distribution is equivalent to about 85% of all new housed being delivered at the three largest towns.

Policy 6 Housing Distribution			Assessment
SA Objectives			Assessment
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	0
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	0
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	+

Policy 6 Housing Distribution			Assessment
SA Objectives			
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	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

Assessment Conclusions

- D.72 The provision of the majority of housing development at the four main towns offers opportunities to enhance the viability of these centres, reinforcing their traditional roles as “hubs” serving their rural hinterlands. The provision of housing at these centres whilst still enabling local need over and above the district wide requirement, to be met through the neighbourhood planning route will help to meet overall needs.
- D.73 Provision of housing at the existing service centres creates a situation where dependence on the private car is reduced. Facilities such as doctors, leisure centres and schools are generally more accessible in town locations to a variety of transport modes.
- D.74 The concentrated approach to development distribution should offer greater protection for the districts rural landscapes as the cumulative effect of dispersed development will be reduced. Similarly, through larger scale developments, opportunities arise to incorporate significant biodiversity and open space provision within the development and to direct growth away from the most sensitive areas. Incorporation of biodiversity features within a development often delivers a much improved position over intensively farmed land.
- D.75 As the policy promotes a level of growth across the district, there will be some environmental impacts. It is important that these impacts are minimised through the effective implementation of other policies within the Local Plan.

Policy 7 – Delivering Homes

The draft Core Strategy 2010

- D.76 The draft Core Strategy 2010 included a requirement for 7000 homes to be built across the district as set out in the RSS proposed changes. Draft Core Policy 8 Housing Mix, Type and Density set out the councils approach to delivering the right mix of housing to help achieve mixed and balanced communities and to support the economy.
- D.77 The policy set out that:
- to facilitate employment led growth, the emphasis should be on building 3 and 4+ bed market houses;
 - to provide for those in most need of affordable housing, the emphasis should be on 2 and 3 bed properties;
 - to meet the needs of particular groups with identified special needs, developments were required to meet lifetime homes standards; and
 - a general density of between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare was expected in new developments.
- D.78 Key options explored in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report related to:
- how flexible the density requirement for new residential developments should be; and
 - on whether the size of new dwellings should be based on identified need or whether the emphasis should be on supporting the economy.
- D.79 The conclusions of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal were that:
- a flexible approach to density offers the greatest benefits in terms of sustainability enabling design to better reflect the local context and that locally derived design guidance should be used such as village design statements;
 - a mix of 3 and 4+ bed dwellings should be provided to support the economy whilst also attempting to meet any identified local need for particular house sizes.

Explanation of Changes

- D.80 The results of the consultation on the draft Core Strategy 2010 showed a general level of support to the approach being taken. However responses did highlight the need for the approach to development density to be sufficiently flexible to enable development

that respected the local context whilst ensuring that land was used efficiently. It was also highlighted that there were linkages between the housing mix, type and density and the design of developments and that the link between this policy and the design policy needs to be made.

- D.81 Although there was general support to the approach to the size and type of dwellings being required and the mechanism for reviewing this requirement (review through revision of the SHMA, review of the housing strategy and monitoring of the choice-based lettings database), it was suggested that this review mechanism should be strengthened whilst ensuring the specifications for dwelling types and sizes was not overly prescriptive. It was also important that the Lifetime Homes requirement included a viability caveat.
- D.82 Changes to national policy have removed the national indicative minimum density standard giving local authorities the flexibility to develop their own approach to housing density. In relation to infilling and development in residential gardens, national policy suggests that councils should consider setting policies to restrict development in areas where infilling would be inappropriate.
- D.83 In addition, national policy encourages a local approach to the types and sizes of new dwellings and that this approach should be based on market trends, demographic trends and the needs of particular groups in line with the approach proposed in the 2010 draft Core Strategy.
- D.84 In 2012, the council consulted on a number of changes to policies relating to housing mix, type and density requirements to reflect the changes in national policy and previous consultation responses. The results of this consultation were that:
- a flexible approach to density was appropriate but with a maximum density standard being retained to prevent inappropriate development;
 - locally derived criteria to encourage sensitive infilling should be adopted with local community input into these criteria;
 - the council had an important role to play in guiding locally derived criteria to ensure that such policies did not overly restrict housing delivery; and
 - neighbourhood plans should be the primary route for delivering local criteria to guide developments but with interim measures being put into place whilst neighbourhood plans are being prepared.

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- D.85 The revised policy seeks to deliver a mix of housing to reflect identified need, to make efficient use of development land whilst respecting local character and encourage local communities to develop guidelines for sensitive infilling within their settlements.

D.86 In relation to the size of dwellings, the policy proposes the following:

- that 60% of market housing should be three or more bedroom properties;
- that 40% of affordable housing should be three or more bedroom properties;
- on smaller sites a flexible approach will be taken to reflect local character and site specific issues;
- on rural exception sites, the size and type of dwellings should closely reflect established local need; and
- that the needs of particular groups will be met by working with partners such as the County Council.

D.87 In relation to residential density and infilling, the policy proposes to encourage local communities to develop detailed policies and seeks to ensure that residential sites seek to achieve a density that:

- makes effective use of the site;
- respects local character;
- is acceptable in terms of design and amenity; and
- high density development is only likely to be acceptable within town centres, in highly accessible areas and in areas which are already developed at a high density.

Policy 7 Delivering Homes			Assessment
SA Objectives			Assessment
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	0
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	0
	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	0

Policy 7 Delivering Homes			
SA Objectives			Assessment
Prudent use of natural resources	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	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	0
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	0
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	0
	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

Assessment Conclusions

- D.88 One of the objectives of this policy is to deliver housing to meet the needs of the community including families, older people or people with special housing requirements. Provision of housing to meet these varied needs, will help to create inclusive communities, where the diverse needs of different people are accommodated.
- D.89 The policy offers a flexible approach to infilling and does not stipulate a minimum density requirement but outlines the role of locally derived design statements to guide development density and infilling. For this reason the policy is likely to offer opportunities for development, making the best use of land within existing built up areas whilst respecting local character and townscapes. This more flexible approach was one of the recommendations of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal.

Policy 8 – Affordable Housing

The draft Core Strategy 2010

- D.90 One of the objectives established in the draft Core Strategy 2010 was to deliver more housing, including affordable housing that better meets the diverse needs of the District. This was in response to the lack of affordable housing across the district with the aim of creating more sustainable communities and supporting the local economy.
- D.91 Draft Core Policy 9 – Affordable Housing set out the Council’s approach to delivering affordable housing to help deliver this objective. The approach was based on viability and included the following elements:
- that all sites should contribute to the delivery of affordable housing;
 - that 40% of all housing on a development site should be affordable housing with the exception of Gillingham where 35% would be required (to reflect viability);
 - that a flexible approach to the level of provision was permissible where it could be demonstrated that viability was an issue;
 - that available subsidies and grants would be taken into account in viability assessments;
 - that provision on-site was expected; and
 - District-wide affordable housing should include a mix of social rent (70%) and intermediate housing (30%) and affordable units should usually be 'pepper-potted' across a site;
- D.92 Key options explored in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report related to:
- the level of affordable housing that should be sought; and
 - the site size threshold that should be applied
- D.93 The conclusions of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal were that:
- sites should provide as much affordable housing as possible having regard to viability;
 - a flexible site size threshold should be applied rather than a rigid “all sites” threshold; and
 - affordable housing should always be “pepper-potted” across a site.

Explanation of Changes

- D.94 The results of the consultation on draft Core Policy 9 showed an even split between support for and objection to the policy. The main comments related to the need to build some flexibility into the policy to reflect the differing site characteristics that exist across the district. Suggestions included:
- using a set of targets as the starting point for negotiations on affordable housing provision;
 - the need to consider the implications for smaller settlements who may wish to grow;
 - the consideration of an approach to development types where 'pepper-potting' may not be appropriate;
 - the need to look into the practicalities of the intention to reclaim shortfall in provision if market conditions improve; and
 - the need to ensure that information on housing need is kept up to date.
- D.95 Since draft Core Policy 9 was written, there have been a number of changes to the way affordable housing is delivered. These changes include the revocation of Regional Strategies, the introduction of the NPPF and the introduction of the affordable rent product. In January 2011, to reflect some of these changes, the Council introduced its affordable housing 'Interim Position Statement'. This statement was intended to give clarity on the Council's position when negotiating affordable housing on development sites. It set out the site size threshold and percentage of affordable housing that will be sought in the period prior to the Local Plan being adopted.
- D.96 The introduction of the affordable rent product and the reduction in average grant funding for affordable homes has altered the viability of schemes on which affordable housing will be sought. This has necessitated further changes to the draft policy produced in 2010. An updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was also produced, which provided updated evidence on key matters such as proportions of affordable housing to be sought and tenure split.
- D.97 In Autumn 2012, the Council consulted on a number of proposed changes to the affordable housing policy to reflect the changing national and regional picture. The results of this consultation were that:
- a high level of affordable housing should be sought (greater than 30%);
 - a tenure split of 70% rent and 30% intermediate should be sought on sites but that the approach should be flexible enough to reflect local circumstance;
 - the use of a valuer to enable site viability was important;
 - an off-site contribution towards affordable housing based on an assessment of costs was appropriate.

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- D.98 The revised policy sets out that all developments of three or more net additional dwellings will be expected to contribute towards the delivery of affordable housing. Specifically, it sets out that:
- within Gillingham, 30% affordable will be sought;
 - within the Gillingham Southern Extension, 35% affordable will be sought;
 - elsewhere within the District, 40% affordable will be sought.
- D.99 In addition to these requirements, the policy sets out that:
- developers have the option to involve the District Valuer if the level of affordable housing proposed is below the required levels;
 - that developers will be required to provide the maximum level of affordable housing that is viable;
 - that if financial circumstances improve, the level of provision will be increased; and
 - that the tenure split on site should be in the range 70% to 85% rent and 15% to 30% intermediate housing.
- D.100 Provision of affordable housing should be on-site and generally 'pepper-potted' across the site. Where there is a shortfall in on-site provision, contributions will be sought towards off-site provision based on the cost of delivering the appropriate level of affordable housing.

Policy 8 Affordable Housing			Assessment
SA Objectives			Assessment
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	0
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	0
	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	0

Policy 8 Affordable Housing			
SA Objectives			Assessment
Prudent use of natural resources	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	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	0
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	0
	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

Assessment Conclusions

- D.101 This policy seeks to deliver affordable housing on development schemes and therefore helps to create more balanced, inclusive communities by enabling those who may not be able to afford market housing to live in places close to where they work and close to their families. In turn, the delivery of affordable housing helps to support the economy, making it more competitive.
- D.102 Provision of affordable housing across the district, in sustainable locations enables people to live close to local facilities such as schools and shops that they use on a regular basis, reducing the need for travel longer distances to meet their everyday needs and enabling them to participate more within their communities.

Policy 9 – Rural Exception Affordable Housing

The draft Core Strategy 2010

- D.103 Affordable housing on rural exception sites was dealt with by Policy 10 in the draft Core Strategy. The policy supported the provision of small affordable housing sites in locations that would not normally be used for housing to meet strictly local needs. The policy: defined local housing need; provided guidance on the villages where rural exception schemes would be focused and how sites should be selected; and set out how such schemes should aim to meet identified needs and how their occupancy would be controlled.
- D.104 The Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report noted that permitting such development in all rural areas could cause accessibility problems leading to higher living costs for the occupants. The report examined whether a more restrictive approach should be adopted and the key options explored were:
- whether sites should be allowed in all settlements of 3,000 inhabitants or less;
 - whether sites should be restricted to settlements on the basis of their level of service provision and /or population size; and
 - whether sites should only be permitted at the larger villages in the District (defined as the RSS Development Policy C settlements excluding Sturminster Newton).
- D.105 From the Initial Sustainability Appraisal it was concluded that:
- permitting rural exception sites in all settlements across the District would be likely to deliver more affordable housing in locations where local need had been identified, helping to build and strengthen rural communities;
 - some of the benefits would be diluted if rural exception schemes were allowed in all settlements since the cost of living is higher in rural areas and if schemes were located in smaller villages without facilities, reliance on the private car for everyday trips would be increased; and
 - overall, placing some restriction on the location of rural exception sites was considered to be desirable although it was felt that placing too much restriction could harm rural communities.

Explanation of Changes

- D.106 The NPPF continues to support the provision of rural exception sites and they are defined in a broadly similar way (schemes should meet strictly local needs; in perpetuity; on sites that would not normally be used for housing). The NPPF also suggests that “small

numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding".

- D.107 The results of consultation on the draft Core Strategy showed general support for the position being taken in the policy. However, there were some concerns, in particular that:
- such schemes may not be genuinely affordable due to the higher cost of living in remote rural areas;
 - a strict approach to the application of policy would not help to encourage young people to stay in the area; and
 - the need for a site needs to be fully justified and schemes should remain affordable in perpetuity.
- D.108 In autumn 2012 the Council consulted on whether an element of market housing should be allowed on rural exception sites. The consultation at that time also sought views on how a revised policy could ensure that the market element could be controlled to ensure that local needs are met without harming local character. Respondents to the consultation broadly supported allowing an element of market housing as long as it was no more than the minimum necessary to deliver the affordable element. Respondents also felt that the policy should seek to protect local character. The Council has also had regard to changes to the planning system and the funding regime for affordable housing when revising the policy.
- The Local Plan Part 1 2013**
- D.109 In the Local Plan Part 1, rural exception affordable housing is dealt with under Policy 9. The revised policy: updates the definition of local housing need; provides updated guidance on how rural exception sites should be selected; removes the list of settlements where rural exceptions would be considered; clarifies how such schemes should aim to meet identified local needs; and provides more detail on nominations and the control of occupancy.
- D.110 The policy also indicates that the Council may permit small numbers of market homes on rural exception sites but only as a last resort to contribute towards closing a funding gap for the provision of the rural exception affordable homes proposed on the site and provided that any market element is similar (or smaller) in size and type to the rural exception affordable homes being proposed.

Policy 9 Rural Exception Affordable Housing			Assessment
SA Objectives			Assessment
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	0
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	0
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	-

Policy 9 Rural Exception Affordable Housing			
SA Objectives			Assessment
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	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	0
	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	0
	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

Assessment Conclusions

- D.111 Many of the changes to the policy are aimed at updating or clarifying aspects of the draft policy so that it will be more effective at delivering rural exception affordable housing to meet local needs. However, the main change is that an element of market housing will be permitted on rural exception sites.
- D.112 The provision of affordable housing helps to reduce levels of poverty and help individuals participate in their community. Allowing a market element on rural exception schemes is likely to make such schemes more economically viable and so the revised policy is likely to better enable local communities to meet their affordable housing needs. Allowing a market element will also help to create more inclusive developments, which may not be the case with 100% affordable rural exception schemes.
- D.113 Any impacts on the environment and natural resources arising from a scheme will be judged against other policies in the Local Plan however an impact on local landscapes may well result from the dispersal of such schemes. The wider approach to acceptable locations may also have an impact on the ability of people to meet their everyday needs locally, increasing the need to travel.
- D.114 Rural exception schemes help local people to realise their potential and contribute to the local economy.
- D.115 Allowing a market element on rural exception sites has the advantages of making schemes more economically viable and the potential to create more inclusive communities. However, the market element needs to be strictly controlled to ensure that the emphasis remains on meeting local needs and to ensure that local character is protected.
- D.116 It is essential that the focus of the policy continues to be on the delivery of affordable housing only in areas where a need is identifiable. The policy should not become the route for the delivery of market housing in rural areas even in small numbers as this would undermine the spatial strategy.

Policy 10 – Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

The draft Core Strategy 2010

- D.117 The draft Core Strategy did not contain a policy relating to the provision of sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople because all Councils in the Dorset Sub-region had commenced preparation of a joint Development Plan Document (DPD)⁷ dealing with the provision of sites.
- D.118 The text in the draft Core Strategy referred to the emerging DPD in relation to the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy as it stood at the time. It also referred to DM Policy 6 which set out the various criteria against which all planning applications would be judged, including location, design and site management arrangements.

Explanation of Changes

- D.119 Abolition of regional planning and the introduction of the NPPF has prompted inclusion of a specific policy in the Local Plan to deal with the matters of identifying and meeting the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.
- D.120 Through the NPPF and the national planning policy guidance 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites'⁸ the Government seeks to ensure fair and equal treatment for Gypsies and Travellers in a way that respects the traditional and nomadic way of life while also respecting the interests of the settled community.

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- D.121 The policy now being put forward states that the Council will make appropriate provision of sites to meet the identified need for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople pitches within the District through the Dorset-wide Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations DPD. In addition, the requirement for the provision of transit sites will be addressed through the same DPD.
- D.122 Planning applications will be determined in the light of Policy 26 - Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

⁷ Dorset-wide Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Development Plan Document

⁸ Planning Policy for Traveller Sites - Department for Communities and local Government (March 2012)

Policy 10 Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople			Assessment
SA 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	0
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	0
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	0
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	0

Policy 10 Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople			
SA Objectives			Assessment
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	0
	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	0
	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	0
	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

Assessment Conclusions

- D.123 The provision of an adequate number of sites and pitches to accommodate the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and members of the Travelling Showpeople community through the Dorset-wide DPD will help create balanced communities. It will also address the accommodation needs of a particular part of the community.
- D.124 Provision of this accommodation in appropriate locations will minimise impact on the landscape and on other environmental assets.

Policy 11 – The Economy

The draft Core Strategy 2010

- D.125 Draft Core Policy 6 set out the Council’s approach to economic development for the District. It also set out the regional and sub-regional context; the level of job growth; the approach to identifying delivering employment land; how the Council will support thriving market towns and sustainable rural communities; and how the District will adapt to sectoral change, support sustainable tourism and match jobs to skills and enhance training opportunities.
- D.126 Key options explored in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report were:
- whether to plan for a low level of job growth (broad RSS interpretation), a higher level of job growth (based on more detailed assessment of evidence), or an even higher level of growth to support a supply led approach;
 - whether to allocate enough land to meet workspace need or to allocate additional land; and,
 - whether to allocate most employment land at the main towns, or provide employment land in locations in proportion to housing growth.
- D.127 From the Initial Sustainability Appraisal the following conclusions were drawn.
- The most appropriate approach is to plan for job growth that meets the likely future demands, based on more detailed assessment of evidence, and help to reduce commuting into and out of the district. The strategic policy should not reflect peaks and troughs of economic cycles, but take a longer term view;
 - Allocating enough land to meet the identified need is likely to offer the most sustainable option as it should reduce the negative environmental impacts whilst still enabling the economy to grow. However, the supply of land should be kept under review to ensure that the most appropriate and sustainable land is available to allow for sustainable levels of economic growth. A range of sites for different uses should be identified to adapt to sectoral change and avoid incompatible uses on adjacent plots;
 - Generally a focus on the urban areas will offer greater benefits than a dispersed approach. The policy should aim to focus a greater proportion of employment towards the main towns, and away from the villages, to give workers the opportunity to combine trips to meet their everyday needs, and should specifically set out to encourage the provision of necessary infrastructure to support business activity. The policy should detail particular circumstances where expansion of existing employment sites in the rural area

is acceptable; it is essential to have a rural location; and that re-use of buildings in the countryside is appropriate where sustainably located.

Explanation of Changes

- D.128 Changes to the national, regional and local policy structure, and in particular the removal of the regional tier of policy, has meant that local Council's have been able to set their own approach to economic development within the national framework, using locally derived evidence to identify and proactively meet development needs to support economic growth.
- D.129 The results of consultation on the draft New Plan in 2010 showed a general level of support for draft Core Policy 6, although some concerns were expressed in relation to the key options explored through the Initial Sustainability Appraisal. The overall conclusions were that:
- the approach to the overall quantum of jobs is supported where the locally derived evidence demonstrates a certain level of growth;
 - the approach to the overall quantum of land was supported, particularly if directed to make use of existing capacity on employment sites; and
 - the approach to the distribution of employment land is supported where the level of provision of homes and jobs is matched.
- D.130 In 2012, the Council consulted on changes to key issues, including whether there is a need to identify further employment sites in North Dorset in addition to those that are already allocated or have planning permission, and whether the Council should allow employment generating uses other than B1, B2 and B8 on employment sites, and if so, which uses should be permitted. Support for both not identifying further employment sites and for allowing other employment generating uses on employment sites were keenly supported.
- D.131 Options explored directly at Gillingham included the removal of the proposal for a strategic business park at Wyke, and retaining land at both Brickfields and Park Farm to support the mixed use strategic site allocation. Both of these options were supported which altered the strategy for Gillingham from supply-led employment at an identified site not closely related to housing growth, to more closely matching employment opportunities to housing development. This issue is discussed in more detail in relation to Policy 17.

The Local Plan Part 1 2013

D.132 The revised policy, now known as Policy 11, reflects the NPPF and acknowledges the abolition of regional planning, the introduction of neighbourhood planning and takes into consideration the concerns of local communities. The policy:

- identifies the four main towns of Blandford, Gillingham Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton as centres for economic growth, supports certain forms of economic development in the countryside and enables communities to meet their own local needs through neighbourhood planning. This approach to the distribution of employment land links locations of homes and jobs;
- identifies key actions to deliver sustainable economic development, including: making provision for sufficient land in sustainable locations; adopting a flexible approach to the uses that may be permitted on employment sites; periodic review of the portfolio of employment sites to ensure they remain fit for purpose; encouraging tourism proposals that are sustainable and which contribute to the rural economy; continuing to work in partnership to help create an environment where business can thrive; and enhance opportunities for and access to training;
- removes the proposal for a strategic business park at Wyke and the associated supply-led approach at Gillingham, whilst still identifying an overall need for 3,630 FTE jobs over the plan period, following an update of the evidence, and the predicted change to sectors within the North Dorset economy over the plan period;
- identifies sufficient employment land to meet the District's needs, and sites for mixed use regeneration. A more flexible approach to uses on general employment sites is also permitted; and
- sets out the Council's commitment to periodic review to ensure employment land remains fit for purpose.

Policy 11		Economy	
SA Objectives			Assessment
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	0
	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	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	-

Policy 11		Economy	
SA Objectives			Assessment
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	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	++

Assessment Conclusions

- D.133 The approach of focusing the majority of economic growth at the four main towns within the district is more likely to give a situation where these larger centres grow and thrive and become more self-contained where housing and economic growth are linked. Enabling local communities to plan for their own needs through neighbourhood plans will enable social progress recognising the needs of everyone, as will having a more flexible approach to the uses permitted on employment sites. Identifying sites for mixed use regeneration close to town centres will also support economic growth, particularly for non-B Class uses and retail.
- D.134 Providing sufficient employment land for economic growth and identifying and planning for future job growth ensures that neither over provision of land or restriction of labour supply causes imbalance in the local economy.
- D.135 There is the potential for a negative impact on the local environment through impacts on biodiversity and on landscape including as a result of pollution resulting from industrial developments. It will be essential that landscape planting, the retention of trees and hedgerows in developments and the inclusion of space for biodiversity are all incorporated into development schemes. The use of mitigation measures such as SuDS on employment land is also important.
- D.136 As many employment buildings are large, are large users of energy and are often located in areas away from residences and other sensitive uses, there are opportunities for renewable energy such as photo-voltaic panels on roofs or combined heat and power plants, to be incorporated into employment developments. These opportunities should be considered for inclusion within the policy.

Policy 12 – Retail, leisure and other commercial developments

The draft Core Strategy 2010

- D.137 Draft Core Policy 7 defined the hierarchy and network of centres in the District, set out the Council’s approach to town centre uses, the development of existing town centres, the retention of shops in town centres, and shop front design.
- D.138 Key options explored in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report were:
- to continue with current primary and secondary shopping areas, or to expand town centre areas to allow for projected growth.
- D.139 From the Initial Sustainability Appraisal it was concluded that:
- making adequate provision for retail uses in the town centre is important to avoid the negative effects of out of town retail;
 - the most appropriate option is likely to be to make provision for additional retail growth in the towns through expanded secondary and primary shopping areas; and
 - locating employment development at the towns and settlements identified in the retail hierarchy will support their role as local service hubs serving their rural hinterlands.

Explanation of Changes

- D.140 The results of the consultation on the draft Core Strategy 2010 showed a high level of support to the approach being taken. Local concerns were focussed around the local issues of understanding the retail relationship between the towns of Shaftesbury and Gillingham. Essentially Gillingham relies more on Shaftesbury for provision of comparison goods and although Shaftesbury has sufficient quantum of convenience retail, people travel from Shaftesbury and surrounding villages for the quality of convenience goods available at Gillingham.
- D.141 The NPPF states that planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres. Councils should also apply a sequential test to applications for main town centre uses that are not proposed in the town centre. Areas within town centre boundaries should be the sequentially preferred location for main town centre uses. The NPPF requires that primary shopping areas are defined, in addition to primary and secondary frontages.

D.142 A point was made about making reference to on-line shopping. The nature of how people access retail is currently changing. The government has started to investigate this initially through the Portas review and national policy may change over time to reflect changes taking place on the high street.

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D.143 The hierarchy and network of centres reflects the core spatial strategy and includes the main towns of Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton.

D.144 Policy 12 sets out that town centre boundaries will be defined in the Local Plan Part 2, unless a local community defines a boundary for their town centre through the neighbourhood plan route. In the interim the Council will use available evidence to make judgements for development management purposes about whether a particular site falls within a town centre. Evidence will include the 2005 Annual Monitoring Report; Town Design Statements; and earlier applications where proposals were tested against the sequential test in national policy.

D.145 The policy sets out how primary shopping areas, as well as primary and secondary shopping frontages should be defined or redefined. The Local Plan Part 2 or neighbourhood plans drawn up by local communities will establish the location of primary shopping areas and review primary and secondary shopping frontages. In the interim, the Council will use the recommended primary shopping areas in as identified in the Joint Retail Study, and primary and secondary shopping frontages as identified in the 2003 Local Plan, for development management purposes.

D.146 The policy explains how the national sequential test will be applied to proposals for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and not in accordance with the development plan. This provides clear guidance as to how impact should be assessed.

D.147 The policy sets out how future retail, leisure, office and community needs will be accommodated through enhancing and expanding existing town centres. The Council's approach to meeting identified needs is:

- reducing vacancy rates and encouraging implementation of existing permissions;
- identifying locations for mixed-use regeneration; and
- working with local communities to take forward proposals for town centre enhancement and growth through neighbourhood planning or other local, community-based initiatives.

- D.148 The policy recognises the importance of markets to the town centre economies within the main market towns and sets out the Council's support to retain and enhance the markets where needed.

Policy 12 Retail, leisure and other commercial developments			Assessment
SA Objectives			
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	0
	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	0
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	0
	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	0

Policy 12 Retail, leisure and other commercial developments			
SA Objectives			Assessment
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	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	++

Assessment Conclusions

- D.149 As the centres of the four main towns have numerous listed buildings and are designated as conservation areas, focussing regeneration on sites within and adjacent to town centres, and applying the sequential test to encourage appropriate siting of town centre uses, will support the improvement of the quality of the built environment, and help to protect heritage assets and townscapes. This focus on town centre first for the development of town centre uses will also support the self-containment of the main market towns and reduce impacts on the environment by reducing the need to travel.
- D.150 The approach of working with local communities to enable them to enhance their town centres will help to encourage individuals to participate in their community. Vibrant, safe towns and town centres also encourage community events and generally enhance community spirit.

Policy 13 – Grey Infrastructure

The draft Core Strategy 2010

- D.151 Draft Core Policy 11 embraced the coordinated provision of drainage, utilities and roads to support the residential and employment developments outlined in the strategy. The policy recognised that higher density development in accessible locations can help reduce the need to travel and reduce the need for development on greenfield land.
- D.152 The Policy also acknowledged that well designed development incorporates good links to neighbouring areas and to reduce reliance on the private car, these are best provided through cycling and walking routes. These routes can offer multiple benefits such as improved health through more active lifestyles and the provision of wildlife corridors connecting habitats and the countryside.
- D.153 In all transport related issues, there is a need to ensure that the needs of the mobility impaired are not harmed. For example restrictions on parking need to ensure that adequate disabled parking is provided, cycle and footpath routes need to ensure that access for the disabled is maintained and road design needs to ensure crossing points are included in convenient locations. Priority should be given to pedestrians and cyclists over cars especially in town centres and estate roads within new housing developments.
- D.154 The policy made a general point about the need for separate foul and surface water sewerage systems. However, drainage through combined sewers should be avoided to reduce the risk of combined sewer overflows and the health risk associated with such pollution. All new developments should therefore include separate foul and surface water sewers and where possible existing combined sewers should be replaced with separate systems. Surface water drainage systems should be provided through SuDS and only in exceptional situations, through traditional piped based drainage systems.
- D.155 Key options explored in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report particularly concerned transportation issues and considered adopting packages of measures along five broad categories:
- Demand management measures: manage mix, location and density of developments, manage parking, promote community travel planning;
 - Highway network measures: freight management, provide accurate information, review road schemes, Route Management Strategies;

- Public transport measures: Gillingham interchange improvements, real time bus information, additional bus services, integrated rail/bus ticketing;
- Walking and cycling measures: 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 rural areas; and
- Parking measures: manage parking in public car parks, on street parking and residential parking.

D.156 From the Initial Sustainability Appraisal it was concluded that:

- the greatest benefits are likely to arise through the implementation of the demand management measures;
- there are likely to be several negative effects from implementing the package of highway network measures against which mitigation measures will need to be put in place. If this mitigation is done effectively, the most appropriate action will be to implement these measures;
- implementing the package of public transport measures is likely to be the most sustainable option, offering benefits to the residents of the district;
- implementing the measures for walking and cycling improvements is likely to offer benefits in terms of sustainable transport, however greater emphasis could be given to connecting villages to each other and to the main towns through safe cycle and walking routes;
- managing parking across the district in a comprehensive way should encourage more sustainable travel choices however it requires actions outside of the remit of the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy should however not prevent it from happening at some time in the future and therefore should include the residential parking guidelines developed across the whole County as the first part of this process.

Explanation of Changes

D.157 The revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy has removed the regional road hierarchy framework; the NPPF has come into force, emphasising the importance of providing infrastructure; and neighbourhood planning has been introduced, providing an additional dimension to the provision of local infrastructure. In addition, clarification of what counts as 'infrastructure' has led to a broadening of the definition, as reflected in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan which accompanies this Plan.

- D.158 Consequently, the policy does not now single out A350 for freight signage and routing but makes it implicit for all routes and roads. In addition, the NPPF has emphasised the need for Transport Statements and Transport Assessments⁹ so the Policy includes a section to embrace this, taking a strategic view rather than as previously when policy on Transport Assessments and Transport Statements was contained in draft Development Management Policy 2.
- D.159 As a result of the consultations carried out in 2010 and 2012, the policy wording has been extended to ensure that all the key issues are fully covered, including extending the drainage element and making reference to improved rail services. Extreme weather events resulting in high and sudden rainfall which has led to incidents of widespread flooding has focussed attention on the importance of drainage. The Policy has been strengthened in recognition of this to highlight local water management and sustainable drainage solutions. Reference to the rail service to Gillingham is also now included.
- D.160 Recognition of the crucial nature of broadband provision was an outcome of the 2010 consultation and amended Policy wording takes account of this. The NPPF indicates that telecommunications form an important part of the infrastructure framework which needs to be provided and that the Council should work with other authorities and providers to secure its provision.
- D.161 Dealing with waste has become an even more significant element in the general workings of the community and the importance of the public realm in urban areas is being increasingly recognised. The policy therefore now specifically mentions these two matters.
- D.162 All of these elements drive an integrated approach to the provision of grey infrastructure provision and the delivery of the core national planning principle that is to 'proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the ... infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs'¹⁰.
- D.163 The policy has been revised with a view to consistency in the Local Plan Part 1 so some aspects of infrastructure are dealt with elsewhere, most notably renewable energy installations. Renewable energy and the generation of heat or electricity from renewable or low carbon sources gives rise to a need for appropriate infrastructure. Policy 3 relates to climate change and Policy 22 deals with renewables and low carbon energy.

⁹ Paragraph 32, NPPF - DCLG (March 2012)

¹⁰ Paragraph 17, NPPF - DCLG (March 2012)

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- D.164 The revised grey infrastructure policy, now Policy 13, looks to provide the grey infrastructure needed to support development. It particularly relates to:
- transportation including roads, cycleways, footpaths and measures to facilitate public transport use;
 - utilities including telecommunications, electricity, gas and water supply, sewerage and wastewater treatment;
 - drainage including Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and flood prevention measures;
 - waste including its collection, transfer and disposal; and
 - public realm including street art and urban enhancement works.
- D.165 Essentially, the Policy prompts and supports the delivery of new or expanded grey infrastructure in the District to underpin new development and enhance the economy of North Dorset. In some parts of the District, infrastructure provision will be a matter for both the Council and local communities to decide and deliver through the neighbourhood planning process.

Policy 13 Grey Infrastructure			Assessment
SA Objectives			
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	0
	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	0
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	0
	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	0

Policy 13 Grey Infrastructure			
SA Objectives			Assessment
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	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

Assessment Conclusions

- D.166 Grey infrastructure is essential for supporting new development and is important in creating sustainable communities. In particular, the Policy embraces use of Travel Plans and Assessments to assist in dealing with the traffic impact of new development, includes a strong reference to flood prevention and includes public realm improvements. As a result, the Policy is likely to have a particularly strong impact on the competitiveness of the District's economy as it seeks to secure the infrastructure to support growth.
- D.167 The inclusion of telecommunications infrastructure including broadband provision will enhance connections between businesses and their markets and help to better manage travel needs. In a similar way, improved connections between communities and between homes, jobs and facilities will help to enhance the local economy.
- D.168 Inclusion of public realm improvements will assist in achieving enhancements to the public realm, offering enhancements to the historic environment in the district. The inclusion of Sustainable Drainage and separate foul and surface water drainage systems will help to reduce pollution instances and better manage flood risk.

Policy 14 – Social Infrastructure

The draft Core Strategy 2010

- D.169 Draft Core Policy 12 included the provision of schools and colleges, GP surgeries and other healthcare facilities, community halls and leisure centres and urban and rural leisure facilities across the District to improve the quality of life of North Dorset residents. The policy sought to protect and enhance existing provision. Larger social infrastructure items, such as community halls to serve both the towns and their rural hinterlands, were to be encouraged in RSS Development Policy B Settlements with smaller facilities serving more local needs being encouraged in RSS Development Policy C Settlements.
- D.170 The policy stated that the Council will work with partners such as Dorset County Council, to ensure childcare and school provision in the District was adequate to meet the needs of growing communities. It also stated that further education provision needed to be retained and improved to provide the District with a workforce who had the necessary skills to meet the needs of local employers.
- D.171 Key options explored in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report were:
- whether provision should be focused on the main towns only; or
 - whether provision should be permitted at the main towns and the larger villages.
- D.172 From the Initial Sustainability Appraisal it was concluded that:
- The focus of provision should be in the main towns but by permitting small scale facilities in the larger villages the needs of the District as a whole would be met in the most sustainable way.

Explanation of Changes

- D.173 Since the policy was drafted in 2010, the Regional Strategy has been revoked; removing the rigid RSS Policy A, B and C settlement hierarchy and neighbourhood planning has been introduced. Together these changes enable a more flexible approach to social infrastructure provision.
- D.174 Overall, the policy has been revised to ensure a consistent approach in the Local Plan Part 1 and this has resulted in some elements of the policy being re-allocated to other policies. In summary, provision for rural leisure (nature reserves, country parks) is now considered under Policy 15 Green Infrastructure, commercial rural concerns such as clay pigeon shooting and paintballing are

considered under Policy 11 The Economy and urban leisure facilities (bowling and cinemas) are now included in Policy 12 Retail, leisure and other commercial developments.

D.175 The evidence in terms of school requirements and doctors surgeries has been updated and previously omitted social infrastructure provision for emergency services and youth clubs are now included in the policy.

The Local Plan Part 1 2013

D.176 The revised social infrastructure policy, now known as Policy 14, seeks to ensure that the social infrastructure that our communities need is planned for positively. In particular, it aims to deliver:

- education facilities including pre-school childcare, primary and secondary, further and community learning and special needs education;
- health services including hospitals, general surgeries and health centres;
- emergency services including police, fire and rescue and ambulance stations;
- cultural facilities such as libraries, art galleries, arts centres and museums;
- recreation and sport facilities including indoor sports facilities and youth centres; and
- community facilities including non-commercial facilities such as community halls, places of worship and cemeteries.

D.177 In summary, new or expanded provision of social infrastructure will be permitted in the District's four main towns as this is where the majority of the population live. In addition they act as hubs serving their rural hinterlands and are generally the most accessible locations by sustainable transport modes. In the countryside, provision will be a matter for local communities to decide and delivered through the neighbourhood planning process unless an over-riding need can be demonstrated.

Policy 14 Social Infrastructure			Assessment
SA Objectives			
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	0
	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	0
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	0
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	0
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	0

Policy 14 Social Infrastructure			
SA Objectives			Assessment
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	0
	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	0
	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	0
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	+

Assessment Conclusions

- D.178 The provision of social infrastructure is important in creating sustainable communities. The policy focuses growth in the four main towns with a test of overriding need being established elsewhere. This focus combined with the opportunities for local residents to plan for their own communities through the neighbourhood planning is likely to aid in creating balanced communities. It will enable community facilities to be delivered to meet the aspirations of communities building loyalty and a sense of ownership.
- D.179 Delivering facilities to support growth in the most sustainable locations will help to reduce the need to travel.

Policy 15 – Green Infrastructure

The draft Core Strategy 2010

- D.180 The multiple benefits of green infrastructure were highlighted in draft Core Policy 13 along with the approach to coordinating its provision through the development of a Green Infrastructure Strategy. The policy covered all elements of green infrastructure at all spatial scales including sports pitches, recreation grounds, informal recreation space, nature reserves, cycle routes, river corridors, allotments and cemeteries. Standards for the provision of play space, playing fields and allotments within developments were incorporated into draft Development Management Policy 8 and the protection of trees and hedgerows and the requirements for landscape planting were included in draft Development Management Policy 9.
- D.181 Key options explored in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report were:
- to coordinate the provision of green infrastructure through the production of a Green Infrastructure Strategy or to leave it to developers to provide on-site.
- D.182 From the Initial Sustainability Appraisal it was concluded that:
- there was a need to produce the Green Infrastructure Strategy as soon as possible to enable the multiple benefits of green infrastructure to be realised;
 - there was a need to ensure green infrastructure was delivered to at least minimum standards prior to the production of the Green Infrastructure Strategy; and
 - there was a need to include within the policy measures to protect important landscape features.
- D.183 From the addendum to the Initial Sustainability Appraisal it was concluded that:
- the elements of draft Development Management Policy 8 that sought to deliver, protect and enhance open space were seen to be important; and
 - many objectives of draft Development Management Policy 9 Trees, Hedgerows and Landscape design were similar to those in draft Core Policy 13 Green Infrastructure.

Explanation of Changes

- D.184 In relation to Green Infrastructure, consultation comments received on the draft Core Strategy 2010 were generally supportive of the approach. They did however highlight the importance of the timely production of the Green Infrastructure Strategy and the need for interim measures to be put in place during its preparation. Other comments received included:
- mention of hedgerows as important green corridors and fruit tree planting to enhance biodiversity;
 - the need to incorporate standards for the level of allotment provision within settlements;
 - highlighting the connection between green infrastructure provision and health benefits.
- D.185 The policy has been revised to incorporate the key elements of draft Development Management policies 8 and 9 and to put in place some interim measures to help secure green infrastructure prior to the production of a strategy. The production of the strategy will also be timetabled to inform the Local Plan Part 2. The main changes are:
- the inclusion of interim measures for delivery before the Green Infrastructure Strategy is produced;
 - the inclusion of standards for the provision of open space within developments;
 - the need for Neighbourhood Plans to consider measures to aid in the delivery of the Green Infrastructure Strategy at the local level; and
 - the protection of trees and hedgerows on development sites especially those of high biodiversity value.
- D.186 In addition to the changes to this policy, separate policies have been drafted on the Natural Environment and on the Historic Environment as set out in Section 3 of this report both of which relate to green infrastructure.

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- D.187 The revised policy on Green Infrastructure, Policy 15 is similar to the draft policy. It reflects the changing national picture, putting into place an approach to coordinate the delivery of green infrastructure and realise the multiple benefits it can offer. The policy includes standards for the provision of formal recreation space such as sports pitches and for allotments. It seeks to retain mature trees and hedgerows within developments and contribute towards the provision or enhancement of other off-site green infrastructure elements.

Policy 15 Green Infrastructure			Assessment
SA Objectives			Assessment
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	0
	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 townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	+
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	++

Policy 15 Green Infrastructure			
SA Objectives			Assessment
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	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	0
	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

Assessment Conclusions

- D.188 Multifunctional green infrastructure can deliver multiple social, environmental and economic benefits especially if its provision is coordinated in a strategic way. The provision of green infrastructure helps to create attractive, well designed places which in turn facilitate healthy lifestyles through the provision of space for sports and for other outdoor activities. It can provide enhancements to biodiversity and help to minimise the impact of development on the landscape. The creation of well-designed green spaces can also help to make the district more attractive to businesses and for tourists, offering enhanced economic opportunities.
- D.189 Inclusion of standards for the provision of allotments and sports pitches along with recognition of the importance of trees and hedgerows within the policy and the inclusion of an interim delivery mechanism prior to the Green Infrastructure Strategy production are seen as positive enhancements to the policy.

Appendix E: Locational Policies

E.1 The approach outlined in the draft New Plan 2010 for each of the towns has been revised to reflect new evidence, to reflect changes to national policy and to take on board responses to consultation. These revised policies have been subject to SA, taking into account the conclusions included in Appendix D of the Initial SA Report. For each of these policies, a brief report has been prepared (included in this Appendix) which sets out the main changes that have taken place with the results of the SA of the locational policies being detailed in these individual policy reports.

Policy 16 - Blandford

The draft Core Strategy 2010

E.2 The strategic approach to the future development of Blandford over the plan period was set out in draft Core Policy 15. It recognised Blandford's important role as the main service centre in the southern part of the District. It indicated that housing growth would be matched by employment growth and the provision of supporting infrastructure with the aim of increasing self-containment and reducing the need for commuting, particularly to the South East Dorset conurbation. The key spatial aspects of the strategy were:

- focusing housing in accessible locations, particularly locations close to the town centre;
- locating B-Class employment uses on the northern edge of the town in locations accessible to the strategic road network;
- focusing office and non-B Class uses on the regenerated Brewery site close to the town centre;
- providing an enhanced green infrastructure network focused primarily on the Stour Valley and the disused railway line that runs through the town; and
- accommodating growth within environmental constraints, notably two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the floodplain of the River Stour and the town's bypass.

E.3 The strategy for the town saw the building out of sites already allocated for development or with planning permission in the period up to 2016, with the bringing forward of additional greenfield sites after that date.

- E.4 The Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report examined three options, centred around expansion of the town once the currently identified large development sites within the settlement boundary had been developed. These were:
- no post 2016 expansion of the town;
 - expansion of the town to the north east; or
 - expansion of the town to the south west.
- E.5 The main implications of the options considered related to the provision of housing. It was concluded in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report that, in general, not allowing expansion of the town post 2016 was not considered sustainable. Development to the south west was considered to be the better of the two expansion options due to its lesser impact on the landscape and proximity to the town centre and schools.
- E.6 The Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report considered three options for the post-2016 expansion of Blandford (Options 15 (1) a, b and c). Since that Report was published, a further option emerged for consideration as a residential site after a change of policy background, mainly in respect of highways policy. The assessment of this site (Option 15 (1) d) was reported in an Addendum to the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report¹¹. The site in question is situated to the south of the A350 / A354 junction south of Blandford, which lies beyond the town's bypass. Further work is required to determine the capacity of the site but it is likely to be a minimum of 300 dwellings. The site lies outside the Dorset AONB and the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB.
- E.7 While the site is located relatively close to jobs and facilities, the by-pass would act as a barrier to pedestrian and cycle movements and measures would need to be put in place to overcome this severance. An alternative alignment (to that shown in the 2003 adopted Local Plan) of the proposed Charlton Marshall / Spetisbury / Sturminster Marshall by-pass could potentially enable housing to be provided on this site. However, measures (such as a bridge or an underpass) would be needed to overcome the 'severance' caused by the location of the site beyond Blandford's by-pass. Further, the feasibility of satisfactorily accommodating an alternative by-pass route would need to be established and agreed with the Highway Authority. In addition, the Highways Agency submitted an objection to the site, raising concerns about potential impacts on the strategic road network to the south (i.e. the A35 and A31). Finally, the Council's Landscape Assessment of potential housing sites at Blandford (and Shaftesbury) highlighted concerns that development of the site would adversely impact on the landscape and the setting of the town.

¹¹ Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document - Addendum to the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report (October 2002)

E.8 Consequently, the updated SA assessment still indicates development to the south west of the town as being the best strategic option for future growth, due to its lesser impact on the landscape than other sites and its proximity to the town centre. This is reflected in the policy.

Explanation of Changes

- E.9 National policy changes have, in general had little direct effect on the policy for Blandford other than in relation to overall housing numbers. However, more detail has been added in relation to environment and climate change issues. In addition, changing local circumstances have prompted consideration of three matters in particular.
- E.10 Firstly, in respect of neighbourhood planning, Blandford Town Council, Blandford St Mary Parish Council and Bryanston Parish Council have discussed the possibility of preparing a joint neighbourhood plan to address local issues affecting the town and the two parishes. Reference is made to this in the revised town policy.
- E.11 Secondly, consultation on the draft Core Strategy highlighted various matters of local concern, one of which was the provision of sports facilities serving Blandford. Land to the north of the Blandford bypass was originally the focus of efforts to provide new sports pitches but, in the time since the original policy was prepared, these efforts have unfortunately failed. The green infrastructure element of the policy has now been amended to remove specific reference to this land and refer instead to provision within the built up area. The policy in the 2003 Local Plan that proposed sports pitches north of the bypass remains saved giving the opportunity for options to be reviewed through the neighbourhood planning process.
- E.12 Lastly, extension of the Tesco supermarket at Stour Park¹² and a new Asda supermarket off Shaftesbury Lane on the northern edge of the town¹³ have been granted planning permission and this has had a bearing on retail requirements. The policy now reflects these new circumstances.

¹² The extension to Tesco gained permission in 2012 and will increase the stores floorspace from 2,273m² to 3,941m².

¹³ Planning permission was granted in March 2013 for a 2,300m² Asda supermarket and petrol filling station on land off Salisbury Lane.

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- E.13 The broad overall strategy for the town remains as outlined in draft Core Strategy in 2010. However, recent events are reflected in a few detailed policy changes, most notably relating to housing (reflecting for instance, a reduction in the housing numbers proposed on the Land west of Blandford Forum site to reflect the results of more detailed landscape sensitivity work and the development of 77 dwellings on land at Black Lane) and to the changing retail situation.
- E.14 Within the revised Blandford policy, detail is included with reference to the potential for a neighbourhood plan for Blandford to assist in making non-strategic local choices. For example, local residents may wish to explore connectivity and transport linkages over and above those identified in the town policy, allocate additional sites for housing and employment and allocate additional car parking. Where issues are not addressed in the neighbourhood plan then policy will be taken forward via the Local Plan Part 2.

Policy 16		Blandford	
SA Objectives			Assessment
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 townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	+
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	+

Policy 16		Blandford	
SA Objectives			Assessment
Prudent use of natural resources	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	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	-
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	?

Assessment Conclusions

- E.15 Overall, the Final Sustainability Assessment of the Blandford town policy is very similar to the conclusions drawn in Appendix D of the Initial Sustainability Assessment. The commitment to the preparation of a neighbourhood plan by the two Blandford Councils and Bryanston Parish Council will result in greater community engagement and will therefore make the town more inclusive.
- E.16 Commencement of the development of industrial units at Shaftesbury Lane has had a positive impact on the provision of employment enabling infrastructure. This improvement is likely to have an impact wider than just the within the town.
- E.17 The inclusion of the Trailway and additional informal recreation sites along the Stour Valley are seen as positive enhancements in relation to green infrastructure and these will offer multiple benefits in relation to health and well-being, biodiversity and reduced flood risk. However, the identification of a regeneration area in the town centre, located within the flood zone of the Stour albeit protected by flood defences increases the potential risk to flooding.
- E.18 The inclusion of detail on the environment and climate change issues in the town, specifically mentioning the close proximity of the AONB and the issues related to flooding from the River Stour and the presence of Greater Horseshoe Bats, is seen as a positive enhancement of the policy from the draft produced in 2010.

Policy 17 - Gillingham

The draft Core Strategy 2010

- E.19 Draft Core Policy 16 set out the strategy for growth at Gillingham and outlined the important role the town plays in leading provision for District wide growth and serving the communities to the north of the District. The key spatial aspects of the strategy were:
- a southern extension to accommodate a strategic level of growth creating a mixed-use development;
 - regeneration of the Station Road area and improving the links between the high street and the railway station;
 - housing development at Bay to the north of the town centre;
 - a strategic business park proposal at Wyke to the west of the town; and,
 - retaining, enhancing and extending the river corridor open spaces increasing accessibility to increase non-vehicular linked trips.
- E.20 Key options explored in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report were whether:
- to limit growth to sites inside the current settlement boundary to 2016 or allow some greenfield expansion;
 - to locate the major post 2016 greenfield expansion to the south and south east, or to the north west, or a combination of both;
 - to allocate an additional strategic employment site to encourage employment led growth;
 - to provide additional retail growth at Gillingham. If so, approaches considered were to retain regeneration of the town centre as a priority by either focusing on the existing town centre and Station Road area, or to adopt a broader approach to integrate the disparate town centre functions into a more cohesive centre; and
 - to implement a package of measures of minor road improvements and demand management or to continue with the current situation.
- E.21 From the Initial Sustainability Appraisal it was concluded that:
- small scale greenfield expansion would be needed prior to 2016 to maintain delivery of housing at an appropriate rate;
 - locating the major greenfield expansion to the south and south east of the town would offer benefits due to its proximity to the town centre, the main employment sites in the town and the railway station. The development would also offer the opportunity to ease traffic congestion at the bridge where the B3081 crosses the railway line through the provision of a southern link road;

- the designation of an additional strategic employment site would offer the opportunity to attract businesses that would demand a high quality environment, helping to diversify the economy of the town. Impact on biodiversity, landscape and townscape will need to be considered carefully. A strategic site would need to be reserved for larger suitable employers to meet the aims of diversified employment growth;
- the provision of additional land at or close to the town centre will help to meet the retail needs of the expanded town. Opportunities may also arise to realise wider benefits such as greater use of the railway, a district heating system, enhancing the town centre visually, and links with the rest of the town. A co-ordinated approach to town centre regeneration would enable the links between the different town centre nodes to be improved, thereby improving the viability of the town centre; and
- a package of transport measures is likely to help reduce the impact of the growth at Gillingham, although it is important that other measures such as cycling and walking links within and into the town are provided. In addition, the impacts on heritage, biodiversity and landscape need to be taken into account when looking at the environmental impacts of the proposed road improvements.

Explanation of Changes

- E.22 In general changes to national policy have had little effect on the Gillingham policy other than in relation to overall housing numbers. However, given the strategic focus of growth at Gillingham, Policy 21 – Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation has been developed to provide the framework to deliver strategic levels of housing, employment and infrastructure. The consultation on the draft Core Strategy in 2010 highlighted a number of local community concerns for Gillingham, including:
- the capacity of the infrastructure to support the future growth of the town, such as schools, healthcare, green infrastructure, transport, flood, water and sewerage;
 - the need for locally specific policies to reflect the situation in relation to regeneration of the town centre and a town specific green infrastructure strategy;
 - the lack of a need for the strategic business park at Wyke; and
 - the consideration of an option for growth to be located to the north-west of the town.
- E.23 The issues of infrastructure provision have been periodically reviewed with each relevant infrastructure provider and agreement reached that all necessary points are covered in the plan.

- E.24 The Core Strategy sets out the strategic policies for the District, with accompanying Development Management policies. The more detailed place specific policies for Gillingham are currently being prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan Group, and it is appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan to propose policies that deal in detail with town centre regeneration and green infrastructure proposals.
- E.25 The employment land projections in the Workspace Strategy (2008) were updated in 2012 to take account of the change in economic climate and re-assessed future levels of growth. The results of this study showed that, given the new and projected economic environment, a strategic business park at Wyke would no longer be necessary to meet the future need for employment land.
- E.26 Further consultation on key issues in the Local Plan was undertaken towards the end of 2012, and proposed the removal of the strategic business park at Wyke from the proposed Gillingham policy. The results from that consultation clearly demonstrated popular support with the local community. The proposal for the strategic business park at Wyke has been removed from the new Local Plan.
- E.27 The option of developing land to the north-west of the town was considered as part of the examination of potential growth for the town in the Atkins study. The examination concludes the site to the south of the town more sustainable. The Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report concluded that development to the north and west of Gillingham would be likely to increase pressure on key transport infrastructure. Whereas, development to the south and east of the town would be more easily mitigated with greater opportunity for non-vehicular links.
- E.28 The option of developing land to the north east of Gillingham was assessed in the Atkins Report and because of its poor performance, it was rejected prior to 'refined scenarios' being developed. On the basis of this analysis, this option was not assessed in the Initial SA Report. It was subsequently considered that an assessment of the site should be included in the Addendum to the Initial SA Report to ensure that any final decision on the location of growth at Gillingham has been made on the basis of a consistent approach to the appraisal of the options. The site has now been assessed in this addendum to the Initial SA Report and the analysis clearly shows that it does not offer as favourable a location for development and that the southern option has the potential to offer greater benefits in sustainability terms.

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- E.29 Apart from the removal of the proposed business park at Wyke and the inclusion of the Strategic Site Allocation (SSA) policy, the overall strategy for Gillingham remains broadly the same as that outlined in draft Core Strategy published in 2010. Allocating the SSA

brings forward the development of the site, establishing the principles of development early with the aim of securing the infrastructure needed to support the future growth of the town.

- E.30 Updated evidence for the economy has resulted in the withdrawal of the proposal for the strategic business park at Wyke, with sufficient remaining employment land identified to meet the needs of the town. Employment land within the Shaftesbury Road Corridor inside the SSA is the preferred location for the local centre for the SSA, as considered in the SSA policy.
- E.31 Evidence examining affordable housing provision identified a proportion of 30% across Gillingham would be required. This overall level for Gillingham is 10% lower from the remainder of the District due to identified lower residual land values.
- E.32 Through the production of the neighbourhood plan, local residents may wish to explore and investigate linkages and connectivity above and beyond those identified in the town policy. This information could feed into the Green Infrastructure Strategy. Where local issues are not addressed in the neighbourhood plan the Local Plan Part 2 can be used to take policy forward.

Policy 17 Gillingham			Assessment
SA Objectives			Assessment
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 townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	++
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	+

Policy 17 Gillingham			
SA Objectives			Assessment
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	+

Assessment Conclusions

- E.33 Overall the appraisal of the Gillingham town policy is similar to the conclusions drawn in Appendix D of the Initial SA Report. The key areas where the revised policy has had a positive impact on the assessment include the provision for more community facilities both within the existing town (for example the Riversmeet centre) and within the Southern Extension. These changes encourage social progress and help to build strong communities. The development of a neighbourhood plan for the town will also help to foster greater community spirit.
- E.34 The revised employment projections and the consequent removal of the proposals for a business park at Wyke, have resulted in a change in the appraisal results. The primary effect of this is to reduce the potential significant positive effect on the economic aspects of sustainability but an enhancement of the environmental aspects. In addition, specific mention of environment and climate change issues for the town enhance the environmental aspects of sustainability.
- E.35 Including Policy 21 Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation at this stage allows strategic levels of growth to progress, with a sufficient level of detail to address mitigation measures and infrastructure provision, without waiting for the subsequent Local Plan Part 2 document to be written and adopted. This brings forward growth to help meet housing and employment needs of the town.

Policy 18 - Shaftesbury

The draft Core Strategy 2010

- E.36 Draft Core Policy 17 set out the strategy for growth at Shaftesbury over the plan period. It recognised the important role the town plays with Gillingham in supporting the needs of the northern part of the District and neighbouring parts of Wiltshire, the distinctive historic character of the town and the biodiversity and landscape constraints. The key spatial aspects of the strategy were:
- focusing housing largely on the flat plateau land to the east of the town and north of the A30;
 - locating B-class employment uses (including offices) on land to the south of the A30;
 - ensuring that improved public transport, walking and cycling links integrate the new development to the east of the town with the existing built-up area;
 - making the land to the east of the town centre and the west of Christy's Lane the focus for the provision of additional retailing and community facilities; and
 - ensuring that all development, including infilling, is accommodated within landscape and biodiversity constraints.
- E.37 Two key options were explored in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report. The first was the location of growth and whether this should be restricted to within the current boundaries of the town or permitted on greenfield land to the east of the town. The second was community facilities and whether land should be reserved for the provision of a Community Hub in the town centre or whether provision of community facilities should be allowed on other sites.
- E.38 From the Initial Sustainability Appraisal it was concluded that:
- the moderate expansion of Shaftesbury was likely to be the most sustainable option but in combination with the redevelopment of some town centre sites. The appraisal also recognised the importance of minimising the impact on water resources and including space for expansion of the further education college in the town alongside other community facilities; and
 - reserving the site in the centre of town for community uses would offer multiple benefits for the town. Ideally this would include a community hall, further education facilities and a youth centre however; it considered the development of the site for community benefits in general was more important than ensuring all proposed uses were combined.

Explanation of Changes

- E.39 In general, changes to national policy have had little effect on the Shaftesbury policy other than in relation to overall housing numbers. However, consultation on the draft Core Strategy highlighted a number of local communities concerns. These were:
- the likely landscape impact of development, in particular on the proposed housing site to the west of A350;
 - the need for a new community hall and the location of any community facilities; and
 - provision of health services and schools in the town to meet growing demand.
- E.40 In response to landscape concerns in general, the Council undertook a landscape impact assessment¹⁴ of all the proposed housing sites around the town. In particular the assessment recognised that the skyline significance of the site to the west of A350 with its elevated downland plateau was a key sensitivity issue. It suggested that the potential landscape impact on this site could be mitigated by ‘pulling back’ any future line of development and locating public open space associated with the development along the south-western edge of the site. The study suggested that this public open space could include opportunities for native tree planting to tie-in with the existing vegetation around the site.
- E.41 From the consultation responses it is clear that a community hall remained an aspiration of local residents; however, its scale and location was a matter for debate. The revised Shaftesbury policy continues to reserve a site in the centre of town, as this was identified in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report as the preferred approach, but through neighbourhood planning it is anticipated that the final location and scale of provision will be resolved.
- E.42 Updated evidence was also sought from the education and health service providers for the Social Infrastructure policy. It is now proposed that a new primary school is required in Shaftesbury and the policy suggests that the existing doctors' surgery is expanded or relocated. The location of the school has yet to be agreed but choices are limited due to the constrained nature of the town.
- E.43 In September 2013 the parished area of Shaftesbury and the neighbouring parished areas of Melbury Abbas and Cann were designated as a neighbourhood area. The local community is now preparing a neighbourhood plan to address the local issues affecting the town and the two parishes immediately to the south.

¹⁴ Landscape Impact Assessment of potential housing sites at Blandford and Shaftesbury, North Dorset District Council (July 2010)

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- E.44 The overall strategy for the town remains as outlined in draft Core Strategy in 2010 with the incorporation of the updated evidence on social infrastructure requirements for the town. The policy also makes reference for the need for foot and cycle links between the eastern development sites and the existing town centre.
- E.45 The revised Shaftesbury policy, that now also makes reference to tourist-related development, has taken into consideration the concerns of local residents and identifies the important role neighbouring planning can play in making non-strategic local choices.
- E.46 Neighbourhood planning will also enable local residents to take an active role in making decision about the expansion or relocation of the doctor's surgery and developing a green infrastructure strategy for the town. Where issues are not addressed in the neighbourhood plan the Local Plan Part 2 will be used to take policy forward.

Policy 18 Shaftesbury			Assessment
SA 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 townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	++
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	++

Policy 18 Shaftesbury			
SA Objectives			Assessment
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	++

Assessment Conclusions

- E.47 Overall, the assessment of the Shaftesbury town policy is similar to the conclusions drawn in Appendix D of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal. The key area where the assessment has changed relates to the production of a neighbourhood plan resulting in greater community engagement and therefore making the town more inclusive as it enables all residents to have a say in the future. There is now also specific reference to tourism related development which will assist in developing the local economy.
- E.48 The mention of the links between Shaftesbury and nearby Gillingham is significant. The growth of Gillingham is likely to have an impact on Shaftesbury. This could range from the negative impact of increased traffic levels through the town to the positive impact of increased job opportunities. The impacts of the growth of Gillingham will need to be carefully monitored to ensure they are not significant and negative and that mitigation measures (such as the Enmore Green Link Road and high frequency bus routes between the towns) are delivered.
- E.49 In addition the policy now makes specific references to some of the environmental issues that exist including the potential for localised flooding at times of heavy rainfall especially at the bottom of the slopes and the potential for an impact on the nearby protected landscapes of the AONB. The policy also makes reference to the need to incorporate suitable and attractive green space within developments to reduce recreational pressure on the nearby internationally protected habitats.

Policy 19 – Sturminster Newton

The draft Core Strategy 2010

- E.50 Draft Core Policy 18 set out the strategy for growth at Sturminster Newton and outlined the important role the town plays in serving the communities to the west of the District. The key spatial aspects of the strategy were to:
- focus the bulk of housing development within the existing built up area and in locations close to the town centre, with some more limited peripheral greenfield expansion to meet longer terms needs;
 - continue the regeneration of land to the north of the town centre to include an improved range of services and employment opportunities alongside new housing development;
 - develop North Dorset Business Park to meet the employment needs of communities in the western part of the District; and
 - extend the North Dorset Trailway to improve links with Stalbridge to the north west and the villages towards Blandford to the south east.
- E.51 Two key options were explored in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report. The first was to restrict growth to within the current boundaries of the town therefore encouraging regeneration of the town centre and the second was to permit limited growth on greenfield land in addition to the town centre regeneration.
- E.52 From the Initial Sustainability Appraisal it was concluded that:
- regeneration of the centre of Sturminster Newton and development within the settlement boundary would offer a number of benefits including the provision of jobs and housing whilst at the same time improving the appearance and connectivity of the town; and
 - housing delivery was important for the town and regeneration with limited greenfield development would be the best option.

Explanation of Changes

- E.53 In general changes to national policy have had little effect on the Sturminster Newton policy other than in relation to overall housing numbers. The consultation on the draft Core Strategy highlighted a number of local community concerns including:
- the capacity of schools in the town to meet growing demand;

- the impact of development on designated wildlife sites;
- connectivity and linkages between the town centre and any development on the periphery of the town, especially links with North Dorset Business Park; and
- the need for locally specific economic policies to reflect the local situation.

- E.54 Updated evidence in relation to the education provision now shows that proposed growth of Sturminster will require an extension of the existing primary and secondary schools. For Sturminster Newton High School growth will be managed on the existing site. However to accommodate the additional half form of entry required at primary level, Dorset County Council may consider a new site for the William Barnes School.
- E.55 A final Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) report has been produced to consider the impact of development on designated wildlife sites. For growth at Sturminster Newton it concludes that there are no significant impacts, but it does indicate that increased traffic on the A357 and the increase in air pollution associated with this growth may have a negative impact on the Rooksmoor SAC. To mitigate the impact it suggests that traffic flows could be reduced by encouraging alternative transport options, such as the North Dorset Trailway. Since the publication of the Draft Core Policy 18 the Trailway from Sturminster Newton to Blandford has been completed.
- E.56 In 2012 SturQuest (the local community partnership) commissioned a design and development brief for North Dorset Business Park¹⁵. This addressed issues such as connectivity and linkages with the town and also introduced the concept of a locally distinctive ‘food-based’ cluster on the site. Planning permission has since been granted for the site that includes a master plan based on the brief and in 2013 the Homes and Community Agency, together with the owners (North Dorset District Council and Dorset County Council), secured funding to support the installation of key infrastructure.

The Local Plan Part 1 2013

- E.57 The overall strategy for the town remains as outlined in draft Core Strategy published in 2010. Updated evidence for social infrastructure has refined the policy in relation to school provision and the development brief for North Dorset Business Park has

¹⁵ <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=171979&filetype=pdf>

clarified the ambitions of the local community in relation to a localised employment policy for the town and work on site has commenced.

- E.58 If the town decides to prepare a neighbourhood plan local residents may wish to explore and investigate linkages and connectivity above and beyond those identified in the town policy and the development brief for North Dorset Business Park. This information could feed into the Green Infrastructure Strategy. Where issues are not addressed in the neighbourhood plan the Local Plan Part 2 will be used to take policy forward.

Policy 19 Sturminster Newton			Assessment
SA 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 townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	++
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	+

Policy 19 Sturminster Newton			
SA Objectives			Assessment
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	+

Assessment Conclusions

- E.59 Overall the SA of the Sturminster Newton town policy is similar to the conclusions drawn in Appendix D of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report. The key areas where the revised policy has had a positive impact on the assessment are in relation to sustainable levels of economic and employment growth. The commencement of development at North Dorset Business Park is providing the vital on-site infrastructure to enable employment growth to come forward, strengthening the local economy and making the town more self-contained. The brief for North Dorset Business Park also includes a food based training hub that will help to improve local skills.
- E.60 Completion of the North Dorset Trailway to Blandford encourages more sustainable forms of travel between the two towns and villages along the route. The inclusion of the extension of this route towards Stalbridge with linkages to North Dorset Business Park will help to reduce traffic between the towns and encourage sustainable travel to the business park. This will help to mitigate any potential impact on the Rooksmoor SAC.
- E.61 The historic core of the town and nearby heritage assets are specifically mentioned within the policy and this will help to preserve the town's character. The limited greenfield expansion of the town will result in limited landscape impact due to the careful selection of these sites and the need for landscape features to be incorporated into the developments. The continued regeneration of the town centre will help to further improve the attractiveness of the town, enhancing it as a local service centre.

Policy 20 – The Countryside

The draft Core Strategy 2010

- E.62 Draft Core Policy 20 was based on national policy at the time. This stated that ‘new building development in the open countryside away from existing settlements, or outside areas allocated for development in development plans, should be strictly controlled’. National policy also recognised that certain types of development were required to meet the economic and social needs of small rural communities. The countryside was defined as all land outside of the RSS Development Policy B and C settlements listed in draft Core Policy 3 Core Spatial Strategy.
- E.63 The strategy for the countryside sought to adopt an overall policy of restraint, whilst also enabling essential rural needs to be met by:
- identifying, as far as possible, those types of development that may be appropriate in the countryside such as replacement dwellings, tourist facilities and accommodation, the re-use of existing rural buildings, small-scale redevelopment or expansion of existing employment sites, equine related developments, rural exception affordable housing schemes and sites for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople;
 - establishing a test of ‘overriding need’ which any other form of development would need to meet in order to be acceptable in principle in the countryside; and
 - developing more detailed policies to ensure that certain types of development were carefully managed.
- E.64 The Initial Sustainability Appraisal did not make any assessment of options regarding the countryside as it was considered that there were no realistic alternatives that merited consideration. The countryside was considered to be an area of restraint where only limited development that necessitated a rural location, would be permitted in order to support the overall spatial approach to development.
- E.65 The approach to development in the countryside formed part of a wider strategic approach to the spatial distribution of development. An aspect of countryside policy (the size of settlement that should be ‘washed over’ by the countryside designation) was assessed as part of the assessment of draft Core Policy 3 Core Spatial Strategy where consideration was given to the size of settlement which would be suitable for limited growth.

- E.66 From the Initial Sustainability Appraisal it was concluded that settlements with a population of less than 400 inhabitants had few everyday services and that to support these services additional population growth would need to be significant. It was considered that growth in these smaller settlements would harm the character of the area and would have a detrimental effect on the services in neighbouring villages. For these reasons settlements with fewer than 400 inhabitants were not identified as RSS Development Policy C Settlements and were designated as part of the countryside.
- E.67 The countryside policy as a whole was assessed and the mechanisms for meeting local needs were considered. It concluded that the more detailed rural exception policy and policies that allowed certain types of development, would meet the overall housing and economic needs of those communities in the countryside, but at the same time it suggested that by focusing development on the larger settlements the policy could disadvantage those who already live in the countryside.

Explanation of Changes

- E.68 The Government now requires planning policies to take a positive approach to sustainable new development to support economic growth in rural areas and suggests that new dwellings should be located where they will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.
- E.69 National policy also gives local people a powerful set of tools through Community Rights to secure development for their community. The ambition of the neighbourhood should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area and neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the Local Plan.
- E.70 These changes to national policy alongside changes in the spatial approach, including the settlement hierarchy, housing provision figures and methods of delivery, have all enabled a more flexible approach to growth to be adopted in the countryside. This was something that was also identified in the 2010 consultation where it concluded that greater choice should be given to local communities.
- E.71 In draft Policy 3 Core Spatial Strategy produced in 2010, Stalbridge and the larger villages were identified as RSS Development Policy C Settlements. The new approach in Policy 2 The Core Spatial Strategy is that these settlements now form part of the Countryside and are therefore covered by the countryside policy.
- E.72 This new approach has implications for the delivery of community facilities. Where the draft Core Policy for Social Infrastructure permitted small community halls and facilities in these locations, Stalbridge and the larger villages are now covered by countryside

policy where these types of development would not have been permitted. To address this, the countryside policy has been widened to enable essential community facilities to be developed but suggests that these are best located within or adjoining the built-up areas of Stalbridge and the villages.

- E.73 Through rural exception policies and neighbourhood planning the revised policy seeks to focus on meeting local needs rather than focussing on delivery of a proportion of strategic growth. This broad approach was subject to consultation in 2012 where the majority of those responding agreed that:
- no overall housing provision figure should be set for the countryside;
 - future development needs of Stalbridge and the villages in the countryside should be met primarily through neighbourhood planning;
 - the countryside policy (i.e. a policy of restraint) should be applied to Stalbridge and all villages prior to, or in the absence of the production of a neighbourhood plan; and
 - the types of development permitted in the countryside should be widened to include essential community facilities, but these were best located within or adjoining Stalbridge and the villages.
- E.74 The more ‘light touch’ strategic policy framework for the countryside gives greater local choice to communities in deciding how to meet their future development needs. However, some parishes raised concern that in rural areas local communities recognised they had development needs but either did not have the resources to take forward neighbourhood plans or expect they may encounter difficulties in getting a neighbourhood plan adopted. The Council response in such circumstances is that a local community has the opportunity to ‘opt in’ to the Local Plan Part 2 where the Council would work closely with local people to develop proposals that enabled their needs to be met.

The Local Plan Part 1 2013

- E.75 The revised Countryside Policy acknowledges the abolition of regional planning, the introduction of neighbourhood planning and takes into consideration the concerns of local communities. The policy:
- identifies, as far as possible, those types of development that may be appropriate in the countryside. This now includes essential community facilities and where necessary, develops more detailed policies to ensure that certain types of development are carefully managed; and

- establishes a test of ‘overriding need’ which any other form of development would need to meet in order to be acceptable in principle in the countryside.

E.76 The approach will enable Stalbridge and the villages to focus on meeting local, rather than strategic needs, primarily through neighbourhood planning and gives local communities in the countryside the choice to ‘opt in’ to the Local Plan Part 2 where the Council would take the lead, as an alternative to meeting local needs through neighbourhood planning.

Policy 20 The Countryside			Assessment
SA 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	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	?

Policy 20 The Countryside			
SA Objectives			Assessment
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	0

Assessment Conclusions

- E.77 The emphasis of policy in the countryside remains on restraint, although development is permitted where an overriding need for a countryside location can be demonstrated. A number of changes have also been made to the suite of more detailed policies that guide development in the countryside to help support the rural economy and meet essential rural needs. The main change is that a greater area of the District is now subject to countryside policy, but to enable local needs to be met a revised policy approach has increased the range of development types permitted. In addition local communities have been given greater choice and flexibility through the neighbourhood planning process.
- E.78 In terms of housing, employment and community facilities local communities have a choice of meeting need through rural exception policies or a neighbourhood plan. Neighbourhood plans can also propose design guidelines and identify local green spaces and so protect or enhance the natural and built environment. Neighbourhood plans can also promote energy and resource efficiency above the standards set in the Local Plan if there is evidence to support such an approach. This greater flexibility to provide detail and guidance through the neighbourhood planning process ensures that those communities wanting to take an active role in shaping the place in which they live or work, can do so.
- E.79 In addition to Local Plan policies and neighbourhood planning the Government have also made, and propose to make, further changes to national permitted development and use classes orders that increases the options in the countryside.

Policy 21 – Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation

The draft Core Strategy 2010

- E.80 There was no Strategic Site Allocation policy in the draft Core Strategy. Draft Core Policy 16 Gillingham set out the strategy for growth at Gillingham and outlined the important role the town plays in leading provision for District wide growth and serving the communities to the north of the District. The key spatial aspects of the strategy, which impact on the provision of an extension to the town, included:
- a southern extension to accommodate a strategic level of growth creating a mixed-use development;
 - retaining, enhancing and extending the river corridors by increasing accessibility to increase non-vehicular linked trips.
- E.81 From the Initial Sustainability Appraisal it was concluded that:
- Locating the major greenfield expansion to the south and south east of the town would offer benefits due to its proximity to the town centre, the main employment sites in the town and the railway station. The development would also offer the opportunity to ease traffic congestion at the bridge where the B3081 crosses the railway line through the provision of a southern link road;
 - A package of measures is likely to help reduce the impact of the growth at Gillingham, although it is important that other measures such as cycling and walking links within and into the town are provided. In addition, the impacts on heritage, biodiversity and landscape need to be taken into account when looking at the environmental impacts of the proposed road improvements.
- E.82 Directly related to the SSA, key options explored were:
- locate the major greenfield expansion to the south and south east (The Southern Extension);
 - locate the major greenfield expansion to the north west; and
 - locate the major greenfield expansion both to the south and south east, and to the north west.
- E.83 The option of developing land to the north-west of the town was considered as part of the examination of potential growth for the town in the Atkins study. The examination concludes the site to the south of the town is more sustainable. The Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report for the Core Strategy concludes that development to the north and west of Gillingham would be likely to increase pressure on key transport infrastructure. Whereas, development to the south and east of the town would be more easily mitigated with greater opportunity for non-vehicular links.

E.84 The option of developing land to the north east of Gillingham was assessed in the Atkins Report and because of its poor performance, it was rejected prior to 'refined scenarios' being developed. On the basis of this analysis, this option was not assessed in the Initial SA Report. It was subsequently considered that an assessment of the site should be included in the addendum to the Initial SA Report to ensure that any final decision on the location of growth at Gillingham has been made on the basis of a consistent approach to the appraisal of the options. The site has now been assessed in the addendum to the Initial SA Report and the analysis clearly shows that it does not offer as favourable a location for development as the other Gillingham localities already assessed and in particular the Southern Extension option.

Options considered

E.85 Stage 1 consultation on Key Issues of the Local Plan in 2012 sought views of the local community on key features which set the framework for the development of the southern extension as a whole. Options considered and consulted on as part of this were based on the major landscape, ecological and transport related constraints and ways the development could be accommodated within them.

E.86 Key options explored for the SSA in the Key Issues consultation were:

- SSA(a) The route of the principal street and whether it should follow:
 1. a northern route – most direct route but would require a substantial crossing across the flood plain;
 2. a southern route A – avoiding the flood zone and routed to the north of the high ground within the site;
 3. a southern route B – avoiding the flood plain, bringing the access from Shaftesbury Road further south and routed to the south of the high ground within the site; and,
 4. Cole Street Lane – along the existing route including an upgrade of the route;
- SSA(b) Whether the green infrastructure (including sports pitch provision) should be dispersed across the site allowing greater access to smaller elements, or clustered allowing better access to higher quality areas of recreational facilities;
- SSA(c) Whether to optimise access (including vehicular) across the site and with the existing town, or to limit access;
- SSA(d) Whether to locate the local centre centrally within land south of Ham, or on the Shaftesbury Road corridor close to Orchard Park;
- SSA(e) Whether to combine expanding the existing primary school with a new primary school at Orchard Park (Shaftesbury Road corridor) or a new primary school south of Ham, or additional expansion of Milton on Stour primary school; and

- SSA(f) Whether to seek employment growth at solely Brickfields Business Park or to combine this with employment growth at Orchard Park (Kingsmead Business Park).

Options SSA(a) – Principal Street

- E.87 Evidence gathered to support the development of the Southern Extension site has indicated that several highway improvements are required. Many of these relate to improvements to existing junctions. There is also the need to provide a road link through the site to relieve pressure on the junctions adjacent to the railway bridge and to provide for a through bus route.
- E.88 The four options considered for the route of the principal street were subject to SA and subject to consultation. The result of the appraisal of the options for the principal street identified several issues. Option SSA(a)1 would result in the crossing of the flood plain of the River Lodden which would require a large and long bridge. This would have a landscape and biodiversity impact and would sever the river corridor open space network. It would also have a significant cost which would reduce the available funds for other infrastructure provision. It is therefore not the preferred approach.
- E.89 Option SSA(a)4 was considered to have a significant impact on the landscape and built heritage of the area. Cole Street Lane is a good example of a country lane typical of the Blackmore Vale and hence utilising and upgrading this route would harm the character of the area. This option is therefore also not favoured.
- E.90 Option SSA(a)2 and Option SSA(a)3 were assessed to have a similar impact in terms of sustainability although it was thought that bringing the principal street closer to the existing St Mary the Virgin Primary School would result in more opportunities to encourage sustainable travel choices. Whichever of the two routes is preferred for the eastern end of the principal street, it should avoid Cole Street Lane along its entirety.

Gillingham Southern Extension			Principal Street			
SA Objectives			Option SSA(a)1 Northern alignment	Option SSA(a)2 Southern alignment A	Option SSA(a)3 Southern alignment B	Option SSA(a)4 Cole Street Lane upgrade
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing that is affordable and that meets the needs of the community	-	0	0	-
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	+	+	+	0
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	0	0	0	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 developments	0	+	+	-
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	--	0	0	0
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes	-	0	0	--
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond the aesthetic value	-	0	0	-

Gillingham Southern Extension			Principal Street			
SA Objectives			Option SSA(a)1 Northern alignment	Option SSA(a)2 Southern alignment A	Option SSA(a)3 Southern alignment B	Option SSA(a)4 Cole Street Lane upgrade
Prudent use of natural resources	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	-	0	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	0	0	0	0
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	0	0	0	0
Maintenance of sustainable levels of economic growth and employment	13	Improve the economic competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	+	0	0	0
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	+	+	0	-
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and rural areas creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	0	0	0	0
	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	0	0

Options SSA(b) – Green Infrastructure

- E.91 Green Infrastructure, as defined in Policy 15, includes informal open space, such as areas for dog walking and formal open space, such as playing pitches and children’s play areas. Informal open space will primarily be provided along the river corridors with children’s play areas being provided throughout the site. However formal open space such as allotments and sports pitches could either be provided in clusters or dispersed across the site. These two options for formal open space provision were subject to SA and also to consultation.
- E.92 Several issues were identified as part of the SA and these were highlighted as part of the consultation on the options. The appraisal highlighted that although benefits can be achieved through the clustering of formal open space provision, there are also negative elements. For example when sports pitches are clustered together, economies of scale enable more effective provision of the associated facilities such as changing rooms and for ease of management of the site.
- E.93 However, clustering of pitches does not provide equal accessibility for all who live within the site. The accessibility issue is particularly relevant for allotments where regular visits are needed for watering and maintenance by allotment holders. Clearly there is a balance to be struck between efficiencies in provision and management of supporting facilities achieved through clustering and accessibility across the site.
- E.94 The overall appraisal conclusions suggested that clustering offered the best approach however it will be essential to ensure that these clusters were of a manageable size and delivered in the most accessible locations.

Gillingham Southern Extension			Green Infrastructure	
SA Objectives			Option SSA(b)1 Green Infrastructure dispersal	Option SSA(b)2 Green infrastructure cluster
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing that is affordable and that meets the needs of the community	0	0
	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 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 townscapes	+	+
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond the aesthetic value	0	0

Gillingham Southern Extension			Green Infrastructure	
SA Objectives			Option SSA(b)1 Green Infrastructure dispersal	Option SSA(b)2 Green infrastructure cluster
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	0	0
Maintenance of sustainable levels of economic growth and employment	13	Improve the economic competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	0	0
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	+	+
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and rural areas creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	0	0
	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	0

Options SSA(c) – Access

- E.95 There are a number of points where access to the site could be gained from the existing built up area of Gillingham. Access could be in the form of pedestrian and cycle routes through to vehicular routes. The options considered were whether access routes should be maximised or restricted.
- E.96 Maximising connectivity between the existing town and the Southern Extension will offer benefits in terms of building strong communities and in enabling sustainable travel modes, alternative to the car. However it is essential that the connections between different areas respect their character do not have an adverse effect on the amenity of existing residents. This is particularly important in relation to vehicular access through existing residential areas. When vehicular access is required, the number of homes served off of existing estate roads should be minimised to minimise the impact on established residential areas.

Gillingham Southern Extension			Access	
SA Objectives			Option SSA(c)1 Optimise access	Option SSA(c)2 Limit access
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing that is affordable and 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 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	+	0
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes	?	?
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond the aesthetic value	+	0

Gillingham Southern Extension			Access	
SA Objectives			Option SSA(c)1 Optimise access	Option SSA(c)2 Limit access
Prudent use of natural resources	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	+	0
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	+	0
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	0	0
Maintenance of sustainable levels of economic growth and employment	13	Improve the economic 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 rural areas creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	+	0
	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	0

Options SSA(d) – Local centre

- E.97 The size of the Southern Extension necessitates the provision of a local centre within the site. The Local centre would be small scale with limited retail activity and community facilities. Two options were considered for the location of this local centre, one at Orchard Park (the Shaftesbury Road corridor and referred to Kingsmead Business Park in the Local Plan Part 1) and the other more centrally within the site. These options were subject to appraisal and consultation.
- E.98 The central location for a local centre would be more accessible purely in terms of distance to the whole of the Southern Extension site however the barrier created by Shaftesbury Road would make it difficult for the future residents of the eastern part of the site to access a centre in this location. Positioning the centre at the Shaftesbury Road improves accessibility for the whole site but also improves accessibility to essential facilities for the existing town.
- E.99 The current approach to the town along the Shaftesbury Road corridor is not of high quality. Positioning the local centre along this corridor does offer the opportunity to improve the entrance to the town and offers the opportunity to improve pedestrian and cycle links in the area. A high quality design and road layout in this area would offer significant improvements in terms of the built environment.
- E.100 There is already commercial activity at the Shaftesbury Road corridor and creating a local centre around this activity would enhance the viability of the local centre uses. In addition, being located on a main route into the town offers the opportunity to attract passing trade, further enhancing its viability.
- E.101 There is the potential for a negative impact on the existing town centre resulting from the development of a local centre within the Southern Extension site. For this to be minimised, the local centre must be kept to small scale uses only to serve the immediate area. In addition, the local centre should be made as accessible as possible by pedestrian and cycle routes to encourage sustainable modes of travel.

Gillingham Southern Extension			Local centre	
SA Objectives			Option SSA(d)1 Location 1 - Orchard Park	Option SSA(d)2 Location 2 - Centrally
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing that is affordable and that meets the needs of the community	+	0
	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	+	0
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed developments	0	0
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	0
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	0	0
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes	++	0
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond the aesthetic value	0	0

Gillingham Southern Extension			Local centre	
SA Objectives			Option SSA(d)1 Location 1 - Orchard Park	Option SSA(d)2 Location 2 - Centrally
Prudent use of natural resources	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	+	0
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	+	0
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	0	0
Maintenance of sustainable levels of economic growth and employment	13	Improve the economic competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	+	0
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	+	+
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and rural areas creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	+	0
	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	0

Options SSA(e) – Primary School

- E.102 Additional primary school provision will need to be delivered to serve the Southern Extension. Three options were considered for meeting this need all of which included the expansion of the existing St Mary the Virgin school on the northern boundary of the site and further expansion at an additional location. These additional locations were to provide a new school at Orchard Park; more centrally within the site close to St Mary the Virgin; or to expand Milton-on Stour school on the northern side of the town.
- E.103 The expansion of the existing St Mary the Virgin school would provide a reasonably sized school, in close proximity to the site and hence would serve the site well. Milton-on-Stour school is remote from the Southern Extension and hence would create difficulties for travelling to school. This does not help to improve access to schools and would be likely to encourage travel to school by car. This would cause traffic problems through the town. It is therefore concluded that provision of a new school within the site would offer greater benefits than the expansion of the Milton-on-Stour school, encouraging walking and cycling to access the facility.
- E.104 Provision of a new school centrally within the site would make it more accessible in terms of distance to the majority of the new residents however due to the “barrier” of the busy Shaftesbury Road; accessibility to residents on the eastern side of this road would be difficult.
- E.105 The provision of a new school on the eastern side of Shaftesbury Road at Orchard Park, removes the necessity for pupils from the eastern part of the site to cross Shaftesbury Road. In addition, the school could be located near to the proposed Local Centre which would provide further footfall to the area, increasing its viability.

Gillingham Southern Extension			Primary School		
SA Objectives			Option SSA(e)1 St Mary the Virgin + Location A - Orchard Park	Option SSA(e)2 St Mary the Virgin + Location B - Centrally	Option SSA(e)3 St Mary the Virgin + expand Milton-on-Stour
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing that is affordable and that meets the needs of the community	0	0	0
	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 developments	+	0	0
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	0
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	0	0	0
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes	0	0	0
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond the aesthetic value	0	0	0

Gillingham Southern Extension			Primary School		
SA Objectives			Option SSA(e)1 St Mary the Virgin + Location A - Orchard Park	Option SSA(e)2 St Mary the Virgin + Location B - Centrally	Option SSA(e)3 St Mary the Virgin + expand Milton-on-Stour
Prudent use of natural resources	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	0	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	0	0	0
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	0	0	0
Maintenance of sustainable levels of economic growth and employment	13	Improve the economic competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	0	0	0
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	++	+	--
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and rural areas creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	0	0	0
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	+	+	+

Options SSA(f) – Employment Growth

- E.106 To ensure that the Southern Extension to Gillingham is sustainable, the social and green infrastructure outlined above along with the relevant grey infrastructure will need to be delivered alongside the housing. In addition to this, there will be a need to provide further employment growth within the town to ensure the town is as self-contained as possible. Two options were considered for employment growth, these were to expand Brickfields Business Park and continue with the employment allocation at Orchard Park or to expand Brickfields Business Park only. Employment growth includes the B class uses of:
- B1 Business - offices, research and development of products and processes, light industry appropriate in a residential area;
 - B2 General industrial - use for industrial process other than one falling within class B1; and
 - B8 Storage or distribution - including open air storage.
- E.107 Brickfields Business Park is the largest business park within the town and its expansion is allocated within the adopted 2003 Local Plan. It has the potential to accommodate a significant additional level of employment growth to serve the town. As a result of the Southern Extension, there is the opportunity to create a new access to the site off of the B3092.
- E.108 Offering options for employment growth is likely to offer the most benefits for the town, creating the maximum level of employment within the town. This will help to reduce commuting and help to create self-containment, reinforcing the town's role as the main centre in the north of the District. It will however be essential that these two employment areas are readily accessible by a range of transport options including cycling, walking and public transport.
- E.109 The Orchard Park area currently has employment uses associated with it. With the Local Centre and primary school being preferred at this location, there is the potential for a conflict between uses. It is therefore essential that any employment uses at Orchard Park are compatible with the neighbouring uses and it may be worth including a restriction to B1 Business uses only.
- E.110 In addition to the potential for conflict between neighbouring uses at Orchard Park, there is a need to ensure that any development in this location creates a pleasant entrance to the town. As employment sites often contain large, faceless buildings it will be important that any employment growth at Orchard Park is sensitively designed to improve the entrance to the town.

Gillingham Southern Extension			Employment Growth	
SA Objectives			Option SSA(f)1 Option A - Orchard Park + Brickfields	Option SSA(f)2 Option B - Brickfields only
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing that is affordable and that meets the needs of the community	0	0
	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	+	0
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed developments	+	0
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	0
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	0	0
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes	?	0
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond the aesthetic value	0	0

Gillingham Southern Extension			Employment Growth	
SA Objectives			Option SSA(f)1 Option A - Orchard Park + Brickfields	Option SSA(f)2 Option B - Brickfields only
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	0	0
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	0	0
Maintenance of sustainable levels of economic growth and employment	13	Improve the economic 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 rural areas 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	++	+

Results of consultation on the options

- E.111 The results of Stage 1 consultation were general support for locating the principal street following southern route B (option 2); clustering green infrastructure; optimise access; locating the local centre on the Shaftesbury Road corridor; expansion of existing primary school plus a new primary school at Orchard Park (Shaftesbury Road corridor); and seeking employment growth at both Brickfields and Orchard Park.
- E.112 These results were taken forward to Stage 2 consultation Gillingham Southern Extension Concept Plan Workshop in March 2013, where local stakeholders including community groups, infrastructure providers developers and Council officers carried out a site visit and followed this up with discussion around the key issues of the site and a mapping exercise drawing up concept plans to illustrate the ideas that emerged from the workshop. The outcome of the workshop was the production of a concept statement, a composite concept plan, and a set of design principles, which together form the conceptual framework as taken forward in the Local Plan Part 1.

Results of options appraisal

- E.113 The results of the options appraised for the Gillingham Southern Extension were broadly the same as the results of the consultation on these options. Several recommendations have come out of the appraisal of the options which may have a bearing on the final policy for the Southern Extension.

SA Recommendations:

Option SSA(a) – Principal street

- The principal street should avoid Cole Street Lane in its entirety to help preserve the character of the Blackmore Vale
- The principal street should avoid areas liable to flood to increase resilience to climate change

Option SSA(b) – Green infrastructure

- Green infrastructure should be provided in accessible locations with the provision of safe and convenient walking and cycle routes

Option SSA(c) – Access

- Access along existing estate roads will need to be carefully designed to minimise impact on the amenity of existing residents. Such routes should serve the smallest number of new dwellings whilst ensuring a sensible layout results

SA Recommendations:

Option SSA(d) – Local centre

- The Local Centre needs to be made as accessible as possible via sustainable transport choices including the provision of bus, cycle and pedestrian routes. In addition, the local centre needs to be carefully designed to improve the entrance to the town
- The Local Centre should include small scale units to ensure that it does not have a negative impact on the existing town centre

Option SSA(e) – Primary school

- The primary school should be made as accessible as possible to encourage walking and cycling to school.

Option SSA (f) – Employment growth

- Employment growth should be maximised within the boundaries of the existing employment sites (Brickfields Business Park and Orchard Park). Uses in close proximity to residential or other uses should not have a negative impact on user's amenity and hence at Orchard Park, uses should be restricted to B1 Business.
- The design of employment units along the B3081 (Shaftesbury Road) and the B3092 should be of high quality design to improve the entrances to the town.

The Local Plan Part 1 2013

E.114 The inclusion of the Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation (SSA) in Policy 21 provides greater detail on the southern extension, in the context of national policy and housing and employment evidence updates. The SSA plans for about 1,800 homes in total, of which about 1,240 will be delivered during the plan period up to the year 2026, and include 35% affordable housing. Updated evidence for the economy has identified sufficient remaining employment land identified to meet the needs of the town, including Brickfields Business Park within the SSA. Undeveloped employment land within the Shaftesbury Road Corridor inside the SSA is the preferred location for the local centre for the SSA, bringing both services and a diversification of jobs to the area.

E.115 Policy 21 also includes the requirements for:

- Climate change – incorporating energy efficiency and renewable energy measures on site to meet the requirements of the Government's Zero Carbon Buildings Policy and off-site allowable solutions, considering opportunities for a district heating scheme, and measures to address the risks of fluvial and surface water flooding and incorporating SuDS;

- Environment – measures for landscape integration of the southern extension, conservation and enhancement of wildlife interests, and retention and enhancement of significant archaeological features and their settings;
- Meeting housing needs – including spatially phased development commencing adjacent to existing built up areas, a mix reflecting the Policy 7 Delivering Homes, and 50 affordable extra care units;
- Supporting economic development – including high quality design around key gateways;
- Grey infrastructure – a principal street linking B3092 and B3081 which will be designed as a bus route, a permeable and legible network of well-defined streets and spaces and off-road footpaths and cycleways within the southern extension, well designed gateways to the town and accesses at key points, primarily pedestrian and cycle links to the existing town, Cole Street Lane becoming a ‘green route’, off-site highway improvements to increase capacity, measures to support modal shift and enhance the railway station, contributions towards a link road between the B3081 and the A30 at Enmore Green, and upgrading of utilities, telecommunications and sewer networks;
- Social infrastructure – provision of a local centre to include local convenience retail, 2 FE primary school, pre-school nursery, and community hall and health facilities. The expansion of St Mary The Virgin Primary School and Gillingham High School, and improvements to or expansion of Riversmeet, Gillingham Town Library, and Gillingham Fire Station;
- Green infrastructure – at least 8.5ha of formal public open space including at least 7ha of sports pitches grouped in two clusters around the B3081, and children’s play spaces, allotments and community orchards. At least 26ha of informal open space primarily along the river corridors providing a landscape setting, enhanced habitats for wildlife and off-road pedestrian and cycle links. Retention of important trees and hedgerows, publically accessible greenways, SuDS, and strategic landscape planting.

E.116 Through the production of the neighbourhood plan, local residents may wish to explore and investigate linkages and connectivity above and beyond those identified in both Policy 17 for Gillingham town and Policy 21 Gillingham SSA, and the development brief for the regeneration of the town centre. This information could feed into the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

Policy 21 Gillingham Southern Extension			Assessment
SA 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 townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	+
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	+

Policy 21 Gillingham Southern Extension			Assessment
SA Objectives			
Prudent use of natural resources	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	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	+

Assessment Conclusions

- E.117 Overall the appraisal of the Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation policy has produced similar conclusions to the results from the Key Issues consultation carried out in 2012. The preferred options that came out of this consultation have also performed best when assessed against the SA objectives.
- E.118 In relation to the principal street, the policy seeks to protect Cole Street Lane along its entirety, closing it off to through traffic with it being utilised as a “green route” for limited access to existing buildings, for pedestrians and cyclists thereby retaining its rural character. In addition, avoiding areas at risk from flooding not only reduces its cost but also helps to reduce the impact of the Southern Extension on the local biodiversity but makes the development more climate change resilient. In addition, optimising access to the site, utilising as many points of access as feasible will help to integrate the Southern Extension into the town.
- E.119 The policy seeks to ensure clustering of green infrastructure to provide high quality sports facilities in accessible locations. This will help to improve opportunities for recreation and offer the most cost effective management opportunities, making the facilities more sustainable in the long run. The provision of open space along the river corridors which run through the site, helps to protect and enhance the biodiversity in the area, offers opportunities for informal recreation and helps to integrate the development into the landscape.
- E.120 The preferred approach for the Local Centre in the policy is the Shaftesbury Road corridor. This offers the opportunity to create a “centre” which not only supports the existing commercial activity but also builds upon it. This should help to increase its viability and offer opportunities to improve the entrance to the town through good design. In addition, locating a new primary school at this location will also help to secure the centre’s long term viability, creating a community hub in the area.
- E.121 Overall the policy has been assessed as having a clear positive impact on the SA objectives due to the level of detail included within it and the mitigation measures established. It is however essential that all the different elements of the Southern extension are linked together and linked to the existing town through a high quality network of foot and cycle routes. This will help to integrate the town with the Southern Extension.



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