

DT11 FORUM  
Community Partnership

# Shaping the Future

## Community Strategic Plan

Consultation document

2008

## Our Vision for the DT11 area

**“To create a thriving, vibrant and environmentally sustainable future for the town and villages of the DT11 Forum area set in accessible and well managed countryside.”**

## Letter from the Chairman

## Introduction and Background

In the year 2000 the Government passed legislation that required local authorities to prepare Community Plans as part of their overall Local Development Frameworks as set out in the revision of the planning system.

In North Dorset the District Council decided to make “Community Planning” mean exactly what it says - a plan prepared by the local community, addressing its local needs and priorities, rather than a district wide approach. It was agreed that the community plans should be based on the market towns and the parishes that surround them and for whom the towns are a focus for local services.

*“The District Council has a duty to work with its communities and with other agencies providing and planning local services to produce a community strategy which sets out a plan of action for improving the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area. Community planning should engage and involve local people and improve the co-ordination of the services they receive. North Dorset District Council has a profound commitment to a bottom up approach to community planning and a longstanding enthusiasm for partnerships as a way of delivering local priorities. Consequently, the Council has welcomed community planning as a way of working”.*

*North Dorset District Council Corporate Plan”. (2004 -2008)*

The Community Strategic Plan for the DT11 area has developed over a period of years. Initially through the preparation of an Action Plan based on consultation with local communities and groups and the many Parish Plans already developed in the DT11 area. More recently the DT11 Forum Community Partnership was awarded Market and Coastal Towns status. Unlike earlier MCTI towns the funding and timescale for the preparation was limited but as much consultation had already been undertaken it was seen that the DT11 Forum were in a good position to be able to complete a more Strategic Action Plan based on the work already completed.

## Market and Coastal Towns initiative

The DT11 Community Strategic Plan has been prepared with the support of the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative and using the process recommended by the Countryside Agency (now Natural England). The term 'market town' refers to towns in rural England that have traditionally hosted an agricultural market. In more recent years this description has been extended to include seaside resorts, fishing ports, mining and farming communities.

These towns have an important role to play in meeting many of the needs of local people including providing access to a wide range of employment, retail, leisure, professional and public services. In addition, the Government has been particularly concerned to maintain and enhance the role that market and coastal towns play in keeping the countryside alive by providing employment, shopping and other services for their surrounding areas.

Part of the Government's strategy involves local communities working with local authorities, local businesses and development agencies to consolidate and expand the role that market and coastal towns play in the socio-economic fabric of the countryside, to prepare plans to secure the future of their towns and the surrounding parishes and to build up the capacity and skills necessary to make these plans a reality.

To implement the Government's strategy, the South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) created a partnership of regional agencies, called the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative (MCTi) comprising:

- South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA)
- Countryside Agency (now Natural England)
- English Heritage
- Government Office South West
- South West Regional Assembly
- Housing Corporation
- Lottery Funds South West
- South West Area Network of Rural Community Councils

This partnership has broadened into an MCT Association of regional agencies, with

representation from MCTi towns and sub-regional MCTi fora. The MCTA was disbanded at the end of June 2008 and the last towns involved are currently finalising their Action Plans

Although the long-term vision for the DT11 Forum area will be consistent over the next twenty years, the Action Plan will be reviewed and updated regularly, as new ideas and opportunities arise. Fundamentally, it will be vital to ensure that local community support for the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) remains strong and enthusiastic.

The MCTI process in the DT11 area has involved consolidating and updating the earlier consultations, particularly focussing on the town of Blandford Forum. Consultations have been undertaken under 3 broad themes

- A Sustainable Economy
- Addressing Community Needs
- Meeting the Environmental Challenge

In addition to preparing the CSP, the MCTI process requires the establishment of a local structure or organisation, a 'community partnership', to deliver the plan in the future. This role will be undertaken by the DT11 Forum Community Partnership and its associated trading company, DT11 Forum Ltd.

In the longer term it may be that the DT11 Forum Community Partnership, with its trading company, may convert to take on Charitable status as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation once the relevant legislation is passed.

### **The DT11 Area Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is:**

A plan of actions agreed by the community to achieve positive benefits for everyone who lives, works, plays in or visits Blandford Forum and its surrounding parishes.

It is a "framework" for the future and tries to answer the all-important questions;

- What do we want the DT11 area be like in 20 years?
- What do we need to do to make that happen?

## The DT11 Forum Community Partnership (DT11 Forum)

In developing and managing the CSP the DT11 Forum Community Partnership does not 'own' the CSP or the Action Plan. The Plan is owned by the communities of the town and the surrounding villages. In the future, the role of DT11 Forum Partnership will be to safeguard the integrity of the Plan as a whole on behalf of the wider community, and ensure that local communities ongoing needs are identified and met. The DT11 Forum Community Partnership is not a statutory body and does not replicate or undertake the functions or duties of a local or district council. It can, however, complement or add value to the work of statutory bodies by working with them in partnership.

All DT11 Forum partners will be responsible for sharing information and networking with local groups, and preparing and managing the implementation programme and monitoring progress of the plan.

The DT11 Forum will act as the 'custodian' of the overall Plan, and will monitor the progress of the whole Action Plan, lobbying political support for projects and programmes at the highest relevant level.

## The DT11 Forum Plan area

The DT11 Forum area comprises the majority of the DT11 postcode area and was originally based on the local schools pyramid. The Blandford pyramid of schools has recently changed from a three to two-tier system with primary schools in both the town and the surrounding villages feeding into the Blandford School. A few villages in the west of the DT11 area such as Milborne St Andrew feed into the Dorchester pyramid, while other primary schools, such as the one at Shillingstone, feed into the Sturminster Newton pyramid. With the exception of the Royal School of Signals there are no tertiary education facilities.

DT11 Forum covers the market town of Blandford Forum and the surrounding 26 parishes and villages, and is set in the Dorset and Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONBs (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). Blandford Forum is a fine example of a

Georgian town and has a population of 10,000+ (including the parish of Blandford St. Mary).

Blandford Forum is the administrative centre and principal urban area in North Dorset. Between 1991 and 2001 the population grew at above county and national levels at a rate of 11%. This area is primarily serviced by the A350 and the A354. The former runs along the Stour river valley joining the northern and southern parishes and places the Bournemouth/Poole conurbation within 40 minutes of Blandford. The A354 links Dorchester to Salisbury through Blandford. There are no rail links in the area.

The 26 parishes/villages in the DT11 area are;

Blandford Forum	Pimperne
Blandford St Mary	Shillingstone
Bryanston	Spetisbury
Charlton Marshall	StourpaineTarrant Gunville
Chettle	Tarrant Hinton
Child Okeford	Turnworth
Durweston	Winterborne Clenston
Hanford	Winterborne Houghton
Hilton	Winterborne Whitechurch
Iwerne Courtney (Shroton) and Stepleton	Winterborne Stickland
Langton Long	Tarrant Monkton and Launceston
Lower Winterborne	South Tarrant Valley (Crawford, Keynston, Rushton, Rawston)
Milborne St Andrew	
Milton Abbas	



MAP

## The Role and Function of the Community Strategic Plan

The new strategic planning process for local government (the Local Development Framework) will incorporate the Community Plans from each of the Community Partnerships of North Dorset; and the county-wide Dorset Strategic Partnership, is able to provide some resources to help to implement the actions in Community and Parish Plans. The CSP is the community's chance to influence the future of the area at a strategic level and DT11 Forum, as the Community Partnership, will co-ordinate the aspirations and actions of the Action Plan. Most of the actions identified in the Action Plan, and the resulting projects and initiatives will be delivered by organisations other than the Partnership alone.

The CSP as a whole has three main parts:

1. The strategy for the plan; describing the themes, objectives and issues of the plan;
2. The Action Plan tables; listing the action points raised from the consultations. The actions in the table will guide the implementation of the Plan, helping to define priority projects and the overall work programme for the DT11 Forum Partnership
3. The appendices and support documents that are the evidence for the Action Plan as a whole. (These documents are held in the DT11 Forum Community office and not included in this document)

### Vision for the DT11 Forum area

**“To create a thriving, vibrant and environmentally sustainable future for the town and villages of the DT11 area set in accessible and well managed countryside.”**

This Vision will guide the decisions on projects and programmes of activity to be supported by the community partnership members. These programmes and projects are grouped under three broad “themes” .

**A Sustainable Economy**  
**Addressing Community Needs**  
**Meeting the Environmental Challenge**

**Reporting back and accountability!**

Over the lifetime of the Action Plan, it is likely that the issues included in each of the themes in the CSP will be influenced by external decision making and susceptible to changes in policy or directives, whether by European, central, regional or local government and any number of other statutory and regulatory bodies. Therefore, it is anticipated that within the Partnership working groups will be identified to oversee the delivery of the various projects or initiatives and to ensure that the DT11 Forum are able to maximise any opportunity that presents itself - and of course, minimise lost opportunities.

At the heart of this will be the DT11 forum’s commitment to accessible and fast track communications. The progress on delivering the Action Plan, and most particularly the projects of the DT11 Forum and its partners will be publicised widely. It is planned to launch [www.DT11Forum.org.uk](http://www.DT11Forum.org.uk) in September this year. The website will be fully interactive and enable ongoing dialogue between local people, groups and DT11 and its partners.

It will enable DT11 Forum to publish reports from all the working groups and project promoters. In addition it is planned to launch a regular community newspaper as a “sister” to the website.

# The Themes of the Community Action Plan

## A Sustainable Economy

Including: Business, Tourism, Transport, Agriculture, Waste Management, Training, Skills and Employment

### Our Objectives

- To re-establish Blandford Forum in its historic role as the economic hub of local area linked to parish and village based businesses and enterprises.
- To ensure that the economic interdependence of the town and villages is recognised and fully integrated into economic, development and infrastructural strategies and plans at all levels.
- To establish the DT11 area as a centre of excellence and exemplar of good practice for sustainable and 'green' business.
- To address the need to develop skills locally, particularly in information and communications technology, to provide a ready pool of labour, and attract new businesses to the area
- Ensure that a range of business accommodation is available for both incoming businesses and those already in the area wishing to expand.
- Identify the needs for on-going accessible training and skills development throughout the business sector, particularly for SME's.
- To develop opportunities for skills and training for young people throughout the DT11 area in association with schools, businesses and organisations working with young people.

This will require measures to give the town a margin over the attractions of Poole, Bournemouth and Salisbury and to at the very least reduce the negative impression it currently seems to have. A thriving economic presence making the best use of its Georgian heritage will widen its attractiveness beyond the immediate area.

Blandford Forum has a good mix of independent retailers including butchers, bakers and greengrocers, plus some High Street groups. It is the shops that make Blandford Forum a town but the pressures on independent retailers in particular are enormous. There are some major retailers (Tesco, Homebase) in an out-of-town development in Blandford St Mary.

Blandford Forum has been an important market town since the 13<sup>th</sup> century and is the centre of the DT11 post code area. It still has a market twice weekly but the economy is a diverse one with manufacturing (which includes Hall & Woodhouse) making up 17.4% of jobs, wholesale, retail and repair of motor vehicles another 17%, public administration and defence 10.6% (Blandford Camp) education 10% and construction 7.1%

73% of 16-74 year olds are economically active, the county average is 65%. Two thirds of these are in full time employment and half the inactive 27% are retired. These signs are encouraging for Blandford and the 26 parishes surrounding it.

However, if we are to maintain and grow a healthy economy, we need to outline plans to encourage and promote existing businesses and create an environment which will attract new businesses to the area. Blandford will be key to the economic sustainability of the area.

Tourism is a major aspect of the economy in North Dorset but is relatively under-developed in DT11 area. Marketing support for this is limited due to financial constraints. Marketing and raising the profile of the area will be vital to develop the potential of this sector of the local economy. In particular, creative and innovative schemes, encouraging "green" tourism should be developed, linking the high quality environment to the economy of the area, specifically to improve the visitor experience and tourism 'product'.

Over 80% of the economically active population is in part time or full time employment. This level of employment is above the 75% county level and underlines the critical role of the Royal School of Signals/Blandford Camp in the local economy. It is therefore worth noting that Blandford area has both the lowest level of self employed people, some 6% below county level, and the second highest level of unemployed people.

The largest sectors in the area are manufacturing (17%), wholesale & retail trade and

motor vehicle repairs (17%), while the major employers are Hall & Woodhouse Brewery, Royal Signals, Bryanston School, Signpost Housing and the district & county councils.

Parameters	Dorset	Blandford	Gillingham	Shaftesbury	Sturminster
Economically Active					
% employed: part time	20.9	21.3	19.9	19.2	17.7
% employed: full time	55.3	61.8	59.1	59.8	59.1
% self-employed	17.6	11.0	15.8	16.3	17.2
% unemployed	3.1	2.8	2.4	2.6	3.8

### Economic Challenges

The principal challenges to economic development in DT11 area include;

1. Poor infrastructure and communications.

- Transport links and access to urban centres and market opportunities are severely affected by the relatively low grade of the main trunk routes, notably the A350, and poor access to motorways. There are no rail links in the DT11 area. (The only main line railway station in North Dorset is in Gillingham)
- Signage from the main road networks to does not encourage visitors to the market town for retail and tourism.
- Limited public transport throughout the DT11 area causes difficulties for accessing training and encourages outward migration for employment opportunities. Bournemouth and Poole are within the local Travel to Work area and attract outward daily migration, particularly for skilled and higher paid jobs.
- The lack of training opportunities locally has resulted in a serious skills shortage<sup>1</sup>. In particular, basic communication, marketing and customer care skills, construction trades, and creative and IT skills are in demand.

---

<sup>1</sup> North Dorset Business Skills and Training Survey 2007

- North Dorset does not have a major training and skills centre on a par with Salisbury, Bournemouth and Poole or the college at Yeovil. If the local economy is to grow and be successful, its workforce must have the skills necessary to complete successfully in the employment market. Developing strong links between schools or other educational bodies and local businesses will be essential.

- Large parts of the DT11 area still have a restricted or no Broadband access, making it difficult for new and developing businesses to expand.

- A lack of affordable housing often deters or precludes potential employees from moving to or remaining in employment in the area

## 2.Economic efficiency and effectiveness

- Businesses need support and assistance to adopt efficient recycling and energy reduction practices to reduce costs and qualify for assistance with developing more environmentally efficient and low carbon business practice.

- The area has no overall marketing profile or strategy. The business networks are not well integrated and often are not maximising mutual trading or marketing opportunities.

- New businesses are attracted to other 'better developed business environments', mostly in the conurbations of Bournemouth and Poole or Yeovil.

- The high quality environment both historical and the surrounding countryside is not fully exploited as an economic driver for new and existing businesses.

## Economic Opportunities

While the area faces many challenges, often in common with other very rural parts of the South West, it also has a number of specific economic opportunities that can support the regeneration of the DT11 area over the forthcoming years.

- Redevelopment of the Hall and Woodhouse Brewery site will increase opportunities for diversifying local business through the proposed mixed use

development associated with the new brewery construction

- The redevelopment of the “Morrisons” site, adjacent to the river offers the opportunity to create a new gateway to the town.
- Changes affecting the operation of the Blandford Camp are as yet unknown but should be taken as an opportunity to develop better and more dynamic employment and or training initiatives.
- The regional strategy encourages businesses to take a positive approach to tackling sustaining environmental resources and climate change. The local countryside environment and the Stour Valley offer a wealth of opportunities for developing ‘green tourism’ and reusable or alternative energy schemes.
- North Dorset has a reputation for quality local foods and produce. The higher profile of local products offers opportunities for improving joint marketing and improved supply chains from producers to markets, on-line sales and joint retailing.



## Addressing Community Needs

Including: Accessibility and transport, Education, Community Safety, Communication, Spiritual life, the Arts, Sport, Recreation and Leisure, Young people, Older People, Town and Village Life, Health, Democracy and Equality

Our Objectives;

- To provide advice, information and guidance to support projects and activities identified in Parish Plans when requested
- To work with organisations, both formally and informally constituted to combat rural deprivation, and to ensure that hard to reach groups, vulnerable and isolated people are able to access services and participate fully in all aspects of life.
- To develop skills, training and educational opportunities to meet the needs of all young people in the DT11 schools catchment area.
- To evolve a new model for a well-founded and well- funded local youth service, to overcome the multiplicity of service providers and creates added value and self esteem for young people.
- To generate a sense of community well-being and safety as a result of positive images of social and community activities, through the DT11 website, the community magazine and in association with the media, the police, community safety teams and the local PACT.
- To establish the DT11 area as a focus and cultural centre for arts and the environment
- To ensure that there are adequate sport and recreation facilities available to serve everyone in the DT11 area, through local sports pitches, play areas and informal open space, and in particular to retain the Blandford Leisure Centre.

## The Community

The DT11 Forum area comprises a great diversity of 'communities' geographical, cultural

and those representing particular interests. The population of the settlements in the area range from approximately 10,000 in the growing town of Blandford Forum to small hamlets of under 100.

Although the death rate in the area is higher than the birth rate, the population continues to grow at a pace above the national (4%) and county (6%) rates due to people choosing to move into the area. The area is seen to offer a high quality of life for residents, though an apparent degree of affluence potentially masks a number of serious issues relating to rural deprivation. Blandford Old Town ward is within the 20% most deprived wards in Dorset. Deprivation is clearly identifiable in some parishes where isolation and a lack of service options (e.g. for leisure, employment or access to health care), notably for young people and vulnerable older people, is largely caused by inadequate local transport. Local churches often provide a focus for parish activities and information, and act as a network to support the more vulnerable members of the community.

The Blandford area has the highest ratio of people aged 0-44 years (57%)<sup>2</sup>, but the lowest share of people aged 60-85+ (22%) in the district. The younger age structure is also a result of people choosing to move into the area. Interestingly the share of non-white population in the Blandford area is higher than that of the county and 1.5 times that in three other towns in the district.

Parameters	Dorset	Blandford	Gillingham	Shaftesbury	Sturminster
<b>Age Structure</b>					
0 - 15	17.9	19.5	18.4	18.4	17.8
16 - 17	2.4	2.3	2.3	2	1.9
18 - 44	29.6	35.1	32.5	33.4	29.2
45 - 59	20.8	20.7	16.8	19.3	17.7
60 - 85+	29.3	22.4	30	26.9	33.4
<b>Ethnicity</b>					
Non-British pop	1.3	1.6	0.9	1.0	0.9

DT11 area is particularly fortunate to have a high proportion of parishes where Parish Plans have been completed or are in preparation, all of which, including the local

<sup>2</sup> The Bryanston and Milton Abbas boarding schools impact heavily on the 0 - 15 age group, while the Royal Signals School at Blandford Camp accounts for the bulge in the 18 - 44 age group.

consultations, form part of the evidence for this document.

Inevitably, with such a diversity of information strategic objectives and actions will to be agreed by the DT11 Forum partners. So while the DT11 Forum Community Partnership will endeavour to support individual parish based projects as far as its resources, both financial and human, permit, this document identifies the issues and actions where the DT11 Forum Partnership, as a whole, can be most effective in addressing the needs of the communities of the DT11 area.

### **Community Needs Challenges**

The principal challenges to supporting local community needs in DT11 area include;

- Transport - DT11 is a very rural area and car ownership is comparatively high even among lower income groups. Yet public or community transport remains the only option for many residents. With the increasing cost of fuel there is a growing willingness to use public transport among those with access to a private car for particular types of journeys or for reasons of sustainability.
- Education - The schools pyramid has recently changed from a 3 tier to a 2 tier system. This has inevitably caused some disruption. It is essential that in 'rationalising' education services in the area that the needs of ALL the children and young people are identified and met, from pre-school through to higher education and training, irrespective of academic ability
- Support for Young People -In rural areas support services for disadvantaged young people are often difficult to access and frequently hard to sustain financially. This can result in inconsistent and piecemeal provision often dependent on volunteers. Retaining young people in the area and offering them a voice in the future development of the DT11 area is a priority and ensuring that young people are seen as an integral part of the community will be essential.
- Community safety - North Dorset has a very low rate of serious crime. However there is a widely held view that crime levels are much higher than the statistics suggest and the "danger" of becoming a victim of crime is prevalent, particularly among older people. Nuisance is often perceived as crime.

Vandalism and anti-social behaviour is seen as a particular problem in the town centre, although there are some issues in the outlying villages. Problems include drunkenness and under-age drinking and acts of vandalism. It is important to see these issues in the context of other parts of Dorset and the UK and realise that our problems are relatively minor.

- Traffic safety - As with many other parts of the country traffic volumes are steadily increasing across the DT11 area and speeding is a real issue. Even where adequate speed limits are in place, the issues around speeding cars and subsequent road safety are recognised in most Parish Plans and at PACT meetings.

Increased traffic and congestion on the roads and in town diminishes locally amenity and creates an unwelcoming and intimidating environment for visitors, pedestrians and children. Reducing speeding on rural roads and reducing car use, in light of increases in fuel costs and the implications for climate change will improve the town environment and help to protect the amenity of countryside

- Arts and Culture - There are more practicing artists in the DT11 area than anywhere else in North Dorset. However there is no venue or centre for culture to display or promote the area's cultural heritage. Many of the artists use the local countryside as inspiration and have chosen to work in the area because of the environmental qualities.

- Recreation and Leisure - There are a large number of thriving sports clubs in the area. Although there are a number of good pitches/courts/facilities across the area, there is a strong need for more to accommodate the number/range of active sports clubs. Adequate leisure facilities are seen by many living in the DT11 area as a key indicator for quality of life but the Blandford Leisure Centre is threatened with closure in 2010 unless long term alternative funding can be secured.

- Affordable housing - Throughout the whole county of Dorset there is a lack of affordable housing. This is possibly one of the greatest challenges facing the long term sustainability of communities in DT11. At 18.6% Blandford Forum and the adjoining parish of Blandford St Mary has the highest percentage of residents in

rented accommodation in the district. This level of rented accommodation is more than 6% above county level. It is not an issue DT11 can tackle alone but can support and promote opportunities as they arise and support agencies and particularly the Affordable Housing Task Force in its work.

### **Community Opportunities**

- The North Dorset Trailway once completed will open up a recreational and safe transport link across the DT11 area. Making the links between the local footpath network and nearby village will offer an extensive network of paths and bridleways and can encourage sustainable tourism and opportunities for village based businesses.
- The 'Connecting Dorset' initiative has linked village halls to the internet and making new opportunities for villages to develop local community learning events.
- Community Buildings -There are many examples in North Dorset where community buildings such as village halls and community centres are put to multiple uses to create a range of leisure opportunities.
- Outdoor play is an important aspect of life for children and young people and there are a number of good examples of provision in the DT11 area including the skate park in Stour Meadows. However, a number of younger children's play areas across the DT11 area are desperately in need of upgrading - most notably Larksmead and Blandford St Mary. In some of the smaller villages there is a need for a safe open space for children away from traffic.
- Although there are a number of good sports pitches/courts/facilities across the area, there is a strong need for more, to accommodate the number/range of active sports clubs as well. In addition there is a need to ensure enough capacity so that informal/ad hoc matches can also thrive.

# Meeting the Environmental Challenge

Including; Sustainable communities and lifestyles, Transport choices, Waste and recycling, Alternative energy, Local produce and supply chains, the “Green” environment, the built heritage

A common theme in all the consultations and as a priority in Parish Plans is the need to conserve the rich environmental heritage of the area. It is valued highly for its historic and archaeological heritage and for the natural features and the richness of its wildlife. However, there are now additional pressures, which are having an ever increasing effect on our environment that are less immediately tangible but will, increasing, influence and potentially radically change our environment.

A major aspect of “Shaping the Future” concerns taking on the challenge of not simply conserving or environment in traditional terms, e.g. through sensitive and appropriate management and Conservation policies, but by adopting much longer term objectives. These will involve some very difficult decisions and will have major implications for not only the natural and physical environment but virtually every aspect of the lives of everyone in the DT11 area, and, of course, far beyond.

Facing up to and meeting the challenges facing everyone due global warming and the resulting climate changes, is the context in which all of the preceding issues must be addressed.

## Our objectives

- To create a DT11 - wide carbon neutral lifestyle, based around the Transition Towns, Cittaslow and similar projects.
- To analyse travel to work patterns and supply chains to identify ways to enable local business and employees to reduce car and procurement costs.
- To support the development of innovative schemes to reduce or generate energy which benefit the local community and encourage greater energy efficiency in business and by local residents.
- To ensure that the green environment and the historic buildings and heritage of the DT11 area are safeguarded

## Meeting the environmental challenges

- Sustainable living - Adopting, and committing to, as individuals and as groups or communities, more sustainable and less resource and energy intensive lifestyles. For individuals to see the changes that they make have an impact, will require commitment and people to work together across the DT11 Forum partnership area.
- Transport options - For a very rural area such as DT11 public transport will always have difficulty meeting the needs of the whole community. The recent demise of DART (Dorset Accessible and Responsive Transport) once funding ceased, shows the precarious and financially resource intensive nature of both public and community transport. With the increase in fuel costs the financial viability of both public and community transport will come under pressure. Possibly at the same time as customer demand may rise.
- Recruitment in many businesses is difficult and transport costs will further discourage job applications therefore encouraging alternative methods of transport, particularly cycling may need to be linked to incentives around schemes such as Bike2Work or healthy living campaigns.
- Businesses will be incurring greater costs for haulage, both in terms of delivery and procurement creating further financial uncertainty.
- Waste management and recycling - Kerbside recycling is well established, however, concerns over commercial waste recycling and the amount of excessive packaging, particularly relating to supermarkets and fast food outlets, undermine many individual's commitment to reducing waste and recycling.
- Alternative energy - The increasing price of fuel and energy was a great concern to many people, particularly older and less affluent people. The capital costs of installing better insulation or energy saving devices deterred many people from making changes.
- Information on alternative energy and energy reduction is often confusing and not easily understood making it unattractive to people.
- Local produce - There are many good local food producers and suppliers but many feel they need more support, e.g. through marketing.
- The Green environment - Generally, there is great satisfaction with the way the local environment is managed in the area, however, questions over the future

management of the flood plain and concerns over the 'run-off' in future development that may add to potential flood risks will remain.

### **Environmental opportunities**

- Many villages and towns in rural areas are developing local schemes to become more self-sustaining communities. Much good practice advice is available and strong mutually supportive Transition or similar networks are established.
- The Rural Reach project in the DT11 area will be reporting on the principle of Community Transport plans and may potentially be rolled out nationwide.
- Central government is providing incentives to encourage businesses to adopt schemes such as "Bike2Work" and be involved in travel to work plans
- Traditionally the River Stour was a source of energy for many mills along its banks, by harnessing modern engineering and technology the River could once again be a source of energy generation.



## Future monitoring and Implementation

Monitoring and adapting the Actions of the Plan and assessing priorities will be a regular part of the work of the DT11 Forum Community Partnership. This will be undertaken through six monthly monitoring of the overall progress of the Action Plan and the projects, programmes and service improvements within it e.g:

- Progress on priority projects
- Identification of new projects/initiatives
- Delivery of actions
- Breadth of coverage in activity
- Identification of issues/actions needing to be targeted in following six months

In addition an annual review will take place with the production of an annual report highlighting the achievements of the Plan. All of this information will be readily available to the public.

Much of the work will be innovative, and the lessons learned during implementation of the Plan, we hope will be of value to local partners and other organisations elsewhere engaged in this type of work

Keeping people informed and ensuring that the DT11 Forum as the Community Partnership are accountable for their actions will be crucial. It is proposed to:-

- establish regular public presentations, workshops and 'surgeries' in the town and villages;
- liaise with the local press and media;
- prepare reports on activities and research;
- maintain an interactive DT11 Partnership website and magazine
- establish new working groups, supporting particular aspects of the Action Plan

## **Consultation and evidence**

An initial draft action plan was prepared in September 2006. This draft was then taken out for further public consultation and prioritisation and the action plan amended accordingly.

The information from that earlier Action Plan is incorporated into this document and updated to include further research and the changes in context since that date.

Some actions expressed here are far from new and represent hopes for change yet to be achieved. Some actions are directly for the DT11 Forum to achieve, others are in the domain of other partners such as Blandford Forum Town Council, or a particular parish council. Others are actions for partnership working. The DT11 Forum Partnership understands that in many instances its role will be one of influencing the decisions of others rather than directly undertaking the action itself.

## **Evidence base - Directory of Consultation and Data Sources.**

### Parish Plans

#### Blandford Forum Strategic Plan

Child Okeford & Hanford Parish Plan 2004

Hilton & Melcombe Horsey 2005

The Lower Winterborne Parish Plan October 2004

Milton Abbas Parish Plan 2003

Pimperne - Past, Present and Future The Vital Village Plan 2003.

Durweston Village Plan 2005

South Tarrant Parish Plan 2005

Tarrant Monkton & Launceston Parish Plan September 05

Village Survey and Shroton Parish Plan 2005

Charlton Marshall Action Plan 2006

Shillingstone Parish Plan

Bryanston Parish Plan

Spetisbury Parish Plan

Stourpaine Parish Plan

## Public Consultation

Summary of feedback from the three-day consultation at Hall & Woodhouse brewery as a result of the proposed redevelopment of the brewery site (172 visitors: 49% residents of Blandford Forum and 30% residents Blandford St Mary).

Public consultations at the Georgian Fayre, May 2006 and outside Somerfields, Blandford Leisure Centre, Blandford Library, Blandford Hospital, Blandford Opportunity Group, Blandford Older People's Forum, Pimperne Mother & Toddler Group, Durweston Village Hall coffee morning, Tarrant Keyneston Village Fete, Child Okeford PTA Summer fete, Winterborne Kingston parish lunch - Summer 2006. (169 respondents, 44% residents of Blandford Forum, 55% residents of other parishes in DT11 area, 1% resident elsewhere but work or use services in the area)

Deleted: ,

Economic development consultation (attended by 42 local businesses) 2007, Hall and Woodhouse Visitor Centre, Economic Development survey (200 respondents)

Community Needs consultation and survey, Corn Exchange and Woodhouse Gardens Pavilion Autumn 2007, February 2008

Environmental Challenge consultation Corn Exchange and exhibition in the Shambles February and March 2008

Additional data sources

Blandford Pathfinder Youth Survey findings 2006

# ACTION PLAN TABLES

The following tables list the actions that have been identified already to help achieve the objectives within each theme. Some are small scale and 'quick - wins, others are long term and may take many years to achieve.

However the Action Plan is a 'live' document and will be subject to updating and amendment, and DT11 Forum will also take an positive approach to opportunities to undertake projects if resources or other factors enable them to do so.

Under each theme a list of priorities are given as a focus to delivery of the overall objectives of the Action Plan

## Theme : A Sustainable Economy

Objective	Action	Partners	£	Time
<p>To re-establish Blandford Forum in its historic role as the economic hub of local area linked to parish and village based businesses and enterprises</p>	<p>Develop a range of local shopping events to encourage residents and visitors to use the town for their shopping needs</p> <p><b>Support the production of a town guide and business directory</b></p> <p>Monitor the Hall &amp; Woodhouse redevelopment plans - particularly in relation to retail provision - to ensure that threats to Blandford Forum town shops are minimised</p> <p>Support village shops, post offices and pubs particularly those that are at risk of closure and support campaigns to keep them open.</p> <p><b>Support an extended Chamber of Trade which is integrated with other business networks on the surrounding industrial estates</b></p> <p>Improve the signage to the town centre to encourage retail and visitors</p> <p>Support and develop projects and initiatives that encourage civic pride and improve the appearance and cleanliness of the town to encourage visitors to the town, both for retail and tourism.</p>			
<p>To establish the DT11 area as a centre of excellence and exemplar of good practice for sustainable and 'green' business.</p>	<p>Improve recycling and commercial waste disposal as an exemplar of good practice</p> <p>Develop new enterprise based on the quality local environment and the historic heritage</p> <p>Promote small scale village tourism</p>			

	<p>Support the retention of the Blandford Tourist Information Centre</p> <p>Explore ways to use existing tourism attraction as leverage to support local events and other tourism benefits to support local communities and the environment</p> <p><b>Prepare a Green Tourism marketing strategy.</b></p> <p>Encourage schemes to improve the quality of the visitor experience and tourism 'product'</p>			
To ensure that the economic interdependence of the town and villages is recognised and fully integrated into economic, development and infrastructural strategies and plans at all levels.	<p>Support the development and retention of village shops</p> <p>Press for more affordable housing to assist local recruitment</p>			
To address the need to develop skills locally, particularly in information and communications technology, to provide a ready pool of labour, and attract new businesses to the area	<p>Seek opportunities to engage with establishments with High - tech training facilities to improve levels of skills in ICT</p>			
Ensure that a range of business accommodation is available for both incoming businesses and those already in the area wishing to expand	<p>Encourage small business units in villages to provide local employment.</p> <p>Lobby for improved Broadband access throughout the DT11 area</p>			
Identify the needs for on-going accessible training and skills development throughout the business sector, particularly for SME's.	<p>Seek opportunities for locally based training in identified skills shortages as identified in the North Dorset Business Skills and Learning Survey</p> <p>Seek opportunities for accessible training in village locations.</p>			
To develop opportunities for skills and training for young people throughout the DT11 area in association with schools, businesses and	<p>Prepare a Local Learning Plan that identifies wide range of Learning needs including vocational and community learning</p>			

organisations working with young people	<p>Develop training and support services targeted at vulnerable or at risk young people</p> <p>Develop opportunities to improve work readiness in young people joining the labour force.</p>			
---	--	--	--	--

## Priorities for 2008 - 10 - A Sustainable Economy

- Support the production of a town guide and business directory
- Support an extended Chamber of Trade which is integrated with other business networks on the surrounding industrial estates
- Prepare a Green Tourism marketing strategy.
- Develop training and support services targeted at vulnerable or at risk young people
- Develop opportunities to improve work readiness in young people joining the labour force.

## Theme : Addressing Community Needs

Objective	Action	Partners	£	Time
<p>To provide advice, information and guidance to support projects and activities identified in Parish or other Community Plans when requested</p>	<p>To encourage the development of new parish and community plans, including the smallest parishes and communities, and the revision of plans already completed</p> <p>To support local councils to secure adequate affordable housing to meet local needs identified through housing needs assessments.</p> <p>To support the expansion of community transport schemes at a local and district wide scale.</p> <p>To improve the amenity of the local environment, e.g. road edges, hedgerows and verges.</p> <p>To support the construction and improvement of village, parish and other community buildings that can be used for smaller scale theatre, film and arts events as well as community learning, sports, lunch clubs and other social activities.</p> <p>To support Blandford Forum Town Council in their negotiations with English Heritage and plans to refurbish the Grade 1 Listed Corn Exchange to create a cultural venue and focal point for civic events</p> <p>Support the diversification of the uses of church buildings</p> <p>To support the provision of new library facilities in Blandford and the larger villages</p> <p>Promote access to Life Long Learning and community learning plans</p> <p>Support the refurbishment</p>			



	<p><b>of play areas at Larksmead, Blandford Forum and Chettel Way, Blandford St Mary</b></p> <p>To promote adequate outdoor play provision for children of all ages, especially in areas of dense housing and isolated villages including equipped play areas, informal open spaces, skate parks, ball courts and youth shelters.</p> <p><b>To support the creation of sports pitches and facilities on the land north of the Blandford bypass</b></p>			
<p>To work with organisations, both formally and informally constituted to combat rural deprivation, and to ensure that hard to reach groups, vulnerable and isolated people are able to access services and participate fully in all aspects of life.</p>	<p>To support the provision of improved transport for vulnerable individuals and groups to provide access to services and to minimise isolation</p> <p>To work with identified minority or hard to reach communities to enable them to participate in a full range of community activities</p> <p><b>To support and lobby for the retention of village and rural services, eg shop, post offices, pubs and garages, and support innovative and creative schemes to develop new or replacement services</b></p> <p>Support the existing and new village and community magazines.</p> <p>Support plans to provide information, guidance and language tuition for refugees, asylum seekers and minority ethnic people living in the DT11 area</p>			
<p>To develop skills, training and educational opportunities to meet the needs of all young people in the DT11 schools catchment area</p>	<p>To support the development of the Blandford Childrens centre</p> <p>To support the provision of after school and holiday clubs in schools throughout the DT11 area.</p>			

	To encourage the provision of pre-school facilities			
To evolve a new model for a well-founded and well-funded local youth service, to overcome the multiplicity of service providers and creates added value and self esteem for young people.	<p><b>Develop a young people's website</b></p> <p>Lobby for and actively facilitate the creation of venues/facilities of particular appeal to young people</p> <p>To develop a Young People's Forum to act as a consultation and feedback group for community planning issues.</p> <p>To champion youth transport schemes to enable young people to access services and leisure activities across the DT11 area, including in the evenings and weekends.</p> <p>Promote the use and development of the Dorset Youth and Community Service mobile 'Youth Bus' service across the DT11 area</p>			
To generate a sense of community well-being and safety as a result of positive images of social and community activities, through the DT11 website, the community magazine and in association with the media, the police, community safety teams and the local PACT.	<p>To support traffic management schemes to increase road safety, where identified in Parish or Community Plans</p> <p>To lobby improved access to healthcare e.g. evening surgery hours and increased NHS dentistry</p>			
To establish the DT11 area as a focus and cultural centre for arts and the environment	<b>To investigate the feasibility of an environment and cultural visitor centre in the DT11 area</b>			
To ensure that there are adequate sport and recreation facilities available to serve everyone in the DT11 area, through local sports pitches, play areas and informal open space.	<p>To support projects to maintain and develop new footpaths and cycle tracks, both in town and in the wider countryside</p> <p>To develop projects providing accessible and high quality play areas and recreational facilities for children and young people throughout the DT11 area</p>			

	<p>Develop quality and challenging sports and recreational facilities for young people including skateparks, youth shelters and youth clubs.</p> <p>To support the provision of informal and formal sports pitches and related facilities to meet the needs of local clubs and groups to provide for greater involvement and excellence in sport, and in particular to retain the Blandford Leisure Centre</p> <p>To support volunteering and the development of new sports and leisure groups</p> <p>Seek opportunities for the provision of a cinema in Blandford</p>			
--	---	--	--	--

### Priorities for 2008 - 10 - Addressing Community Needs

- Support the refurbishment of play areas at Larksmead, Blandford Forum and Chettel Way, Blandford St Mary
- To support the creation of sports pitches and facilities on the land north of the Blandford bypass
- To support and lobby for the retention of village and rural services, eg shop, post offices, pubs and garages, and support innovative and creative schemes to develop new or replacement services
- Develop a young people's website
- To investigate the feasibility of an environment and cultural visitor centre in the DT11 area
- and in particular to retain the Blandford Leisure Centre

## Theme : Meeting the Environmental Challenge

Objective	Action	Partners	£	Time
<p>To create a DT11 - wide carbon neutral lifestyle, based around the Transition Towns, Cittaslow and similar projects.</p>	<p><b>Establish a Climate Change Action group</b></p> <p><b>Investigate the feasibility of a network of transition villages based around the hub of Blandford</b></p> <p>To raise the profile and seek increased marketing opportunities to support local producers and encourage local procurement</p> <p>Support local recycling and composting schemes</p> <p>Encourage local initiatives to prevent and alleviate the risk of flooding</p> <p>Raise awareness of the impact of climate change on the environment and future lifestyles</p> <p>Develop local guidance on environmental impact for permitted development</p>			
<p>To analyse travel to work patterns and supply chains to identify ways to enable local business and employees to reduce car and procurement costs.</p>	<p>To encourage and publicise car share schemes</p> <p>To improve access to information relating to public and community transport</p> <p>To work with communities in villages and in the town to develop local Community Transport Plans to meet locally defined needs</p> <p>To encourage wider use of Nordcat community transport scheme by targeted marketing to specific user groups</p>			
<p>To support the development of innovative schemes to reduce or generate energy which benefit the local community and encourage greater energy efficiency in</p>	<p>Support the development of energy generation from water turbines on the Stour river</p>			

business and by local residents				
<p>To ensure that the green environment and the historic buildings and heritage of the DT11 area are safeguarded</p>	<p>Support the preparation of Parish Village and Town Design statements</p> <p>Support fundraising for repairs to the cupola of St Peter and St Paul Church in Blandford Forum as a landmark building for the town</p> <p>Support schemes that improve the character and amenity of streets e.g. undergrounding of wires and cables</p> <p>Support projects that increase access to the countryside particularly those that encourage new visitors and people with disabilities e.g. change stiles to kissing gates</p> <p>Support local initiatives that improve the amenity of villages, local streets and open space</p> <p>To encourage environmental improvements required at Stour Meadows and draw up action plan.</p> <p>Promote new local footpath and cycle routes - especially key routes into the town and the preparation of cycle route and walks leaflets</p> <p>Promote volunteering for countryside and conservation projects</p>			

## Priorities for 2008 - 10 - Meeting the Environmental Challenge

- Establish a Climate Change Action group
- Investigate the feasibility of a network of transition villages based around the hub of Blandford
- Promote new local footpath and cycle routes - especially key routes into the town and the preparation of cycle route and walks leaflets



