South East Dorset Strategy

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SED 01 First Detailed Proposals

Planning & Transport Bournemouth Borough Council Town Hall Annexe Bournemouth BH2 6EA Environmental Services **Dorset County Council** County Hall Dorchester DT1 1XJ Strategic Planning Services Borough of Poole Civic Centre Poole BH15 2RU Final First Detailed Proposals for RSS Sub-Regional Policies for South East Dorset.

1 Brief Description of the Joint Study Area

1.1 South East Dorset, focused on Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch, is one of the South Coast's major urban centres. It is a key driver in the South West region and has a vital role in the Sustainable Communities agenda. With a population of over 400,000, it is the second largest urban area in the South West. It has a broadly-based economy, with significant specialisms in tourism, education, financial services, high tech and marine industry, retailing and entertainment. The area is served by Bournemouth Airport, the Port of Poole and barely adequate road and rail links to London and the South East, very poor to the north and west. Its setting in internationally recognized quality countryside and coastal environment makes it unique for a conurbation of its size. It is a place that attracts people to live, learn, work, relax and retire. It has seen significant growth over many years, principally through the in-migration of both people and companies, and substantially from London and the South East.

2. Vision

- 2.1 In the future South East Dorset will strengthen and develop its regional, national and international role within its outstanding environment and be recognized internationally as a prime example of a sustainable conurbation. This will be achieved by:
 - a) sustaining, safeguarding, promoting and celebrating the unique quality of its natural environment and coastal setting,
 - b) growing a dynamic economy that makes minimal demands on natural resources,
 - c) fulfilling its economic potential through investing in people, transport and other infrastructure,
 - d) promoting job growth that reduces out-commuting and increases local wage rates,
 - e) connecting business, educational establishments and communities,
 - f) providing quality housing for all sections of the population,
 - g) enriching the quality and breadth of its culture,
 - h) creating and strengthening vibrant communities,
 - i) improving the quality of its urban environment, and
 - j) reducing the need to travel within the conurbation, improving accessibility and investing in sustainable transport.

3. Key Strategic Planning Issues

- a) How to reconcile the pressures for new development arising from the need to secure the long-term prosperity of the area and demand for housing with the need to conserve and enhance the internationally and nationally recognized environmental quality of the area.
- b) How to achieve a significant increase in the supply of affordable and appropriate housing, when most housing will be built on small urban sites while planning mechanisms favour the use of large greenfield sites to achieve such an outcome.
- c) How to provide for an ageing population, taking account of the impact on the labour force, the need for support services and the need for specialist accommodation.
- d) How to improve accessibility both within the area and to and from other areas, to support economic, social and environmental wellbeing.
- e) How to ensure that focussing development within the main built-up areas leads to improvements in the quality of life, and does not lead to a worsening of environmental or social conditions, or to an unacceptable level of traffic congestion.
- f) How to achieve the investment needed to secure the infrastructure required to implement the strategy.

4. Levels of Growth

- 4.1 Advice on the final level of housing growth and its distribution within South East Dorset will be presented to the Regional Assembly shortly. A substantial amount of work has been undertaken to date looking at the issue from both the demand and supply sides. As a benchmark, taking account of existing commitments, urban potential and urban extensions, up to 34,500 dwellings could be accommodated at the PUA between 2001 and 2026. The wider study area would contribute to a higher total of up to 40,400 dwellings over the same period.
- 4.2 These figures, together with higher ranges based on increases over the levels proposed in RPG10 (up to 57,500 dwellings across South East Dorset), have been tested with regard to their compatibility with the vision for the area, labour market accounts, transportation implications, implications for water supply and sewage treatment, and public acceptability. In order to meet most elements of the vision and to comply with the absolute constraints on development in certain areas, levels of growth higher than the benchmark level could be met only by significant intensification within the existing urban areas.
- 4.3 With regard to the vision, the principal conclusion was that the greater the overall level of growth in South East Dorset, the greater the degree of conflict with the outcomes of the vision.
- 4.4 Provisional findings from the labour market accounts show that between 2001 and 2016, there would be an excess of supply over jobs. After 2016, there would be a very significant shortfall of economically active people. These balances are based on a continuation of current commuting patterns, which demonstrate a substantial amount of out-commuting from South East Dorset. Some of the shortfall in the later part of the period could be made up by reducing out-commuting flows. Further work on this issue is in hand and will be provided to the Regional Assembly shortly.
- 4.5 With regard to transportation, the impact on the future network (i.e. including the proposed transport changes to 2026) has been assessed. Growth levels higher than the benchmark level (as set out in paragraph 4.1 above) would be unacceptable to the Highways Agency and the local highway authorities because the forecast levels of congestion would be economically unacceptable and areas of the PUA would suffer from unacceptable air quality.
- 4.6 None of the growth levels imply major difficulties with regard to water supply and sewage treatment, although substantial investment will be required.
- 4.7 With regard to public attitudes, the consultation exercise held early in 2005 showed that accelerated growth was viewed with some suspicion, while present growth rates were thought to be more likely to deliver a balanced environment. Nevertheless there was widespread concern about how to generate more affordable housing.
- 4.8 Growth levels for South East Dorset are likely to be among the highest for any major urban area in the South West, even though the opportunities for the outward

expansion of the conurbation are severely limited. To achieve the vision for South East Dorset, it will be essential that a commensurate level of regional investment in transport and other infrastructure is made to accompany the estimated growth. Without this investment, there is a very real danger that the economic prosperity of the area will be jeopardized, and the quality of the area will deteriorate.

5. Spatial Strategy

- 5.1 The spatial strategy aims to secure the vision by focusing development on the existing built up area in a manner which reinforces those elements of the conurbation's structure which can contribute towards the development of a genuinely sustainable urban form of unique character, within an internationally valued environment. The spatial strategy is thus:
 - a) to concentrate the majority of development in urban areas, particularly at town and local centres which are on prime transport corridors;
 - b) to focus the most intensive activities in the centres of Bournemouth and Poole in order to continue an 'urban renaissance' of attractive, vibrant and culturally stimulating town centres;
 - c) to bring forward the development of Bournemouth Airport as a regionally significant employment site, once the related transport infrastructure identified in paragraph 5.2(q) has been provided;
 - d) to continue Poole Bridge Regeneration Initiative as a regionally significant mixed residential and employment scheme;
 - e) to protect and enhance the sub-region's key natural and built environmental assets, including internationally valued habitats and unique coastal and landscape characteristics;
 - f) To make provision for the following urban extensions:

For housing:

Roeshot Hill, Christchurch	Up to 600 dwellings
Pardy's Hill, Corfe Mullen*	Up to 700 dwellings
Wimborne North*	Up to 600 dwellings
Cuthbury, Wimborne	Up to 200 dwellings
Parley Cross, West Parley	Up to 900 dwellings
TOTAL	Up to 3,000 dwellings

For employment:

Blunt's Farm, Ferndown

Up to 20ha

*The development of these sites will be subject to a satisfactory hydrological survey.

LDFs will define detailed site boundaries and set out the phased release of land, taking account of the implementation of infrastructure pre-requisites, local need and the availability of suitable brownfield sites;

- g) apart from the limited urban extensions identified in (f) above, to contain the outward spread of the urban areas and other settlements within or bounded by the existing boundaries of the South East Dorset Green Belt;
- h) to improve the connectivity of the South East Dorset by air, sea, rail and road to other parts of Britain and Europe, making best use of the principal gateways of Bournemouth Airport and the Port of Poole; and
- i) to manage use of the transport network and locate development so as to minimise the need to travel within the conurbation and reduce the proportion of journeys made by single occupancy cars.
- 5.2 In more detail, the sustainable growth of South East Dorset will be managed by:

Economy

- a) providing for the development of a net increase of 110ha of employment land, on a variety of site types and locations;
- b) using the employment land at Bournemouth Airport primarily for air-related and knowledge-based industries. The use of a significant proportion of the site for office development that relies on high levels of car-based commuting will not be allowed;
- c) directing major office development (> 2,000 sq m) to Bournemouth and Poole town centres, Lansdowne and Castle Lane East;
- d) protecting established and committed employment sites that meet sustainability criteria and are significant in accommodating employment, other than where such sites are needed to accommodate waste management/treatment facilities;
- e) providing opportunities for the expansion of Bournemouth University, the Arts Institute and further education institutions;
- f) maintaining Bournemouth and Poole Town Centres' roles as major subregional shopping centres;
- g) promoting the growth of sustainable tourism by encouraging development that will improve the quality and range of attractions and accommodation, contribute to regeneration, and help to extend the tourist season.

Housing

- h) providing for the development of up to 40,400 dwellings (subject to confirmation) between 2001 and 2026, over 90% of which will be within existing urban areas;
- securing the highest possible amount of good quality, affordable housing for sale or rent, taking account of the viability of individual sites and other demands on developer contributions;
- securing a mix of dwelling types that meets the needs of all sections of the population;
- achieving higher densities than those achieved in the past, except where this would harm the quality of the urban environment and/or would be adjacent to heathland SSSIs.

Community and related infrastructure

- safeguarding and improving public open space and streetscapes within urban areas,
- m) providing recreational/informal open space, community forests and/or country parks close to the urban areas, but away from environmentally sensitive areas, and accessible by public transport, cycling or walking;
- n) from the conurbation, improving the accessibility by public transport, cycling and walking of significant areas of countryside recreation, including the Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site, Cranborne Chase and the New Forest
- within the urban areas, providing for local services and facilities for all of the community, including education, faith, health, sport and recreation, and culture. Such facilities should be retained where there is a continuing need and there are no accessible local alternatives.

Transportation

- (p) enhancing public transport, walking and cycling provision, increasing demand management by transferring more road space to priority vehicles and managing the supply and use of parking;
- (q) delivering strategically significant transport improvements:
 - Prime transport corridor improvements;
 - Poole Bridge Regeneration network;
 - A31 to Poole corridor improvements;

- making provision for a new passenger terminal at Bournemouth Airport and a package of measures to improve access, including link road to the A338;
- Port of Poole deeper access channel and berth improvements.

All of these transport improvements will be located and designed to minimize their environmental effects.

- (r) Expanding significantly the role of rail, for passengers and freight, by:
 - providing new local passenger services and stations, including a Swanage connection, and using rail for local park and ride;
 - introducing new links to Bristol and other major centres in the South West;
 - further expanding rail freight use at the Port of Poole.

6. Key transportation infrastructure and other investment priorities

6.1 These issues are now addressed in the implementation plan. It should be noted that there are key infrastructure investment requirements that will be needed if the strategy is to be implemented.

7. Demand management proposals

7.1 These issues will be addressed in the fuller version of the strategy that will be delivered to the Regional Assembly shortly.