

Bid to join Garden Communities programme

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All questions must be addressed, apart from those specifically designated for transformational community proposals and garden villages proposing fewer than 5,000 homes (Q 2, 4). If you have questions, or would like to discuss an proposal ahead of submission, please contact gardencommunities@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

Bids should be submitted by **09/11/2018**

Please click here to open the [prospectus](#).

Name of local authorities and promoters/landowners/developers involved (clearly identifying lead authority):

West Dorset District Council (Lead Authority), Dorset County Council, Dorchester Town Council

Promoters: Grainger Homes PLC, Persimmon Homes

Main Contact

[REDACTED]

Telephone Number

[REDACTED]

Email Address

[REDACTED]

Organisation

West Dorset District Council (Dorset Councils Partnership)

Headline Information

1. Provide a description of the proposed garden community including proposed number of homes, including types and tenures, number of jobs it hopes to create, employment space, schools and other community facilities, green space provision, number of district and local centres, amount of retail and other commercial space proposed; key items of infrastructure needed to support delivery of the garden community. Please itemise these below.

Housing

Number of homes

4,000

Delivered by

Led by private sector developers

Types of homes and tenures

A diverse range of house types
A whole spectrum of tenures including professionally managed private rental sector

Employment

Number of jobs created

1,340

Approx. area of employment space (ha)

10

Key types of jobs created

Estimated number of jobs:
900 in B1 to B8 uses (10 ha)
150 in retail/commercial (within 2 local centres)
250 in schools (first, middle and high at 4 forms of entry)
40 in health (GP surgery and care homes).
The estimate of jobs does not include any jobs created as part of the construction phase

Approx. area of retail / commercial space (ha)

4

Community Infrastructure

Number of schools

3

Types and size of schools (if known)

Provision of at least:
 4 FE first school
 4 FE middle school
 4 FE high school

Number of health and care facilities

2

Types and size of health and care facilities (if known)

GP surgery
 Care facilities and extra care facilities

Number of community facilities

2

Types and size of community facilities (if known)

Community hall / meeting spaces and an additional LNR visitor centre. Size to be determined

Number of district and local centres

2

Site Space

Approx. area of site space (ha)

433

Approx. area of green space (ha)

225

You will be asked at the end of the form to provide evidence of the following:

- **Location Plan** - One or more plans showing the location of the proposed garden community outlined in red. It should also indicate the location of any nearby communities/development, and the boundaries of the Local Planning Authority, County Council, LEP. Include site boundary coordinates. This plan should also highlight the extent of brownfield conditions on the site, if relevant.
- **Strategic Framework Plan** for the proposed garden community – this should show: the broad disposition of proposed land uses and major infrastructure proposed.
- **Annual housing trajectory** for the garden community

2. If 10,000 or fewer homes are proposed, please provide details of the circumstances that you believe make the proposal suitable for consideration (refer to paragraph 5 of the prospectus.)

West Dorset and in particular Dorchester is an area of high housing demand. Within Dorchester there are significantly more jobs (17,005) than residents in employment (9,195). Although the population of the town has grown significantly (19,031 in 2011 to 20,135 estimate in 2016) there is still an imbalance in the resident working age population (11,628 estimate). Consequently house prices are high but earnings are low resulting in an affordability issue, as summarised below.

- £18,012 lower quartile gross earnings for WDDC (£18,603 for England)
- £205,000 lower quartile house price (year to Sept 2017) for WDDC (£150,000 for England)
- 11.38 lower quartile house price to earnings ratio for WDDC (7.26 for England).

The successes of Poundbury are well known. However it is a unique development closely controlled by the landowner with a clear concept informing a masterplan right from the start. Development at Poundbury is likely to finish in 2025 at which point there are limited opportunities for meeting the future growth needs of Dorchester as the county town. Building on the lessons learnt from Poundbury, it is recognised that there is a need for a more diverse mix of house types and tenures to help meet market demand. It is strongly believed that encouraging this mix, as highlighted in the Letwin review of build out rates, will lead to the higher rate of housing delivery that the area needs.

The area between the new community and the existing town of Dorchester will form a significant accessible green space, predominantly a Local Nature Reserve. It will include areas available for recreation, the preservation of the features associated with the former water meadows, and provision of wetlands to reduce nitrogen flows into Poole Harbour SPA/Ramsar sites.

Dorset Wildlife Trust is keen to be involved in shaping the development and consider there are opportunities for the development to deliver in excess of the ambitions of the Garden Communities Programme. The Trust has commented:

"If development does take place in North Dorchester, as per the proposals in the draft Local Plan Review, there is a significant opportunity for it to be a national green exemplar, exceeding the standards set out in the prospectus for the Garden Communities Programme. To help plan for this outcome, the Garden Communities approach would seem to be one which could help, and we would be keen to be involved."

3. If fewer than 5,000 homes are proposed, describe the measures that will be put in place to ensure that the proposed community will be largely self-sustaining, for example in terms of movement and transport facilities, education, health, community infrastructure, and jobs.

The North Dorchester development sits on the northern side of the Frome Valley water meadows with the centre of Dorchester being approximately one kilometre from the southern portions of the site. The development will be designed as a stand-alone community enabling its day-to-day needs to be met within the site's limits. This will include the provision of a new schools campus across all levels – first, middle and high, relieving pressure on the area's already over-subscribed schools; local centres to provide convenience retail, leisure and other town centre uses to complement that already provided within Dorchester's town centre; 10 hectares of employment land to provide job opportunities within the new community; healthcare facilities including care homes and a doctors' surgery and new community meeting places.

To facilitate the ease of movement between the existing town and the new community, at least three convenient pedestrian and cycle routes will be provided along with enhanced public transport linking the two communities.

In addition to the provision of facilities within the site, the development will help to improve the sustainability of Dorchester as a whole. The town already plays host to Dorset County Hospital, Dorset County Council and West Dorset District Council along with a number of large private sector employers. The provision of additional employment land within the site will provide further opportunities for businesses within the county town to expand and grow. This growth will be supported by the additional homes that will provide the necessary workforce for local businesses.

The provision of additional homes will also help to address the current imbalance of homes and jobs in the town tackling the price differential between Dorchester and the surrounding area.

The delivery of a replacement household recycling centre will enable the provision of an expanded modern facility for the town.

We see a locally led masterplan as the way to securing these provisions in a comprehensive and proactive way removing the need to respond to individual applications on parts of the site. We have drafted a policy for the site which reflects these ambitions and upon which all stakeholders have had an opportunity to comment.

4. Is the proposed garden community a free-standing or transformational garden community?

Transformational

5. In the case of proposals for transformational garden communities where substantive additional growth is proposed to an existing place, please outline the economic, social, and environmental outcomes you expect the proposal to achieve for the place as a whole.

The development will deliver around 4,000 new homes, at least 10 hectares of employment land, around 4 hectares of commercial/retail space, new schools and a significant amount of open space as an attractive recreational feature and Local Nature Reserve within a few minutes' walk of the town centre.

It is essential that it is not simply an urban extension or dormitory to Dorchester, but a high quality new environment and community to support the future economy and life of the town. At this scale it will be relatively self-contained but will also maintain a close relationship with Dorchester town, and will be providing facilities such as the local nature reserve and new schools that will be of benefit to the town as a whole. It will be the next major phase of growth for Dorchester, after the Poundbury development, and must be locally distinctive and of high design quality in order to respect the sensitivity of the town and its landscape setting.

The proposed development at North Dorchester is a key element of the local plan for West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland and therefore will make a significant contribution to delivering the future development needs of the area. With Dorchester being the largest settlement in West Dorset and also the county town, it has historically been a centre of employment. The range of facilities in the town is significant and include Dorset County Hospital and rail links to London and Bristol. The town is therefore a sustainable location for residential development and future economic growth.

The Poundbury development has delivered growth for the town over past decades but is now coming to an end. The future growth of the town is limited by the need for additional infrastructure. New schools are needed and there are capacity restrictions on the southern by-pass. These constraints point towards large scale development delivering growth and infrastructure investment over the longer term. This will involve a significant investment of resources and it is important to get it right.

The delivery of additional 10 ha of employment land (B1, B2 and B8 uses) will provide move-on accommodation for existing firms in the town wishing to expand and to attract inward investment to support the county town as a whole. The provision of additional homes will help to address the current imbalance between homes and jobs, enabling those who already work at the town but commute in on a daily basis to live closer to their place of work. The growth of the town will also help to support the existing town centre by increasing footfall.

Education provision will be enhanced with new first, middle and high schools and improved linkages with Kingston Maurward College. This will enhance the skills of the local workforce. The College, which sits to the east of the site is looking to expand its offer and is in the process of preparing a masterplan for its estate to facilitate this.

The north Dorchester development will deliver a significant number and a wide range of housing at the heart of the Dorchester/Weymouth Housing Market Area. This additional supply of housing will not only meet the needs of the growing population but will meet the needs of those who wish to work and live in the town thereby reducing commuting. As part of the development, a significant number of affordable homes will be delivered which will enable a greater proportion of the lower paid workers to live closer to where they work.

The GP provision in the existing town will be expanded alongside the provision of a new doctors' surgery within the development. Care homes will also be delivered to meet the future care needs of the area.

The delivery of the larger scale development would enable expanded school provision at first, middle and high school levels relieving pressure on the already oversubscribed schools in the town and relieving pressure on the Dorchester school pyramid overall.

Through the development significant open space provision will be secured through the provision of a local nature reserve at the water meadows. This will offer opportunities for recreation including an extension of the Hardy Trail, capitalising on the town's Thomas Hardy connection. Opportunities will also exist for significant biodiversity enhancement through the management of parts of the area specifically with wildlife in mind. The intention is that the area will deliver wetlands which will help to reduce nitrogen flows into Poole Harbour internationally designated wildlife site. Dorset Wildlife Trust has expressed an interest in managing the area as a visitor attraction along with the proposed new visitor centre.

To facilitate ease of movement around the development and to the existing centre of Dorchester, walking and cycle links will be required along with the promotion of public transport. This will include at least three foot and cycle links across the water meadows and also improved connections with surrounding villages such as Charminster. The development will deliver a link between the A35 trunk road and A37 to relieve some pressure on the A35 trunk road junctions.

You will be asked at the end of the form to provide evidence of support for your proposal from the following:

- a) **Local MP(s)**
- b) **Local community**
- c) **Local Enterprise Partnership(s)**
- d) **County Council** (where relevant)
- e) **Neighbouring local authorities**
- f) **For private sector led** – the relevant local authority
- g) **Any other key stakeholders**

You will be asked to answer 'Yes', 'No', or 'Awaiting Response.' If 'Yes' is selected you will need to provide details of engagement and attach relevant evidence. If 'No' or 'Awaiting Response' is selected you will need to provide reasoning.

Strategic Approach

6. Provide a statement on how the proposed garden community fits with local or area housing and economic plans & strategies; how it will meet anticipated population growth both within the relevant Local Plan period and beyond; and how it will address local housing affordability issues.

a) How it fits with local housing and economic plans and strategies

The adopted West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan identifies Dorchester as a centre for growth with a total of around 2,000 homes expected to be built over the period 2011 to 2026. Through the review of this plan, the longer term growth needs of Dorchester are being considered with the preferred approach to delivering these needs being the area to the north of the town – the North Dorchester development. This preferred option was agreed by the council and has been subject to consultation as part of the emerging West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland joint Local Plan.

Covering the whole of rural Western Dorset (North Dorset District, West Dorset District and Weymouth & Portland Borough), the Western Dorset Growth Strategy aims to deliver 20,000 new homes and 13,200 new jobs over the period to 2033 with the western focus being on the Dorchester/Weymouth area. This Strategy is supported by the Dorset LEP within their Dorset Horizon 2038 'A Vision for Growth' (Autumn 2018). Some key challenges identified in the strategy include the poor affordability of homes, the 'demographic crunch' of an increased retired population alongside a reduction in those of working age, and the need for improved infrastructure. The Local Plans across the area including the North Dorchester development, will be key to delivering on the aims and challenges identified in the strategy.

<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/business-consumers-licences/business-support-and-advice/pdfs/dcp-economic-growth-strategy.pdf>

Longer term options for helping to meet the housing growth needs across the Dorset LEP area include establishing one or more garden villages. This is being considered by the Dorset LEP in their recent report 'Supporting Dorset's Economic Growth – Future Housing Provision'. The North Dorchester development would be the first such scheme in Dorset where the lessons learnt could be replicated across the area.

<http://dorsetlep.co.uk/supporting-dorset%E2%80%99s-economic-growth-future-housing-provision/>

The aims of the Town Council include the diversification of the town's economy away from the traditional public sector bias of the county town and to develop more employment space for the town. Growth to the north of the town will help to achieve this through the provision of employment space and through the provision of a wide range of homes for those employed in the town. The town council also recognise the need to deliver more affordable homes particularly aimed at those under the age of 35, again something that the north Dorchester development will help to deliver. A proposal by one of the developers to potentially include an element of professionally run private rented homes has been welcomed to meet a largely overlooked need.

The town wishes to capitalise on its history and rural landscape to drive a heritage tourism strategy. Not only will the opening up of the water meadows to the public deliver an important recreational resource within a few minutes' walk of the High Street, but it will also link Thomas Hardy points of interest in to an extended heritage trail. As well as improving community awareness of the significance of Dorchester's heritage, the development of a heritage trail and visitor centre will help drive up visitor numbers, with all the economic advantages that will bring.

b) How it will meet anticipated population growth

The recently established Standard Method for determining the number of homes needed in an area gives rise to a Local Housing Need figure of 794 dwellings per annum across the joint Local Plan area (i.e. across West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland areas). With Dorchester being the largest and town within West Dorset the majority of this growth will take place at the town as the most sustainable location for growth within the area.

For West Dorset, the mid 2016 population projections suggested a population growth of 7,900 persons over the period 2021 to 2041.

c) How it will address local housing affordability issues

Local Plan policy requires the provision of 35% affordable housing on development sites. This will consist of both homes for rent and for part ownership as set out in the NPPF glossary definition. The provision of additional homes, including affordable homes at the town will help to meet the demand for new homes across the wider area. In addition, it is anticipated that the development will deliver homes in the private rental sector to further diversify the town's overall housing stock.

Over recent years, the area has experienced a decline in the local workforce. In addition, the ageing population means that a higher proportion of the workforce is nearing retirement age. By providing more homes, including affordable homes, those existing residents will be able to live closer to where they work but also the workforce will be rebalanced through in-migration, attracting people of working age.

The council is considering whether the Strategic Partnership recently formed with Homes England would be appropriate to help deliver more affordable homes more quickly through the development of this site.

d) How it will provide and embed opportunities to expand further in the future if required

Further expansion of the site is limited by heritage and landscape constraints and the balance for housing need, but the more detailed investigation of these issues during preparation of the masterplan may identify further opportunities.

Local Leadership

7 a) Set out the extent of community engagement undertaken to date in respect of the garden community. This should include any engagement with key local stakeholders, for example, Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships, LEPs, energy district network operators, etc.

Options for development around Dorchester were subject to extensive consultation and publicity as part of the review of the joint West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (Regulation 18). In February 2017, the

suitability of a number of options were considered and subject to consultation. As a result of this consultation and further site evaluation work, the option for North Dorchester was identified as the preferred approach to meeting the housing need for the area. This preferred approach has recently been subject to further consultation with the local community and parish councils.

As part of the preparation of the preferred options consultation document, Historic England, Natural England, the Environment Agency, Highways England, The Dorset AONB, Dorset County Council and utility infrastructure providers have all been consulted. Their input has helped to shape the preferred option and the Indicative Strategic Framework Plan for the development.

In addition to the above consultation, further engagement has been undertaken with the local parishes, Dorchester Town Council and the Dorchester Civic Society.

The North Dorchester Consortium has also undertaken its own consultation including public exhibitions within the town.

b) How do you intend to engage with local residents and stakeholders about the garden community proposal in the future?

As the Local Plan progresses towards pre-submission consultation (Regulation 19) a masterplan will be produced to guide development of the site. This masterplan will be produced with the involvement of key stakeholders from the local community.

Further community engagement will take place during the production of the masterplan with the views expressed taken into account in the production of the final version.

It is likely that this masterplan will be adopted as a supplementary planning document alongside the adoption of the Local Plan. Should the award be granted this will enable more meaningful and detailed analysis of the issues, including the preparation of full design codes and analysis of viability and deliverability, as well as greater public engagement.

The North Dorchester Consortium has expressed its commitment to assist the delivery of the Masterplan process and work alongside the Council to arrive at a route map to deliver a garden community.

8. Where a proposed garden community is cross-boundary or located close to the boundaries of neighbouring authorities, describe the type and level of local authority co-operation and joint working taking place.

The review of the Local Plan, within which the North Dorchester site is being proposed, is a joint Plan being produced by both West Dorset District Council and Weymouth and Portland Borough Council. Full engagement has therefore been a necessity during its production to date and will continue in the run-up to submission and adoption. The North Dorchester proposal is approximately 6 km from the boundary of Weymouth & Portland Borough.

The next nearest neighbouring Local Authority is Purbeck District approximately 7 km to the east of the proposal. Purbeck District Council has been involved in the production of the Local Plan as a consultee and through informal local working groups. These informal local working groups have involved representatives from all the existing Dorset local authorities and the County Council.

As the proposals progress, the local authorities in Dorset are combining to form two new unitary authorities. There will be one authority for the rural area incorporating Dorset County Council (part), West Dorset District Council, Weymouth & Portland Borough Council, Purbeck District Council, North Dorset District Council and East Dorset District Council. The new urban council will be formed from Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Borough Councils and Dorset County Council (part). The North Dorchester proposal will fall entirely within the new rural Dorset Council.

Garden Community Vision

9 a) Set out the vision and key development objectives for the proposed garden community. Highlight how the garden community will address the qualities set out in the Prospectus, and any other principles considered important.

Reflecting the Town Council's vision for the town, the Local Plan preferred options consultation document includes the following vision for Dorchester:
In 2036 Dorchester will:

- Be a quality county town with a significant offer of retail, health, cultural, leisure, heritage tourism and community facilities;
- Have an attractive and vibrant sub-regional town centre that people come to enjoy, away from motor traffic;
- Continuing to be a public sector hub whilst having a more diverse local economy with good employment and education opportunities;
- Be a place where more people can live and work locally, without having to commute;
- Have a balanced population meeting the housing needs of younger working people and families as well as the old;
- Have good quality transport links to the surrounding towns and rural area;
- Have a high standard of design that promotes the character and heritage that is special to Dorchester;
- Make the most of the surrounding countryside, including its links with Thomas Hardy, Maiden Castle and Kingston Maurward College.

This vision captures the qualities of the town and how they should develop over the Local Plan Review period. Delivery of the vision will be facilitated through the approach to growth set out in the Local Plan Review Preferred Options consultation document.

One of the key development opportunities important to delivering the overall town vision is the North Dorchester development. It is vital for the future of the county town, and its sensitive heritage and landscape setting, that this development is progressed in the form of high quality place-making, locally distinctive

and forming a new community rather than simply a typical urban extension. The draft policy for this development includes a vision for how the development should take place.

VISION FOR NORTH DORCHESTER (INCLUDING THE MODEST EXPANSION OF CHARMINSTER).

CONCEPT STATEMENT:

OVERARCHING VISION FOR NORTH DORCHESTER:

The next phase of Dorchester's growth will be to the north of the town. It will take the form of a mixed-use urban extension of linked neighbourhoods north of the Frome Valley, which together with the modest expansion of the separate village of Charminster, would be designed to the highest standard to fully integrate with the high quality natural and built environment within which it sits.

- The development will help to build a vibrant community spirit across the whole expanded town delivering a sense of place along with an individual community identity within the development.
- The development will deliver the number of homes, workspace and infrastructure necessary to enable the town to continue to grow as a well-planned cohesive whole.
- The development will enhance the town's role as an economic hub for Dorset, building on its excellent education opportunities, and delivering space for business growth. The town's tourist economy will be expanded through enhancements to the water meadows and capitalising on the town's Hardy heritage.

PLACEMAKING OVERVIEW:

The comprehensive development of North Dorchester will have a high standard of place making and design that respond to local distinctiveness and will create areas with innovative and bespoke character special to Dorchester and the surrounding villages.

The development will create an easily understood pattern of streets and spaces that make the most of the existing natural features in and adjacent to the site including focal points within Dorchester town, the nearby villages and the heritage and landscape of the area.

The water meadows will form an important high quality asset for the expanded town creating opportunities for recreation as well as appreciation of the historic context and wildlife of the area. Movement across the water meadows between the different parts of the expanded town, will be enabled as far as practical.

The separate identity of Charminster will be respected. The village will expand in a modest way but with the clear distinction between the North Dorchester development and the expanded village being maintained.

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE:

The development of North Dorchester will incorporate features to reduce the impacts of climate change. Surface water will be managed through an appropriate drainage strategy utilising the existing dry valleys and connecting to the River Frome.

Opportunities for easy access to the town for pedestrians and cyclists will form an integral part of the development layout.

Efforts to reduce carbon emissions from the new dwellings and other buildings to a level below that required through building regulations will be encouraged.

INTEGRATING NORTH DORCHESTER INTO THE LANDSCAPE:

North Dorchester will fit within the landscape of the area incorporating a range of measures to soften the urban form including copse and woodland planting areas on the higher ground and trees along the streets within the development.

PROVIDING A RANGE AND CHOICE OF HOMES:

The development will deliver housing to enable the town to thrive; attracting young working people and families as a priority whilst also meeting the needs of the elderly.

Buildings will need to be practical offering ease of access for future residents. Buildings should be adaptable to cater for different needs and must incorporate space for cycle storage.

CREATING JOB OPPORTUNITIES:

The development will help to deliver a more diverse economy through the provision of employment land recognising the town's role as a hub for Dorset. It will create a place where businesses can start and grow.

Through linkages with Kingston Maurward College and the provision of a new schooling campus, excellent employment and education opportunities will be made available.

PROVIDING AND DELIVERING INFRASTRUCTURE:

The development of North Dorchester will deliver the necessary infrastructure to enable the expanded town to work as a whole including building physical and community linkages between the new development and the existing town.

A road link through the site will deliver a route between the A35(T) and the A37, relieving traffic congestion around the bypass and through the town.

Expanded school provision at first, middle and higher school levels will be incorporated through a dedicated schools campus.

b) Provide details of review mechanisms and tools that will be put in place to secure delivery of the quality aspects of the garden community. E.g. a design review panel.

To support the allocation of the North Dorchester development site in the Local Plan Review, a masterplan will be produced by the Council. This masterplan is likely to set out detail about the development of the site including land uses and design guidelines and the expectation is that it will be adopted as a supplementary planning document. It will be used to aid in decision making on planning applications for the site with applications needing to be in accordance with the masterplan.

The masterplan produced for the North Dorchester site will be prepared with support from a Design Review Panel, workshops to engage the local community, and with reference to assessment frameworks such as Building for Life and Building with Nature to ensure high quality, sustainable design. Preparation of design codes with appropriate review mechanisms will ensure that high quality design is implemented throughout the lifetime of the development. The use of a design review panel and design assessment processes (such as Building for Life, BREEAM and Building with Nature) are specifically mentioned within the Local Plan Review and would be applicable to the North Dorchester development. These approaches are intended to ensure that design, local distinctiveness and place making are addressed from the start, with the council and stakeholders taking a lead and having a strong influence, so that there is a collaborative place-making approach to the development.

Deliverability

Milestones

10 a) Identify the key risks to delivery of the milestones between now and start on site shown in the timeline submitted with this bid and set out the measures you will take to mitigate these risks.

The key risks to the delivery of the North Dorchester development include a lack of available resources to undertake the necessary studies to support the site and a lack of progress with the allocation of the site within the Local Plan Review.

Consultation on the preferred options for the review of the joint West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan has recently concluded. The results of this consultation are being processed. Although no fundamental issues have been identified so far, some of the responses will require further evidence to be gathered to support the progression of the Local Plan.

- Further evidence is needed on heritage, landscape, drainage and highways to establish the nature of any constraint and develop a suitable solution.

Political uncertainties during the drafting of the Local Plan review. The formation of the new Dorset Council unitary authority on 1 April 2019 may have an impact on this.

- Work closely with councillors during the finalisation of the Local Plan Review to ensure understanding of the issues. Continue to demonstrate that all realistic alternatives have been considered.

Uncertainties over the examination of the Local Plan Review.

- Ensure the correct process is followed for the Local Plan review including the production of sufficient proportional evidence and the production of a compliant Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment and Appropriate Assessment.

Planning applications submitted prior to the adoption of the Local Plan and North Dorchester Masterplan.

- Progress with the Local Plan Review as quickly as possible and ensure the masterplan is advanced.

Delay to Local Plan adoption due to the formation of the new Dorset Council on 1 April 2019.

- Legal advice is being sought about progression of Local Plans by the new Dorset Council. A decision on the progression of the Local Plan and the availability of resources will be sought early from the new Dorset Council.

To help mitigate these risks to the successful development of the North Dorchester site, the council has a range of resources available. These include:

- An experienced Local Plans Team who will be drafting the Local Plan Review, working with councillors to secure support for the proposals, undertaking the necessary environmental assessments and submitting the Plan for examination.
- An Implementation Team who will have input into the site allocation process including bringing urban design and landscape architect expertise.
- A Development Management Major Projects Team who will lead on pre-application discussions and manage the planning application process. We would look to appoint a dedicated project officer.

All of these teams will be involved in the formation of the masterplan for the site ensuring that there is consistency across the various teams.

b) Provide a high-level commentary on the assumptions that have been made with respect to the housing trajectory for the garden community.

Through discussions with the North Dorchester Consortium, whose land holding forms the majority of the site as currently proposed, an initial phasing plan and development trajectory have been established. It is expected that initially there would be two sales outlets on the site with up to four or five as development progresses.

The North Dorchester Consortium has indicated that a collaboration agreement exists between the main parties which addresses the shared delivery of infrastructure and the necessary evidence to support the development.

c) Set out any opportunities that there are to accelerate this housing trajectory including any interventions that would be needed to support acceleration.

Through the Council's Accelerated Homebuilding Programme actions are already being taken to accelerate the delivery of new homes. These include work to remove barriers to commencement of development and the review of the planning process for major applications. Lessons have been learnt from Poundbury and the Southern Strategic Allocation at Gillingham. We will continue to liaise with the North Dorchester Consortium regarding delivery and opportunities to increase the number of active outlets once the site is under construction.

We will continue to monitor government backed infrastructure funding schemes to see if additional funding could accelerate delivery. It will be important to ensure that infrastructure is delivered in step with the development. To achieve this there may be a need for forward funding of infrastructure where existing infrastructure is at or near capacity. The main areas where this may be necessary are the delivery of additional capacity on the A35 trunk road and the delivery of additional school capacity.

West Dorset District Council has recently formed a wholly owned housing company to assist in the delivery of stalled sites and more generally increase the supply of homes in the area. The company will be in a position to assist the consortium and other landowners as each of their needs become clear, to ensure that delivery can continue at pace.

You will be asked at the end of the form to provide evidence of the following:

- A **timeline of the key milestones and dependencies** between now and start on site for the new garden community.
- A **structure chart / organogram** of the proposed governance structure for the garden community which shows the role and responsibilities of key project partners, e.g. Local Planning Authority, County Council, LEP, Government agencies, landowners, developers, etc.

Infrastructure

11 a) Provide a list of the key items of infrastructure that will be required to support delivery of the garden community. Transport-related; education, health, country parks, etc.

- Link road between A35(T) and A37(B3147) plus additional junction improvements within and around Dorchester. Links to Kingston Maurward College
- Public transport enhancement, walking and cycling links from the new development into Dorchester.
- New first school, middle school and high school all at 4 forms of entry.
- Additional GP surgery provision.
- Local Nature Reserve, visitor centre and informal recreation space.
- Surface Water Attenuation / SUDS
- Structural landscaping
- Formal recreation space, cemetery, allotments and community orchard
- Contributions to town centre enhancement

b) Outline any significant new or upgraded utility provision that will be required to support delivery of the garden community.

Additional sewerage treatment capacity needed for period after 2030 as identified by Wessex Water.

No other significant infrastructure constraints identified at this stage but it is expected that all utilities will need network upgrade to facilitate the scale of development.

Land

12. Provide a brief commentary on the land ownership and development promotion arrangements within the proposed garden community site. This should include:

[Redacted content]

b) Extent to which land is under option and any agreements in place;

Grainger Plc has a promotion agreement in place with its landowners and will be taking a long term interest in the stewardship of the site. Persimmon has a longstanding option in place with its landowners, requiring it to promote the land and apply for planning permission at the earliest, most appropriate time. Persimmon may then purchase the land upon receipt of planning permission. The North Dorchester Consortium has agreed a process of collaboration in terms of commissioning studies and sharing strategic infrastructure costs as well as generally coordinating the delivery and development process. The remaining land is not currently known to be under legal agreement for development.

c) Details of any discussions about delivery mechanisms and models which have taken place;

Private sector led delivery. West Dorset District Council has recently formed a wholly owned housing company to assist with the delivery of homes across the area should there be failures in the market. Should assistance be needed, the company will be able to work with the consortium or other landowners to ensure delivery is maintained at a reasonable pace. Although the council does not have any formal strategic partnerships with registered social landlords at present, there is the possibility of working with the Strategic Partnership recently formed with Homes England to aid in the delivery of the site and address the acute local affordability issues. This is something the Council is keen to explore in more detail.

d) Envisaged site assembly period including whether land can be drawn down in phases;

The North Dorchester Consortium has already assembled the bulk of the land necessary for early delivery. It is anticipated that the land can be drawn down in phases once the masterplan has identified the intended delivery sequence.

e) Details of any part of the site that is public sector land.

There is no public sector land within the site boundary.

You will be asked at the end of the form to provide evidence of the following:

- **Land ownership plan** – an overlay of the Strategic Framework Plan showing the extent of the different key land interests within the scheme boundary plan at the same scale as the Strategic Framework Plan.

Planning

13 a) Indicate the planning status of the site(s) for the garden community.

Preferred Option in emerging Local Plan review

b) Describe the status of the current Local Plan and if relevant provide a timescale and key milestones for its adoption.

The garden community site is the Council's preferred approach to meet the longer term needs of Dorchester and the surrounding area. The site has been subject to regulation 18 consultation as part of the review of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland joint Local Plan. The next stage will be to produce a pre-submission version (regulation 19) for consultation and submission to the secretary of state for examination. Examination is anticipated in late 2020. The current adopted Local Plan was prepared by West Dorset District Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council as a joint plan. This plan was adopted in October 2015 and runs until 2031. The review of the local plan has reached the preferred option stage (regulation 18) with the reviewed plan running to 2036. The Dorset Local Authorities are currently undergoing reorganisation to form two new unitary authorities covering the whole of Dorset. West Dorset District and Weymouth & Portland Borough will form the new Dorset Council with North Dorset District, East Dorset District, Purbeck District and Dorset County Councils. Once the two new councils are formed, a decision will need to be made about the progression of Local Plans. The options are to either progress the emerging local plans to adoption or to produce a local plan covering the new rural Dorset Council area. A delay to the adoption of the Local Plan Review will result from the reorganisation of the Dorset Local Authorities.

c) Highlight any significant planning constraints that may affect allocation and development of the site. E.g. green belt status, flooding risk, designated heritage assets, etc.

The area between the North Dorchester development and the existing built edge of Dorchester is covered by the water meadows in the floodplain of the River Frome. This area will form a significant wetland Local Nature Reserve which will not only provide opportunities for informal recreation space for the North Dorchester area but also help to reduce nitrate pollution downstream especially in Poole Harbour, internationally protected wildlife site. Opportunities will also exist within the area to enhance biodiversity.

Dorchester as a town has a rich heritage dating back to pre-Roman times. The town itself is centred on its roman core with a sharp transition from the conservation area to the water meadows to the north. Poundbury Camp hillfort sits to the west of the town on a high viewpoint looking out over the western edge of the North Dorchester development site. A significant tree belt along the western edge of the Kingston Maurward Registered Park and Garden forms the eastern boundary of the site. There are a number of listed structures to the west of the development site mainly centred around the village of Charminster and its associated conservation area.

Although the development is wholly outside of the Dorset AONB the area will be visible in distant views from within the AONB boundary. In addition, the local landscape outside of the AONB is of high quality and will need to be given careful consideration as the site progresses and the masterplan is produced. The visibility of the development within the landscape will need to be addressed through the layout of the scheme.

d) If any of the site is classified as brownfield, please highlight the proportion and nature of the brownfield element.

There is no significant brownfield land within the development boundaries.

e) Briefly describe the high level planning strategy proposed to facilitate delivery of the garden community. This should include both plan-making and development management routes.

The first stage in the planning strategy for the North Dorchester development will be its successful inclusion in the pre-submission version of the Local Plan Review. Alongside the production of this pre-submission Local Plan the Council will commission a masterplan for the site and gather the necessary evidence to support the site's formal allocation. The masterplan will be formed through consultation with the local community and statutory bodies to give detailed guidelines for the development of the area.

Should the Local Plan Review be found sound, it will be adopted as a replacement to the currently adopted Local Plan. The masterplan is likely to be adopted alongside the Local Plan Review as a Supplementary Planning Document and be used to guide planning decisions on the site.

The councils have an Implementation Team whose role it will be to take forward the site allocation policy and masterplan and work to deliver the site. This team bridges the gap between the Local Plan allocation and the Major Projects Team which sits within Development Services.

Within the major projects team, there will be a project lead who will act as the main planning officer contact within the council throughout the planning application stage. The role of this dedicated project lead will be to engage in the masterplan process to gain a clear understanding of the development from the early stages. A planning performance agreement will be put in place to facilitate an efficient and effective development management process including pre-application meetings.

Viability

14 a) Provide a brief market commentary on existing land values, levels of local housing demand and need, local housing affordability, and types of homes needed locally to meet need.

[REDACTED]

Through the councils opening doors website we have created a home ownership register that seeks to gain public input as to the type and tenure of housing required and this shows a high level of demand in the area particularly for young couples and young families. A professional private rented sector would be welcomed to meet the needs of those for whom home ownership is out of reach or does not appeal to their lifestyle choices.

There is a high level of affordable housing need in the area with West Dorset being classified as a 'high affordability pressure' area by Homes England. This is borne out by the councils own assessment that many jobs filled in Dorchester are held by those unable to afford to live within the town and undertake a daily commute. The latest published lower quartile house price to lower quartile annual earnings ratio for West Dorset is 11.38.

Currently, there are 1,701 households on the West Dorset Housing register; of these 654 have a connection to Dorchester demonstrating a high level of need at the town. The need is for homes of all sizes from one bed properties to larger family homes.

Of the 654 applicants with a local connection to Dorchester, 122 households are only eligible for low cost home ownership. This is likely to be an under representation of need with recently built shared ownership properties in Charminster all sold off plan within a few weeks of being released onto the market.

b) Provide a high level viability appraisal (budget statement and linked cash flow statement) for the garden community project, highlighting key infrastructure requirements, any funding gaps and how they might be filled. This should include an explanation of the assumptions that have been made.

To inform the next stage of the production of the Local Plan Review (regulation 19 pre-submission consultation), the site (and the Local Plan Review as a whole) will be required to undergo a high level viability appraisal as detailed in the Planning Practice Guidance. This is one of the areas where assistance is requested as part of this Garden Communities bid.

Recent experience of the Gillingham Southern Extension has highlighted to the Council the need to understand the cost implications of the infrastructure requirements on large scale schemes. Some very broad ideas of infrastructure requirements have been established but not yet costed in detail. These include the need for additional school provision and for a link road as outlined above.

As the project progresses, the Council will continue to monitor all funding opportunities to help deliver the necessary infrastructure to enable high quality development to take place at an accelerated rate.

c) Set out the key dependencies and phasing implications between housing and infrastructure delivery.

Where the development rate exceeds the capacity of the existing infrastructure there may be a need for external funding to facilitate a higher delivery rate. Main infrastructure constraints include education provision as existing schools are already oversubscribed and highway improvements where junctions along the A35 trunk road bypass around the town are at or near capacity.

d) Describe any plans to access finance, including private sector investment.

The North Dorchester Consortium has provided significant private sector investment to progress the allocation of the site. Consultation, including public exhibitions, was undertaken by the Consortium, which has also gathered evidence to support the allocation of the site. Further evidence is being assembled by the Consortium to address concerns raised and to support the delivery of the site.

Funding bids, if successful, will help to deliver a higher quality scheme and at an accelerated rate, delivering a higher quality development more quickly.

Government Support

15. Please outline what aspects of the government support package set out in the prospectus you would like to draw on to support delivery of the new garden community. Please be as specific as possible and highlight how the support requested would help deliver additional or accelerated housing delivery.

Resource funding

At this stage WDDC is seeking funding for further evidence and to contribute towards the Council's masterplan for the site. This is likely to be in addition to the work necessary to support future applications on the site; it will however be used to inform those future applications.

Funding towards necessary evidence to ensure the proposal is deliverable and therefore suitable for inclusion within the Local Plan Review for examination is requested. This funding will also help to ensure that the Local Plan Review is successful at examination. The greater detail available as a result of the evidence assessments will help to refine the policy for the site and inform the site masterplan enabling the delivery of a high quality development and one that adopts the principles of the garden communities' concept. Funding will enable greater exploration of detailed elements of the masterplan to ensure high quality development is achieved in a timely fashion.

Specific pieces of evidence required include a detailed heritage assessment to fully understand the implications for the local historic environment; a landscape assessment to fully define the site's developable area and establish broad principles of a landscaping strategy for the site; a high level utilities appraisal of the area and a viability appraisal in accordance with national policy. These pieces of evidence will help to inform the masterplan for the site and increase the likelihood that successful applications can be made by housebuilders as early as possible once the Local Plan Review is adopted.

Delivery advice

The developers involved with the site are already indicating a high level of private sector investment in the site to enable its delivery. The infrastructure benefits that the development of the site will bring are significant but they will be costly. Advice on how to secure the best outcome will be welcomed. We look forward to having a discussion about the different aspects of Homes England's offer that would be appropriate to the site and the opportunities to learn lessons from other successful garden communities.

Delivery Vehicles

Although we have not fully considered the opportunities that site specific delivery vehicles, we are willing to work closely with the Garden Communities Programme to explore any opportunities that will help deliver the high quality development befitting of the town. This would need to be established alongside the existing landowners.

Cross-government Brokerage

There may be opportunities for brokerage to unblock issues. Issues include:

- Highways concerns especially as the A35 trunk road skirts the south of the town.
- There have been concerns raised about the impact on the historic environment especially given the rich heritage associated with Dorchester and the surrounding area.
- There is a need for the development to deliver additional school provision at all three tiers of the local pyramid. Support from the Department for Education will assist with delivery.

Peer learning opportunities

The local authorities across Dorset are combining to form two unitary authorities. One will cover the urban areas of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole and one covering the remaining rural area. As local plans progress in the rural council, and housing needs are planned for, there is significant likelihood that other large sites will be considered necessary not only to meet its own needs but also to meet the demands of the urban authority under the Duty to Cooperate.


The Garden Communities scheme is an attractive opportunity for meeting housing needs in a way that suits those who wish to live in a more urban environment rather than a small rural village. The North Dorchester development is seen as a pilot for future garden communities across Dorset. This will help to tackle the affordability issues that are prominent across the whole County in an environmentally sensitive way and is something being supported by the Dorset LEP.


Additional Evidence Checklist


These items of evidence need to be submitted to gardencommunities@communities.gsi.gov.uk

By checking or selecting 'yes' I confirm that I have emailed a copy of this evidence to gardencommunities@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Location Plan - one or more plans showing the location of the proposed garden community outlined in red. It should also indicate the location of any nearby communities/development, and the boundaries of the Local Planning Authority, County Council, LEP. Include site boundary coordinates. This plan should also highlight the extent of brownfield conditions on the site if relevant. 

Strategic Framework Plan for the proposed garden community – this should show: the broad disposition of proposed land uses and major infrastructure proposed. 

Land ownership Plan – an overlay of the Strategic Framework Plan showing the extent of the different key land interests within the scheme boundary plan at the same scale as the Strategic Framework Plan. 

Provide a **structure chart / organogram** of the proposed governance, legal and financing structure for the garden community which shows the role and responsibilities of key project partners, e.g. Local Planning Authority, County Council, LEP, Government agencies, landowners, developers, etc. 

High level viability appraisal (budget statement, and linked cash flow with all key assumptions clearly shown)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A timeline of the key milestones and dependencies between now and start on site for the new garden community.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Annual housing trajectory for the garden community.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Can you provide evidence of support for your proposal from the following: <i>You will be asked to answer 'Yes', 'No', or 'Awaiting Response.' If 'Yes' is selected you will need to provide details of engagement and attach relevant evidence. If 'No' or 'Awaiting Response' is selected you will need to provide reasoning.</i></p>	

a) Local MP(s)	<input type="text" value="Yes"/>
b) Local community	<input type="text" value="Yes"/>
c) Local Enterprise Partnership(s)	<input type="text" value="Yes"/>
d) County Council (where relevant)	<input type="text" value="Yes"/>
e) Neighbouring local authorities	<input type="text" value="No"/>

Please provide further reasoning

Dorset is becoming a unitary authority in April 2019. The proposal is well within the new Dorset Council area.
 Please see response to Question 8.

f) For private sector led - the relevant local authority	<input type="text" value="No"/>
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Please provide further reasoning

Local Authority led bid however a letter of support from the Private Sector partners (the North Dorchester Consortium) is expected shortly

g) Any other key stakeholders	<input type="text" value="Yes"/>
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