

Introduction

Weymouth is one of the most important resorts and service centres in the South West. Situated halfway along the Jurassic Coast, a UNESCO world heritage site, the town will be in the worlds spotlight in 2012, when Portland Harbour hosts the Olympic and Paralympics sailing events, which will provide an opportunity to support tourism and economic growth and establish lasting legacies such as improved transport connections. The draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the South West identifies a need to broaden the town's economic base, and to improve Weymouth's self-containment.

Within this context, the RSS has made provision for sustainable housing growth in the Weymouth and Dorchester Housing Market Area, comprising 5,000 new homes within the urban area of Weymouth, and 700 homes as part of an urban extension to the town.

In 2008, West Dorset District Council (WDDC) commissioned a study to investigate the deliverability of the urban extension to Weymouth. The Weymouth Area of Search (AoS) encompassed all land adjacent to the Weymouth's urban area within West Dorset, and included land to the north of Littlemoor Road in Bincombe parish.

The 2008 study has enabled WDDC to identify three options for the Weymouth Urban Extension (WUE) in the 'Options for Growth' consultation document published in June 2009. Option 1 is an extension to Littlemoor on land to the north of the Littlemoor link of the Weymouth Relief Road currently under construction.

The landowners in the Littlemoor AoS (the Littlemoor Development Consortium (LDC)) have joined forces to prepare an Illustrative Masterplan (see page 7) showing how the RSS requirement can be

delivered in a way which is consistent with the Government sustainable communities agenda. This brochure explains how the Masterplan has been prepared, the merits of locating the WUE at Littlemoor in the context of relevant Government guidance, and the design strategy Masterplan.



Location Plan

The Site

Littlemoor is a small community 6km to the north east of Weymouth town centre. At its heart, to the south of the proposed Littlemoor link of the Weymouth Relief Road, is a vibrant local shopping centre, which contains a wide variety of services and facilities. The settlement is well connected to the rest of the Weymouth urban area with a regular bus service to Weymouth, and on account of it being close to Upwey railway station.



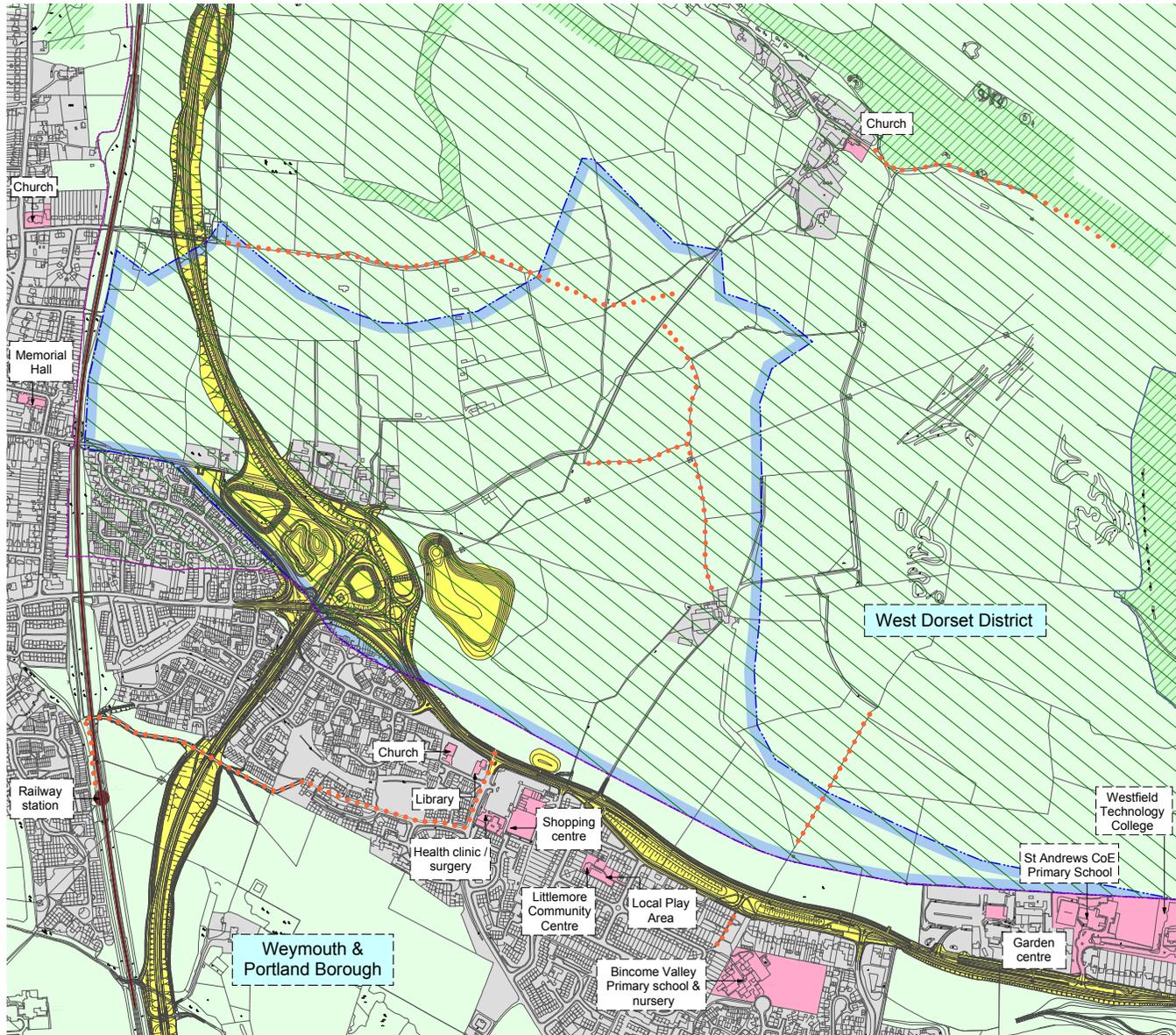
The Littlemoor AoS is on the opposite side of Littlemoor Road, and comprises open agricultural land at the southern edge of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The land is generally open apart from Bincombe Marsh Dairy and several agricultural buildings along Icen Lane. There are no Sites of Nature Conservation Interest or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the AoS. The AoS is generally flat, lying as it does at the foot of the downland to the north of the Weymouth urban area. Public access is limited to a few public rights of

way. The area of search context is shown in figure 1.

Figure 2 sets out the opportunities and constraints within the AoS. LDC consider that land to the north of Littlemoor Road (area 1) offers the greatest potential to accommodate future residential development in a way that minimises impact on its surroundings, and promotes sustainable development. This area of land straddles the district boundaries of West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland Councils. Access to the land can be taken from a number of points along the Littlemore Road section of the



new relief road. The land is well connected and within reasonable walking distance to the facilities and services within the existing urban area, including Upwey railway station and existing bus routes. It is on this basis that LDC has prepared the Illustrative Masterplan .



KEY:

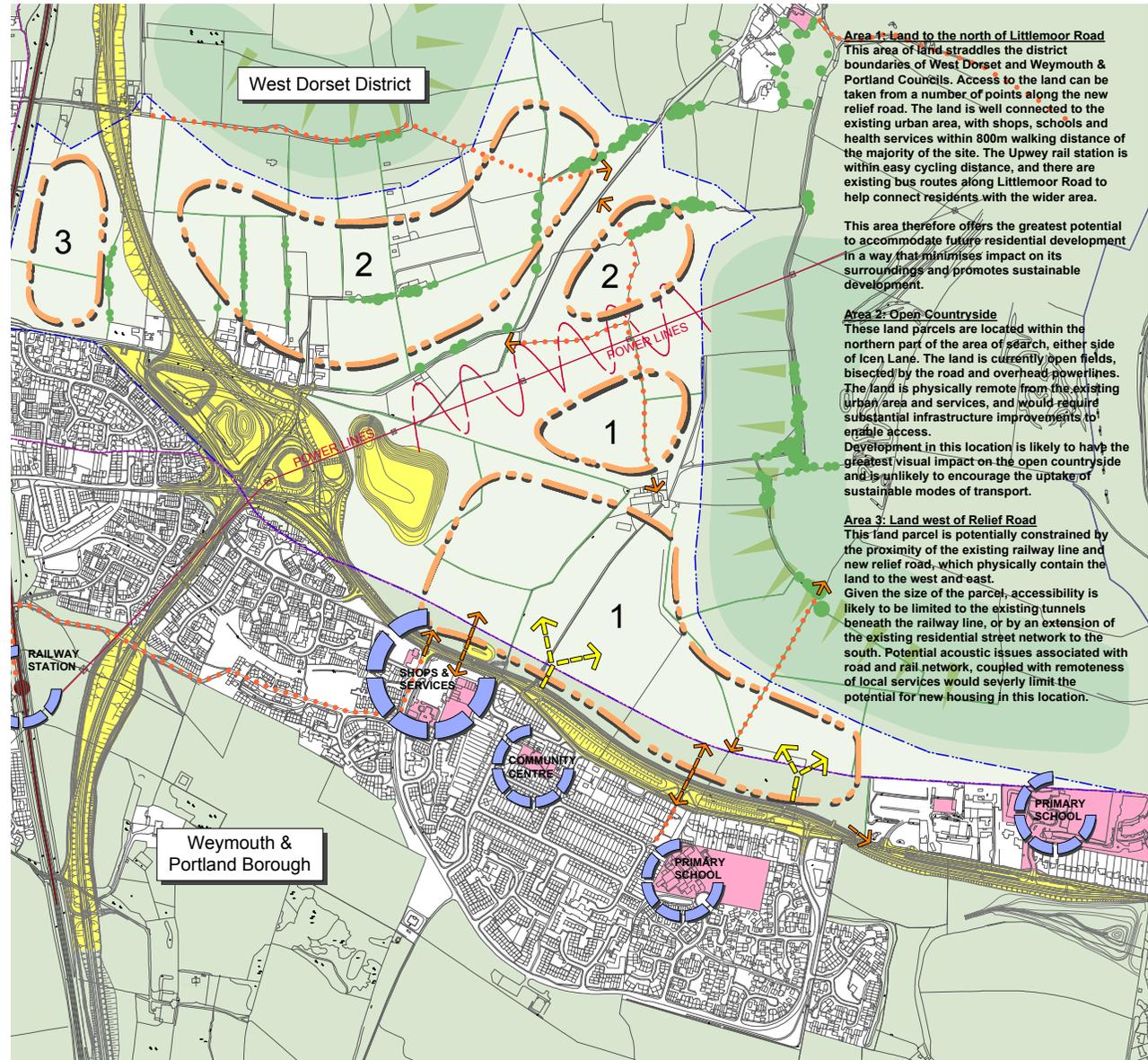
- Littlemoor Area of Search
- Existing Settlement
- Existing Community Facilities (Shops, Schools, Church, Library etc)
- Open Space / Agricultural Land
- Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI)
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- SA23 Scheduled Monument
- Route of Weymouth Relief Road (Under Construction)
- Public Right of Way (Footpath / Bridleway)
- District Boundary (West Dorset District Council / Weymouth & Portland Borough Council)

Figure I: West Dorset District Council Context Plan

KEY:

-  Littlemoor Area of Search
-  Existing Settlement
-  Key Destination (Shops, Schools, Church, Library etc)
-  Open Space / Agricultural Land
-  Existing trees / vegetation (Approximate locations)
-  Steeply sloping ground
-  Broad land parcels (For descriptive purposes)
-  Route of Weymouth Relief Road (Under Construction)
-  Public Right of Way (Footpath / Bridleway)
-  Route of overhead power lines (indicative extent of constraint)
-  District Boundary (West Dorset District Council / Weymouth & Portland Borough Council)
-  Key locations for future vehicular & pedestrian access to urban extension.

Figure 2: Opportunities and Constraints



Area 1: Land to the north of Littlemoor Road
 This area of land straddles the district boundaries of West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Councils. Access to the land can be taken from a number of points along the new relief road. The land is well connected to the existing urban area, with shops, schools and health services within 800m walking distance of the majority of the site. The Upwey rail station is within easy cycling distance, and there are existing bus routes along Littlemoor Road to help connect residents with the wider area.

This area therefore offers the greatest potential to accommodate future residential development in a way that minimises impact on its surroundings and promotes sustainable development.

Area 2: Open Countryside
 These land parcels are located within the northern part of the area of search, either side of Ican Lane. The land is currently open fields, bisected by the road and overhead powerlines. The land is physically remote from the existing urban area and services, and would require substantial infrastructure improvements to enable access. Development in this location is likely to have the greatest visual impact on the open countryside and is unlikely to encourage the uptake of sustainable modes of transport.

Area 3: Land west of Relief Road
 This land parcel is potentially constrained by the proximity of the existing railway line and new relief road, which physically contain the land to the west and east. Given the size of the parcel, accessibility is likely to be limited to the existing tunnels beneath the railway line, or by an extension of the existing residential street network to the south. Potential acoustic issues associated with road and rail network, coupled with remoteness of local services would severely limit the potential for new housing in this location.

A Sustainable Settlement

Paragraph 14 of 'Planning Policy Guidance Note 1: Delivering Sustainable Development' states that the Government is committed to developing strong, vibrant and sustainable communities and to promoting community cohesion in both urban and rural areas. Local planning authorities are required to prepare planning policies which;

- ensure that the impact of development on the social fabric of communities is considered and taken into account;
- seek to reduce inequalities;
- address accessibility for all members of the community to jobs, health, housing, education, shops, leisure and community facilities;
- take into account the needs of all the community, including particular requirements relating to age, sex, ethnic background, religion, disability or income;
- deliver safe, healthy and attractive places to live; and
- support the promotion of health and well being by making provision for physical activity.

These criteria can be seen as the main characteristics of a sustainable community, and is a list of factors against which the local planning authority must assess each of the three options in determining which is the most sustainable.

In terms of accessibility, the vast majority of the site lies within 400m of the existing facilities within Littlemoor local centre, and the whole site lies within 800m. The Institution of Highways and Transportation's 'Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot' defines 400m as a

desirable walking distance, and 800m as an acceptable walking distance. The facilities within Littlemoor local centre include a large supermarket, a dentist, a chinese take-away, a pharmacy, a health centre, a surgery, a hardware store, a newsagent and post office, a fish and chip shop, a charity shop, a green grocer, a hair salon, a clothes store, a library and a church. A further chinese take-away, an osteopath and a vet are located on the southern side of Littlemoor Road, also adjacent to the proposed development site. The Littlemoor community centre and a children's play area are located to the south-east of Littlemoor local centre, again within 800m of the entire site.

The existing Bincombe Valley Primary School lies 500m from the centre of the site and the Westfield Technology College lies approximately 1km to the east of the centre of the site.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport identifies 5km as a distance that is generally feasible to be undertaken by bicycle. This would bring the majority of Weymouth urban area within a reasonable cycling distance. It is likely that in reality the topography of some parts of the town will deter some cycle trips. However, the route along Littlemoor Road to local facilities and to Preston to the east (approximately 2km) is relatively flat, and easily undertaken by bicycle.

The site benefits from lying immediately to the north of the existing bus service nos. 2 and 2A that run at a frequency of 6 per hour between Littlemoor and the centre of Weymouth, either via the A354 or via Preston and Overcombe. The bus service no. 31 also runs along Littlemoor Road adjacent to the site between Weymouth town centre and Axminster via Dorchester, Bridport and Lyme Regis at a frequency of 1 per hour.



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The site is located approximately 1km to the east of the Upwey railway station. This distance represents a walk time of around 15 minutes. The site will be linked to the station via Louviers Road and Beverley Road and a new footpath link that will be constructed as part of the Weymouth Relief Road project. Upwey station is well equipped, with automatic ticket machines and station announcements, real time service information and CCTV surveillance. Bicycle stands are provided on the western platform. Train services run into Weymouth twice hourly in the peak hours and hourly at off-peak times. The journey to Weymouth takes 5 minutes. In the other direction trains run at frequencies of 1 per hour during peak and off-peak periods with services to a range of destinations including Dorchester, Poole, Bournemouth, Southampton, London Waterloo, Bristol and Gloucester.

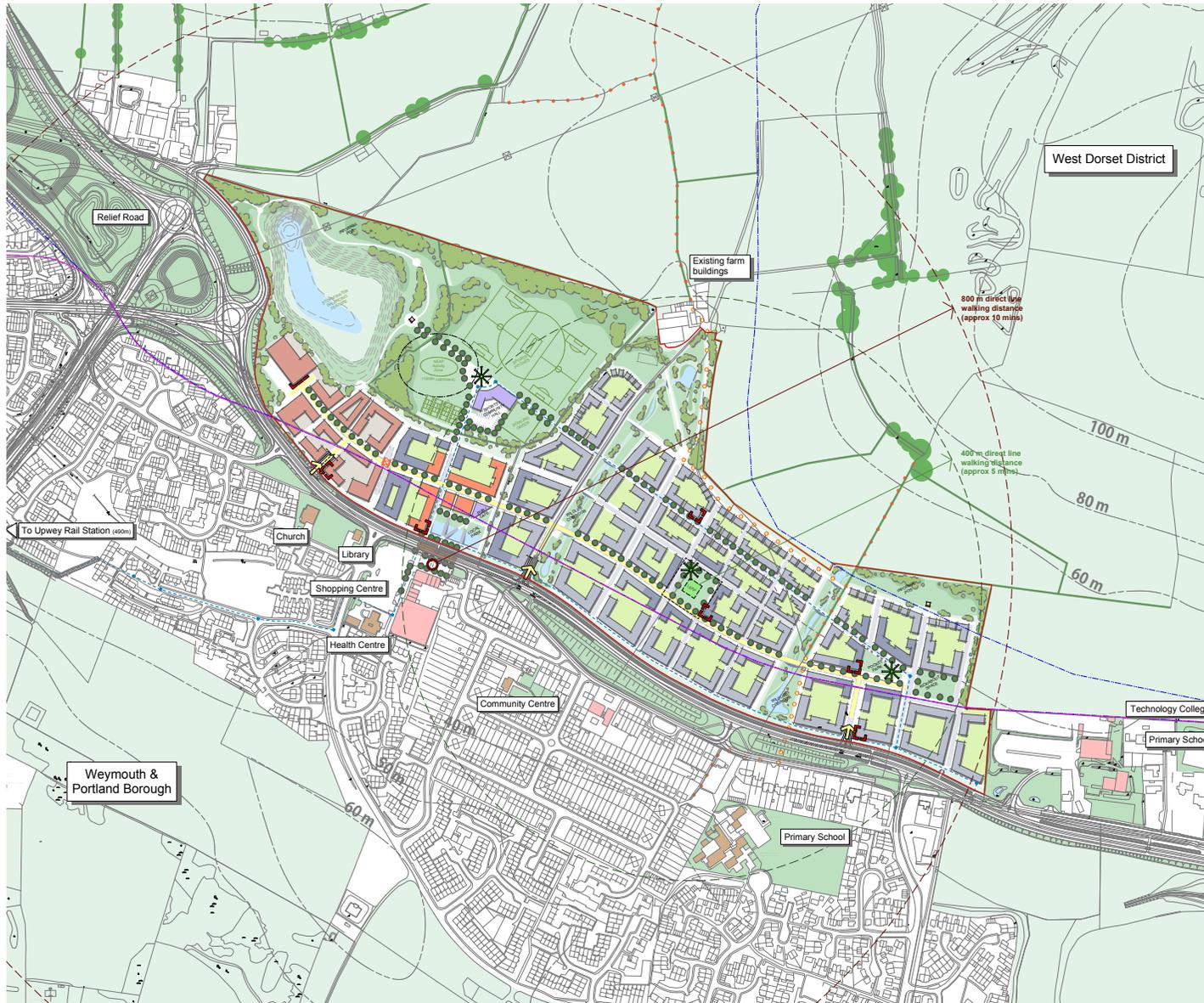
Upwey Station



It is proposed to create a new business park within the development. Some additional employment is available locally, but the majority of remaining commuting trips are likely to be to other parts of Weymouth, or to other urban centres. The existing bus services adjacent to the site provide links to both the centre of Weymouth and to the Granby Industrial Area. The service no. 31 also provides a link to Dorchester and other surrounding urban centres.

As far as the impact on the landscape is concerned, the site at Littlemoor is flat and sheltered and screened by the rising land to the north, and LDC consider that development could potentially be provided without major impact on the wider existing landscape character, and would not interfere to any material extent with any recreational activity. The site is a low risk flood area, and that there are few nature conservation constraints. Opportunities exist within the site for additional green infrastructure.

LDC consider that the best option to deliver the RSS requirement of an urban extension to Weymouth, by creating a new sustainable community with the best opportunities to integrate with the existing urban area, is at Littlemoor. The Illustrative Masterplan shown at Figure 3 gives an indication of how this can be achieved in line with the Governments sustainable communities agenda.



KEY:

- Littlemoor Area of Search
(Approximate boundary as identified by WDDC for the urban extension of Weymouth)
- Administrative Boundary
(WDDC North / W&P&C South)
- Proposed Urban Extension
- Existing Buildings
(Retail / Employment)
- Existing Facilities
(Retail / Employment)
- Existing Facilities
(School / Community Uses)
- Proposed Residential Development
(Medium - Low Density Zone Indicative)
- Proposed Residential Development
(High Density Zone Indicative)
- Proposed Development
(Community Facilities)
- Proposed Mixed Use Development
(Office / Live/Work / Retail)
- Proposed Development
(Employment Uses)
- Existing Trees
(Approximate Size & Position)
- Proposed Structure Planting
(Illustrative)
- Proposed Avenue Planting
(Illustrative)
- Existing Hedgelines
(Approximate Size & Position)
- Proposed Hedgelines
- Proposed Public Open Space
(Use Varies)
- Proposed Balancing Ponds / Streams
(Integrated SUD's)
- Route of existing Public Right of Way
- Proposed Public Right of Way
(Connecting Links)
- Key Cycle Route
- Local Equipped Area of Play
(LEAP - 400m Catchment)
- Landmark Public Realm /
Building Line
- Proposed Vehicular Access
& Main Street Alignment
- Pedestrian / cycle access only
(No through route for vehicles)
- Pedestrian crossing zone
(indicative area)
- Contour Line
(Approximate location)

Figure 3: Masterplan



Design Statement

In order to ensure future development is planned to help promote sustainable living, it is important to ensure it is well connected to the existing community. For this reason the proposed urban extension is located alongside Littlemoor Road, and designed to link into and support the existing schools, shops and services in this area.

Vehicular access to the new development would be taken at three points along the upgraded route of Littlemoor Road, with internal circulation designed to help prioritise pedestrian movement wherever possible, in order to encourage walking and cycling within the local area.

Pedestrian access within the local area would be enhanced by the joining up of existing public rights of way, in order to create a continuous network of footpaths. The introduction of green links north from Littlemoor Road would help promote biodiversity and maintain a physical and visual connections with the countryside beyond. These features would together help create safe routes to school for future

residents, and provide improved access to new areas of open space and countryside for existing residents living in the Littlemoor area.

The illustrative layout of streets is designed to help promote physical and visual connections with the existing area, and will create a permeable edge along Littlemoor Road and enable future residents to access the local bus services.

New areas of public open space including sports pitches and play facilities could be incorporated into the layout of the development, and help act as a buffer to the open countryside beyond. Informal areas of open space could accommodate linear swales or reed beds as part of a sustainable urban drainage system, with the potential to integrate the proposed balancing lagoons associated with the relief road as part of this network. Substantial areas of landscaping would be planted to the northern edge of the development in order to soften its impact on the surrounding countryside.



The urban extension site as shown measures 36.14 hectares (including the adjacent relief road lagoons), and provides adequate space to comfortably accommodate 700 dwellings in accordance with the findings of the RSS.



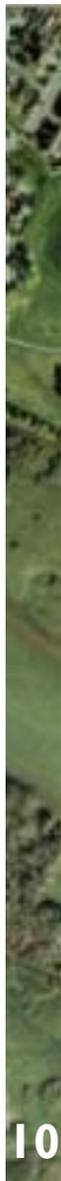
In order to promote a sustainable community where people can move around safely and access goods and services locally, an element of mixed use development is proposed adjacent to the Littlemoor shopping centre. These uses could include a new business park, small scale office space, live / work units and local services to help support the existing local centre by boosting the number of people using the area throughout the day. Subject to demand, the central mixed use area could be planned to incorporate a new cafe overlooking a new local pocket park. The business park would have an independent access to minimise traffic flows within the residential areas, although they would be linked by cycle ways and footpaths.

A network of dedicated and on-street cycle routes can be designed to help promote cycling within the local area, and to connect with the local shopping centre, and beyond to the Upwey and Broadway rail station to link to the wider public transport network



Pedestrian access would be provided at multiple points along Littlemoor Road, with a controlled crossing provided in the vicinity of the existing local shopping centre in order to ensure a safe and conveniently located link across the main road. Pedestrian movement within the site would be encouraged by the use of shared space HomeZones and tree lined streets, which encourage east-west connectivity along the anticipated desire lines and create a highly permeable public realm.

The Littlemoor masterplan is underpinned by sustainability principles. In particular these seek to provide an effective movement network which links into and encourages the use of public transport facilities



and provides easy access to surrounding amenities. A Sustainable Urban Drainage system will become an integral part of the public open space strategy. An ecological survey will be undertaken to ensure minimal impact of development on the local ecology with the retention and mitigation of existing habitats.

In addition it is proposed that dwellings are designed and constructed to achieve at least level three of the Code for Sustainable Homes and the equivalent BREEAM rating for office and industrial buildings. This will aim to maximize solar gain, benefit from natural ventilation, incorporate water efficiency measures and recycling facilities and explore the potential for home composting and food production. Assessments will be made to ascertain how to harness the potential for on-site production of energy from renewable sources and how to maximize the use of locally sourced, certified sustainable materials in the construction process. As the regulatory framework evolves due consideration will be given to meeting the applicable environmental targets.

Incorporating the above, it is intended to design and construct the development in an environmentally, socially and economically conscientious manner. This integrated approach to high quality sustainable design will be reflected in a Building for Life assessment providing validation of this approach to creating a distinctive and characterful development. Lifetime Homes standards will be reviewed to determine how best to deliver the flexibility and longevity of the Littlemoor development ensuring sustainable use long into the twenty-first century.



Conclusions

LDC believe that their proposals for Littlemoor will meet the challenge of achieving a new model of sustainability in Weymouth. The development will meet the urgent need for environmental sustainability, whilst improving the quality of the living experience of Littlemoor. The proposal will use enlightened and considered design to create a community that will enhance lifestyles, in a way which meets the needs of the area and the aims of the RSS.

