

Decision Statement

On behalf of West Dorset District Council, September 2014

West Dorset District Council is satisfied that the Cerne Valley Neighbourhood Plan as modified meets the basic conditions, is compatible with the Convention rights, and complies with the definition of a neighbourhood development plan.
A referendum will therefore be held on 11 December 2014.

Background

In December 2013 the Cerne Valley Group Parish Council submitted its neighbourhood plan and supporting evidence to West Dorset District Council. The parish council were notified of the district council's decision to proceed to examination. The submitted documents were made available for consultation from 10 January to 7 March 2014, and an independent examiner was appointed. A public hearing was held in relation to the Cerne Valley plan on 11 July 2014. The examiner's report was received on 15 August 2014.

In summary, the examiner's report concluded the following

- The Cerne Valley Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements and processes set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and the subsequent Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
- The Neighbourhood Development Plan does not deal with County matters (mineral extraction and waste development), nationally significant infrastructure such as highways and railways or other matters set out in Section 61K of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- The Cerne Valley Neighbourhood Development Plan does not relate to more than one Neighbourhood Area and there are no other Neighbourhood Development Plans in place within the Neighbourhood Area.
- The Sustainability Appraisal, which also covers the Strategic Environmental Assessment requirement, and the amended Habitats Regulations Assessment screening, I find to meet the EU Obligation.
- The policies and plans in the Cerne Valley Neighbourhood Plan would contribute to achieving sustainable development. They have regard to national policy and to guidance, and generally conform to the strategic policies of the West Dorset Adopted Local Plan 2006, the Development Plan.
- That the Cerne Valley Neighbourhood Plan, with recommended modifications, can proceed to a Referendum.

The district council considered the examiner’s report at the Executive Committee meeting on 9 September 2014. The council agreed that the examiner’s recommendations should be accepted and that the amended Neighbourhood Plan (as amended) should proceed to a referendum, as outlined below.

Recommendation	Consideration	Proposed actions
The Cerne Valley Neighbourhood Plan, with recommended modifications, can proceed to a Referendum, and that the Referendum Area should be the same as the Plan Area.	Recommendation welcomed.	Referendum to be organised by the Returning Officer of the District Council.
That Policy 2 is modified as follows: All applications for new development should demonstrate high quality of design, use of materials and detail, which reflect local distinctiveness; also having regard to prevailing scale, massing and density and the development principles as set out on page 10 of the Cerne Valley Neighbourhood Plan.	Recommendation welcomed as clarification to the plan, and the status of the “development principles”.	Modification agreed.
That Policy 3 is modified as follows: The Defined Development Boundary for Cerne Abbas will be retained and extended in its North and West corners as indicated in the map in Appendix 4.	Recommendation welcomed as clarification to the plan.	Modification agreed.
That Policy 4 is modified as follows: Defined Development Boundary for Godmanstone will be adopted and used in relation to future planning applications. The village should have incremental growth in character with its history and therefore proposals for new development will be need to demonstrate that they reflect the character and density of the existing settlement as a whole.	Recommendation welcomed as reflecting the ideals contained in the submitted neighbourhood plan but providing a more justifiable approach to assessing new applications.	Modification agreed.
That Policy 5 is modified as follows: Planning applications for quality conversions of historic farm buildings, including barns, in rural areas should be favourably considered for residential and/or business uses, providing that the proposals are consistent with protecting the character and landscape quality of the Dorset Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty.	Recommendation welcomed as clarification to the plan.	Modification agreed.
That in the light of the position of the emerging West Dorset Local Plan that it may be that, as a result of the local plan examination that the policies within the plan may need to be reviewed.	Agreed that this would be necessary if, for example, more definite targets are required for Neighbourhood Plans.	Noted – officers to confirm to the parish council. whether this would be the case on receiving the report on the Local Plan examination.

Where to find more information...

Copies of this decision statement and the examiner's report can be viewed online at <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/neighbourhoodplanning/west/weymouth> and <http://www.cernevalley.org/>

and in the district council offices at South Walks House, South Walks Road, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1UZ during standard opening hours (8.30am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am to 4.30pm Friday).

A copy of this statement is automatically sent to the parish council who submitted the plan and anyone who has asked to be notified of this decision.