



Our ref:
Your ref:

Hilary Jordan
Planning (Community & Policy Development) Corporate
Manager
West Dorset District Council

via email

Rachel Sandy
Highways Development Management
Team Leader- South West
Ash House
Falcon Road
Sowton Industrial Estate
Exeter EX2 7LB

Direct Line: [REDACTED]

31 October 2018

Dear Ms Jordan

North Dorchester Garden Communities Bid

Highways England is the highway authority responsible for operating, maintaining and improving the strategic road network, which in this case comprises the A35 and its junctions. We therefore have a key interest in the future growth of Dorchester and the surrounding area. We welcome the active lead being taken by West Dorset District Council in working towards a comprehensive and high quality design for the North Dorchester development and its engagement with partners, such as ourselves, in achieving this. We are aware that the County town has grown significantly over the last few decades as a result of the development of Poundbury, with its associated impact on the A35 trunk road and resulting mitigation scheme. However, the Poundbury development will come to an end in the coming years and we recognise that the Council needs to consider the long term future growth of the town to support the local economy and meet the area's housing need.

We understand that the North Dorchester site is the preferred direction for future growth, however such significant expansion of the town needs to be planned appropriately and well-matched by the delivery of necessary transport infrastructure. The A35 and its associated junctions around Dorchester already experience capacity constraints and congestion at peak times. We therefore welcome the collaborative working between West Dorset District Council, Dorset County Council and ourselves in developing the necessary modelling to support the transport evidence base for the allocation of the site in the developing Local Plan, and the identification of the highways improvements required to safely accommodate it. It is understood by all parties that strategic highways improvements will be necessary to enable the North Dorchester site to come forward. A successful bid will therefore support the provision of highways infrastructure, planned and delivered holistically alongside public transport and non-car travel modes to create a sustainable and integrated transport infrastructure for the site.

It will be essential that the development strikes the appropriate balance between the provision of significant additional housing, employment opportunities and local facilities to create a sustainable new community, and that delivery is phased to match the provision of the necessary transport infrastructure in order to minimise the traffic impact on the strategic road network. The garden communities bid will help to facilitate the realisation of a well-designed, comprehensive and locally led development that addresses these needs.

We are therefore fully supportive of West Dorset District Council's bid.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

Rachel Sandy
South West Operations - Planning & Development
Email: [Redacted email address]

[Redacted contact information]