

Purbeck Local Plan

Duty to co-operate statement



Thriving communities in balance
with the natural environment

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Introduction

- 1.1 Strategic policy-making authorities are required to cooperate with each other and other bodies when preparing, or supporting the preparation of, policies which address strategic matters that would have a significant impact on two or more areas. This includes those policies contained in local plans. This statement outlines how Purbeck District Council is managing the requirements of the duty to cooperate throughout the production of the Purbeck Local Plan.
- 1.2 The duty encourages councils to adopt a joined-up approach when plan making with other relevant organisations and bodies in order to deliver sustainable development within their administrative boundary and the wider area. The duty requires constructive, ongoing and active engagement with others when developing strategic planning policies. This statement sets out the work which has been undertaken and identifies how the Council has responded to the key strategic and cross boundary issues identified.

Background

Cooperation on strategic matters

- 1.3 Section 110 of the Localism Act (2011) established a duty to cooperate in relation to the preparing the Purbeck Local Plan in so far as it relates to planning of sustainable development, or use of the land, that would have a significant impact on at least two planning areas. The Act inserted a new section 33A into the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 1.4 The NPPF (para 24) states that public bodies “are under a duty to cooperate with each other, and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries.” This particularly relates to the following strategic priorities:
- i) the homes and jobs needed in the area;
 - ii) the provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development;
 - iii) the provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
 - iv) the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and
 - v) climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.
- 1.5 The Government’s online Planning Practice Guidance makes clear that the duty to cooperate is not a duty to agree. However, local planning authorities should make every effort to secure the necessary cooperation on strategic cross boundary matters before they submit their local plans for examination. It also states that ‘cooperation should produce effective and deliverable policies on strategic cross boundary matters.’ Constructive cooperation is seen as an integral part of local plan preparation and should result in clear planning policy outcomes capable of being demonstrated through the examination process. Cooperation should be a continuous process of engagement from initial thinking through to implementation.
- 1.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) at paragraph 35 notes that the examination of a local plan should include an assessment to identify if the plan has been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements, which includes the duty to cooperate.

Which other organisations should the Council seek to engage with?

- 1.7 The Duty to Cooperate requires cooperation during the preparation of development plan documents and other local development documents between: local planning authorities, county councils, and relevant bodies as

specified in Regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

- 1.8 Relevant bodies include the Environment Agency, English Heritage, Natural England, the Homes and Communities Agency, the relevant clinical commissioning group, the Office of Rail Regulation, the relevant Integrated Transport Authority, the highways authority, the Marine Management Organisation, and the Local Enterprise Partnership. Council's should also engage with their local communities, local nature partnerships and infrastructure providers, (paragraph 25 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) refers).
- 1.9 The Localism Act states that any cooperation should seek to maximise the effectiveness with which relevant strategic activities are undertaken.

Statement of common ground

Background

- 1.10 Included within the recently published revised NPPF is the requirement that, in order to demonstrate effective and on-going joint working, authorities prepare and maintain one or more statements of common ground documenting cross boundary issues and the progress made in cooperating to address these matters. A statement of common ground is a written record of the progress made by strategic policy-making authorities during the process of planning for strategic cross-boundary matters. It documents where effective co-operation is and is not happening throughout the plan-making process; it is a way of demonstrating at examination that plans are deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working across local authority boundaries. In the case of local planning authorities, it also forms part of the evidence required to demonstrate that they have complied with the duty to cooperate.
- 1.11 Statements should be prepared, and subsequently maintained, on an on-going basis throughout the plan making process. Planning Practice Guidance states that authorities should make a statement of common ground available on their website when publishing their draft plan to provide communities and other stakeholders with a transparent picture of how they have collaborated. An agreed statement of common ground therefore has to be produced by the time that a draft local plan reaches examination stage. This means that for the Purbeck Local Plan it will need to be in place when submitting the plan and supporting documentation for examination in February/March 2019.
- 1.12 In summary, statements are expected to set out information covering the following matters:
- the capacity within the local authority areas covered by the statement to meet their own identified needs;
 - the extent of any unmet need within the local authority areas; and
 - agreements (or disagreements) between authorities about the extent to which these unmet needs are capable of being redistributed within the wider area covered by the statement.
- 1.13 Although it has not been possible to have an agreed Statement of Common Ground signed by all Dorset planning authorities in time for pre-submission publication of the Purbeck Local Plan, a draft statement (approved by the Council for signature) has been produced. Together with this duty to cooperate compliance statement, it forms part of the supporting documentation for the publication draft Purbeck Local Plan.

The Council's approach to meeting the requirements of the duty to cooperate

Strategic context

- 1.14 To support the production of the Purbeck Local Plan and meet the requirements of the duty to cooperate, the Council has engaged throughout the plan making process with its neighbouring authorities and other relevant bodies. This section sets out how the District Council has sought to address both the strategic policy objectives outlined in the NPPF (para 20) and other key policy issues managed on a strategic basis. It provides a brief overview of the geography, strategic development strategy and priorities and the key relationships and bodies involved in setting the local context for implementing the duty to cooperate.
- 1.15 Chapter 2 of the Purbeck Local Plan outlines the characteristics of the District including reference to the environment, housing, economy and infrastructure. This chapter also outlines the Council's vision and objectives and explains how the spatial strategy for delivery of sustainable communities will be delivered through the Purbeck Local Plan. This sets the context for cross boundary working, providing the background for some of the strategic issues and opportunities for the District.
- 1.16 The total population of Purbeck District Council is 46,800 (ONS Mid-year population estimate, 2017) of which 26,400 are aged between 16 and 64. Of this age group, 21,200 or 78.3% are economically active, comparable to the national average of 78.4% and marginally lower than the South West as a whole at 80.9%.
- 1.17 Total figures on workplace employment in Purbeck suggest that just over 20,000 people work in the district. Of which about 3,000 are self-employed and 17,000 are employees. Based upon 2011 census data of commuting flows, some 8,800 residents in employment commute out of Purbeck for work and 7,600 commute-in.

Dorset Strategic Planning Forum

- 1.18 The local authorities in Dorset have established a Strategic Dorset-wide Planning Member Forum made up of two elected members from each of the Dorset local authorities listed below and the County Council plus one representative each from the Dorset local enterprise partnership (LEP) and the Dorset local nature partnership (LNP). The Strategic Planning Forum (SPF) is a member level forum, the terms of reference for which are attached at appendix 1, supported by an officer group known as the Strategic Planning Policy Managers Forum (SPPMF).
- 1.19 Meeting on a regular basis, (approximately every 6 weeks), membership the Strategic Planning Forum comprises representatives from the following authorities and organisations:
- i) The Eastern Dorset Housing Market Area partners (Bournemouth Borough Council, Christchurch Borough Council, Borough of Poole, North Dorset, East Dorset and Purbeck District Councils);

- ii) Weymouth & Portland and West Dorset District Councils
 - iii) Dorset County Council;
 - iv) Dorset LEP
 - v) Dorset LNP
- 1.20 Other organisations that have been engaged through the SPF include Highways England, Natural England, Historic England, Homes and Communities Agency, Dorset Public Health and the Clinical Commissioning Group, the Environment Agency and various infrastructure providers including South Western Railway. Representatives of these organisations are invited to meetings and attend as appropriate.
- 1.21 The SPF was established in 2015, (the first meeting being held in November of that year), as a mechanism for members to discuss cross boundary issues with neighbouring authorities in the Eastern Dorset and West Dorset housing market areas and beyond. The strategic cross boundary issues that have been addressed through the Forum include those identified below.

Consultation on the local plan and site allocation assessments

- 1.22 During its gestation the Purbeck Local Plan has been subject to three public consultations in 2015, 2016 and 2018 as set out in the consultation statement. The Council have consulted all the prescribed bodies under the duty to cooperate as part of these consultations. This provides the principal opportunity for the organisations to make a formal comment on the content and policy direction of the Purbeck Local Plan at set stages in its production which often triggers further cooperative working, particularly where issues have been raised. Outside of these formal consultation periods, as explained below, the Council has been proactive in establishing an ongoing and productive dialogue with all neighbouring councils and additionally with many of the prescribed bodies including Natural England.

Purbeck Local Plan elected member engagement

- 1.23 The Purbeck Local Plan has been steered by elected members through the Local Plan Working Group. Comprising of a panel of 6 elected members including the Leader and Deputy Leader, the member group has met regularly to oversee and to steer production of the Local Plan. This forum provides the opportunity to engage members and to inform parish and town councils and the public on recommended solutions to address identified strategic issues.

Moreton / Crossways joint working group

- 1.24 This group meets jointly at member and officer level approximately three times a year as appropriate. It comprises of member and officer representatives from Purbeck and West Dorset District and Dorset County Councils as well parish councillors from Moreton and Crossways. The Group has served as an important forum to exchange information and views

in discussion of strategic cross boundary matters, notably progress made and issues arising from the West Dorset and Purbeck local plans.

- 1.25 In addition to the above, the Council has, and will continue to engage at officer level on an ongoing and constructive basis with West Dorset District Council (WDDC). Both councils have been working closely in relation to the development of policy and evidence specifically related to the proposed developments at Moreton and Crossways. Meetings have been held in order to consider emerging evidence and where possible align and coordinate supporting infrastructure provision for the levels of growth envisaged in respective local authority areas. Both councils are committed to working with site promoters and stakeholders to produce masterplans which will guide development of the allocation sites in the respective local plans.

Dorset housing groups and community land trusts

- 1.26 The Council is a member of the following pan Dorset housing groups:
- Dorset Strategic Housing Group;
 - Dorset LEP Housing Programme; and
 - Dorset Home Choice (allocations and homelessness)
 - The following Community Land Trusts also operate within the District:
 - Corfe Castle Community Land Trust; and
 - Langton Matravers Community Land Trust

Working with developers / site promoters

- 1.27 Purbeck has an agents' forum, where all agents /planners /architects who submit planning applications are invited to attend. This happens twice per year and is a mechanism that enables feedback from customers in terms of our procedures and processes - what we are doing well and what they would like improvements on.
- 1.28 The Council uses this forum to impart updates regarding the local planning process, building control, and development management issues as well as providing updates on the local plan. We also explain updates / changes regarding national legislation and any internal staffing / procedural changes. The aim is to improve the quality of submissions and reduce the number of invalid applications.
- 1.29 In terms of sites that the Council proposes allocating in the Purbeck Local Plan, officers are in regular contact with those involved in promoting development interests – so as to both seek views and also gather up to date information. This continued liaison and working with these parties can be expected to contribute positively to further understanding viability and to progressing suitable schemes that maximise the opportunity for the affordable housing and other community infrastructure provision.

Preparation of the draft Dorset statement of common ground

- 1.30 The SPF is overseeing preparation of a Dorset statement of common ground which considers, and seeks agreement in relation to, the strategically important cross boundary issues. The Forum agreed at its meeting in June 2018 that officers draft a single statement of common ground covering the Dorset area for consideration and approval by the SPF prior to being taken to each of the individual councils for adoption. It was also agreed that the contents of the statement should be based on the 'summary of cross boundary planning issues in Dorset' paper that was previously approved by the Forum and individual councils.
- 1.31 The SPF agreed that, subject to obtaining legal advice, this first statement be taken through the committees of individual Dorset councils and /or Shadow Executives (which represent the two new unitary authorities that will replace the nine existing councils in April 2019) between October and December 2018. The Council is working to ensure that the statement will have been agreed in time for the submission of the Purbeck Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate for examination in February / March 2019.
- 1.32 The recently revised NPPF (July 2018) introduces a new standard methodology for the assessment of housing requirements. However, the Government has already indicated that the methodology is likely to be reviewed very shortly as a result of the reduction in the latest (September 2018) household forecasts. The current draft statement will therefore need to be updated as soon as possible after any changes in the standard methodology have been finalised.
- 1.33 Once approved, the statement will then need to be reviewed regularly, in particular post 31st March 2019 in order to reflect the new council areas resulting from local government reorganisation in Dorset. Subsequent revisions to the statement will then need to be considered by the new Dorset authorities and the adjoining authorities in Hampshire, Wiltshire, Somerset and Devon.

How strategic priorities have been considered

- 1.34 Purbeck District Council has a history of effective joint working with neighbouring council's and other organisations. The next part of the statement describes how the Council has satisfied the legal obligation for co-operation on strategic matters.

Providing the homes and jobs needed in Dorset

Housing need

- 1.35 Paragraph 11 (a) of the NPPF states that Council's plans 'should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area.'
- 1.36 Purbeck District Council is part of the Eastern Dorset housing market area and functional economic area, and also forms part of the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (Dorset LEP). As outlined in the draft statement of common ground, joint working on planning issues in the East Dorset / West Dorset area has been ongoing. A key requirement for the Dorset planning authorities being to work together to set out a strategic approach to the provision of additional homes in Dorset, seeking to meet objectively assessed housing needs. The starting point being for each local planning authority to seek to meet its housing requirements within its own boundaries.
- 1.37 Alongside the other eastern Dorset housing market area partner local authorities the Council has been working collectively to objectively assess housing need across the wider housing market area. In 2015 the Council joined with Bournemouth, Christchurch, East Dorset, Poole and North Dorset and commissioned consultants to prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) in order to assess housing needs across the housing market area. Given advanced work on the Purbeck Local Plan and timings, the other councils agreed for Purbeck to seek an update that has subsequently been published for Purbeck in August 2018. This latest assessment reflects the standard calculation on housing need outlined in the revised NPPF published in July this year.
- 1.38 Details are provided in the housing chapter background paper and the SHMA documentation which identifies the local housing need for Purbeck as 168 homes per annum, equating to 2,688 homes over the 16 year plan period up until 2034.
- 1.39 The publication draft Purbeck Local Plan demonstrates how the Council intends to fully meet its objectively assessed housing need figure. To achieve balanced growth across the District, and sustainable patterns of growth, the Council's strategy involves the release of a small number of sites for new homes currently in the green belt.
- 1.40 As part of the process of preparing its strategy the Council has undertaken constructive and effective discussions with neighbouring authorities to understand their capacity for helping to meet any of Purbeck's housing need. Before concluding that there are exceptional circumstances, to justify changes to the green belt boundaries, the Council has considered all other

reasonable options within the District and in neighbouring areas. This has included writing to all neighbouring authorities, as well as those further afield in Hampshire, Wiltshire, Somerset and East Devon. Responses received indicated that none of these authorities are able to help meet any of Purbeck's housing need.

- 1.41 In addition to taking account of any further national planning policy changes, and in light of the Government's recent statement regarding possible revisions to the published standard methodology on housing need, any future work on housing need after March 2019 will need to be undertaken by the new Dorset unitary authorities once they have been established.
- 1.42 Councils in the SPF have previously discussed the future role and function of the South East Dorset Green Belt. In 2015 green belt authorities considered whether to undertake a strategic review of the South East Dorset Green Belt. At the time not all councils could commit to a collective review. Borough of Poole, East Dorset and Christchurch Council and Purbeck District Council have subsequently completed their own reviews – using broadly consistent methodologies. Through ongoing duty to cooperate work, and following local government re-organisation in Dorset, councils may work on a comprehensive review of the entire South East Dorset Green Belt.
- 1.43 The Council is seeking to meet the mix of housing types identified in the SHMA through policies in the pre-submission draft Purbeck Local Plan. Ongoing discussions will be needed to ensure that the needs for different types of housing across the wider area are addressed.

Gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople accommodation needs

- 1.44 Purbeck District Council has been working closely with other Dorset councils to prepare a joint gypsy and traveller development plan document (DPD). The DPD will allocate permanent and transit sites to meet the accommodation needs for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people over the next 15 years. As part of their work on the DPD the councils have prepared a Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (2017). Using the updated planning definition, the accommodation assessment objectively assesses the need across Dorset for further plots and pitches for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople up to 2033. The accommodation assessment indicates that there is a need for 2 further pitches for gypsies and travellers in Purbeck. The Council has subsequently received further evidence which indicates that there is also a need for 4 travelling showpeople plots.
- 1.45 The Council has completed a number of consultations (in 2011/2012 and 2014) to try and identify sites for pitches and plots but has been unable to identify any suitable or available sites in Purbeck District. Work on the joint DPD is ongoing but not yet completed, however, in order to meet the modest needs for further accommodation in Purbeck up to 2034 the Council has drafted a criteria-based policy in the Purbeck Local Plan for delivering pitches and plots on suitable sites. As part of the preparation of the joint DPD the Council will also be asking neighbouring authorities whether they can help to meet any of the District's needs for further pitches and plots.

Retail, leisure and other commercial development needs

- 1.46 The Council has worked collaboratively in producing the Dorset Workspace Strategy 2016 and the Retail and Leisure Strategy 2015. The joint work on these strategies has allowed the Council to accurately assess the District's needs taking account of broader economic trends affecting the wider area. The Council has focused on working closely with Borough of Poole because of the close functional interaction between these areas.
- 1.47 Given its position as a broadly rural district adjacent to a large urban area, Purbeck District Council has a relatively modest net outflow of commuters. The most significant commuting relationship is with Poole Borough Council with 4,000 out-commuters working in Poole and 2,200 travelling from Poole to work Purbeck each day. The next closest relationships are with West Dorset District (972 out-commuters and 1,263 in-commuters) and Bournemouth (937 out-commuters and 791 in-commuters).
- 1.48 The strategy for delivery of employment land to support the economic prosperity of Purbeck and the wider area, reflects the overall characteristics of Purbeck as a rural District and its proximity to the Poole and Bournemouth conurbation in the east. The two strategic employment sites at Holton Heath and Dorset Innovation Park are designated as safeguarded employment sites in recognition of the long standing experience and expertise in specific areas of advanced manufacturing, research and development, and the prospects for future economic growth. The wider distribution of smaller industrial estates across the District supports a range of more local business opportunities which is important for sustainable growth.
- 1.49 The Council has not received requests from neighbouring authorities to provide employment land to help meet the needs of businesses in their areas.
- 1.50 The Council also work closely with others to promote tourism across the wider area. Visit Dorset Tourism Partnership is a Destination Management Partnership for Dorset, which helps support and grow Dorset's visitor economy by promoting services, facilities and attractions across the county. The partnership is led and funded by five local authority councils, as well as being supported by 600 business members. Officers from the local authorities meet several times a year, and also engage with other tourism bodies.

Working with the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership

- 1.51 Purbeck is a partner in the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Dorset County Council for the implementation and development of Dorset Innovation Park. Covering Dorset County Council and its Districts, Poole and Bournemouth, an area of 1,025 square miles and with a population of 745,300, the Dorset LEP is a business led private and public sector partnership that aims to promote local economic growth and prosperity. Purbeck District Council is represented on several LEP sub-groups, namely the Rural Enterprise Group and the Dorset Inward Investment Group.

- 1.52 The Council has been involved with the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Workspace Strategy that was prepared in association with the Dorset LEP covering both the Eastern and Western Dorset Housing Market Areas. The authorities commissioned consultants to prepare an economic evidence strategy providing updated employment land projections and business sector forecasts to take account of changes in the economic context.
- 1.53 The updated Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Work Space Strategy (2016) was used to inform the review of the Dorset Strategic Economic Plan. The projections in the strategy were further updated in 2017, when a new set of employment projections were developed by Dorset County Council in partnership with other Dorset local authorities. Purbeck District Council was actively involved in the refresh of the strategy.
- 1.54 The Council, along with the Dorset LEP and Dorset County Council, worked in partnership in making a bid for land at Dorset Innovation Park to be designated as an Enterprise Zone. The site covers approximately 50 hectares, of which 35 hectares is developable. The site is centrally positioned in the wider region. The Dorset LEP, Dorset County Council and the Council have been working together to help make the site a major focus for regeneration in South Dorset. The Enterprise Zone is a strategic employment site for the wider area, providing opportunities for businesses specialising in advanced engineering and manufacturing.

Leisure and recreation needs

- 1.55 The Council is currently working with all the Dorset district councils to produce a Dorset wide playing pitch audit / strategy and has been actively involved in the built sport facilities audit across Dorset.

Providing infrastructure

Informal consultation with infrastructure providers

- 1.57 The Council has effectively engaged with infrastructure providers over the course of preparing the Purbeck Local Plan. In preparation for the New Homes for Purbeck consultation the Council sought to informally consult with: Natural England, Environment Agency, Historic England, Dorset County Council, Highways England, Network Rail, South West Railways, Go South Coast (buses), Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group, Dorset and Wiltshire Fire, Dorset Police, Wessex Water, SGN (gas network), mobile phone operators, Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership, Dorset Waste Partnership and National Grid.
- 1.58 Attendees at the meeting (that took place on the 16th November 2017) were invited to give the Council informal guidance on the effect of new homes on existing infrastructure, and the likely requirements for improvements to infrastructure to support development. Responses also guided preparation of the infrastructure delivery plan (IDP).
- 1.59 Infrastructure providers also commented on the New Homes for Purbeck consultation and were invited to attend an event in March 2018 where members of the public could attend and raise questions relating to infrastructure needed to support new homes directly with the providers.
- 1.60 Prescribed duty to cooperate bodies, including Natural England and Historic England, together with a number of utility and other infrastructure providers, have been proactively involved informally commenting on draft policies and the supporting text of the Purbeck Local Plan.

Transport

- 1.61 Transport modelling has formed a key aspect of ongoing joint working both prior to and since establishment of the SPF. The Council has worked particularly closely with Dorset County Council Highways and Highways England on a series of transport modelling studies (including a Crossways-Moreton area study jointly commissioned by the Council and Dorset Councils Partnership). The modelling relating to the local highways network has been led by Dorset County Council and considers the impacts of planned growth arising from the respective local plans of the Dorset authorities.
- 1.62 Other transport matters have included working with local rail and bus operators.

Flood risk

- 1.63 The Council has worked closely and effectively with the Environment Agency, Lead Local Flood Authority (Dorset County Council) and Wessex Water in preparing an updated Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk (SFRA) for the District that takes account of flood risk from multiple sources and anticipates potential future flood risks in order to allow for adaptation to the effects from climate change.

- 1.64 The Council has also worked closely with the same organisations when preparing the environmental policies (relating to flood risk, sustainable drainage systems and coastal change management areas) in the pre-submission draft Purbeck Local Plan.
- 1.65 The evidence underpinning the policy relating to coastal change management areas has also been guided by effective collaboration between the councils of Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Council Partnerships on Shoreline Management Plans.

Water / sewage

- 1.66 The Council has engaged with the Environment Agency and the Wessex Water on these matters on an ongoing basis. Both organisations were invited to:
- Joint meeting of infrastructure providers on 16th November 2017; and
 - Infrastructure drop-in event on 8th March 2018 (as part of the regulation 18 New Homes for Purbeck consultation).
- 1.67 More recently to inform drafting the Purbeck Local Plan the Council informally met with Wessex Water.

Minerals

- 1.68 The Council has worked closely with Minerals and Waste Planning Authority (Dorset County Council) when developing its strategy for meeting the District's housing needs to ensure that development does not sterilise existing mineral deposits.

Providing community facilities

Promoting healthy communities

- 1.69 The Council has engaged with representatives from the Dorset County Council and Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group over proposals for an integrated Wareham health and social care hub. The principle of a hub in Wareham was established in the Purbeck Local Plan Part 1 (2012) and is included as a specific policy in the Purbeck Local Plan. The draft Wareham Neighbourhood Plan also supports the proposal. The Clinical Commissioning Group is working closely with Dorset County Council Adult Social Care Team to maximise the use of their assets in Wareham to achieve integrated health and social care. Joint working on this issue will continue over the coming months.

Green infrastructure strategy

- 1.70 The councils in South East Dorset (Bournemouth, Christchurch, East Dorset, Poole and Purbeck), in partnership with Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission, have jointly prepared a green infrastructure strategy, Investing in Green Places (2011), for the area. The strategy sets out a vision to co-ordinate planning / investment in parks, open spaces, wildlife corridors, street trees and other green spaces.
- 1.71 In association with the Purbeck Local Plan the Council is also preparing a Purbeck Green Infrastructure Strategy. In developing this strategy the Council will be working with neighbouring councils and other key stakeholders.

Addressing climate change and the conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment

Dorset Heathlands

- 1.72 The Dorset Heathlands cover an extensive area of South East Dorset fragmented by urban development and other land uses. A large proportion of Dorset is designated as Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Consultation (SAC) and Ramsar, which collectively forms part of Dorset's protected lowland heaths. Local authorities in South East Dorset whose administrative area is within 5 kilometres of protected heathland and which have responsibility for the determination of residential planning applications, have been operating a strategy for the protection of heathland since 2007.
- 1.73 The latest strategy is presented in the Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework 2015 -2020. The framework outlines heathland infrastructure projects to mitigate / avoid the adverse impacts of new homes on protected heathland. The Council is working with a local landowner and Natural England to deliver a strategic heathland infrastructure project at Morden as referenced the Purbeck Local Plan.
- 1.74 The Council will continue to work jointly with other councils on a strategy for heathland mitigation.

Poole Harbour

- 1.75 Poole Harbour is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), SPA and Ramsar. The Borough of Poole, North Dorset District Council, Dorset Council's Partnership and the Council adopted (with the support of Natural England, the Environment Agency and Wessex Water) a joint Nitrogen Reduction in Poole Harbour' SPD in 2017. This was based on development of a shared evidence base and sets out a joint and holistic approach for mitigating the impact of development on Poole Harbour.
- 1.76 In addition to nitrogen issues, the Council has also been working in partnership with Natural England and Borough of Poole to consider a strategy for mitigating recreational impacts on Poole Harbour. The outcome of this work will be the production of a joint SPD on this issue.

Marine planning

- 1.77 Under the duty to co-operate and the Marine and Coastal Access Act, landlocked as well as coastal planning authorities must take the marine planning system into account during plan preparation. The Council has provided consultation responses on the draft South Marine Plan and recently held an informal meeting (September 2018) with the Marine Management Organisation in order develop effective future joint working.

Working with Local Nature Partnership (LNP)

- 1.78 The Dorset LNP brings together a wide range of partners in public, private and voluntary sectors across Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole. It exists to maximise the benefits to be gained from protecting and enhancing the unique natural assets of the area for people, wildlife and businesses.

Current work includes a position paper on climate change mitigation and adaptation, water management and natural health.

Working with Dorset Area of Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership Board

- 1.79 AONBs are nationally important landscapes and local authorities have a duty to conserve and enhance them. The Dorset AONB Partnership is made up of several groups representing local and environmental interests; local landowners, businesses, environment groups, and local authority representatives; and also various governmental organisations. These groups are represented on the Dorset AONB Partnership Board, which meets twice a year. Councillors and officers represent the Council on the board / meetings.

The Wild Purbeck partnership

- 1.80 The Council is part of an informal partnership of conservation (statutory and non-governmental) organisations and landowners which meets three times a year. It was established to implement the Wild Purbeck Nature Improvement Area (NIA) from 2012-15, and meets to discuss conservation management and collaborate on joint projects. Current projects include the large grazing scheme at Hartland, Arne and Middlebere.

Arne Moors stakeholder liaison group

- 1.81 This group has been set up to share the latest information and updates on the progress of the Arne Moors project, provide a forum for discussion and clarify the next stages of the project. It is an advisory group with members representing different interest groups. With both elected member and officer level representation and agreed terms of reference, meetings occur approximately every two months.

Appendix 1: Strategic Planning Forum terms of reference

The local authorities in Dorset i.e. Borough of Poole, Bournemouth Borough Council, Christchurch Borough Council, Dorset County Council, East Dorset District Council, North Dorset District Council, Purbeck District Council, West Dorset District Council and Weymouth and Portland Borough Council have agreed to establish a Strategic Planning Forum to address strategic planning and the 'Duty to Cooperate' across the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Dorset Local Nature Partnership (LNP) area.

Purpose

The main purpose of the Strategic Planning Forum is to fulfil the obligations under the legal duty to co-operate by:

- i. guiding strategic planning at the 'larger than local' scale through effective policy development across boundaries;
- ii. working with the LEP and LNP in the development of strategy to inform and align spatial and investment priorities and promote sustainable economic growth; and
- iii. guiding the preparation and revision of the Statement of Common Ground (subject to this requirement being introduced in the revised NPPF), setting out the cross-boundary planning matters in the area and the proposed means of addressing them, meeting the required deadlines of preparing the first outline Statement within six months of the publication of the revised National Planning Policy Framework, and the full Statement within twelve months.

The Strategic Planning Forum will have no executive powers and will:

- (a) consider the strategic planning and transport issues that affect cross boundary matters;
- (b) consider and advise on common policy approaches to include in Local Plans;
- (c) integrate into the plan making process the LEP and LNP approaches to growth of the economy and protection and enhancement of biodiversity;
- (d) consider any other planning and other matters of common interest; and
- (e) discuss any updates on key Government policy changes which significantly affect strategic planning in Dorset.

The Strategic Planning Forum will work on a consensus basis and advise local authorities on the outcomes of discussions in the wider interest of a collective approach to strategic planning matters.

Structure and Membership

The Strategic Planning Forum will comprise 20 fixed members, including 18 elected members:

- Two members from each local authority, one of which will ideally be the member with responsibility for the Planning portfolio or equivalent and one other member at the discretion of the local authority; and
- One member from each of the Local Enterprise Partnership and Local Nature Partnership.

Adjoining local authorities to Dorset will be invited to meetings where there are duty to cooperate matters beyond the boundaries of Dorset that require consideration, but will not be entitled to vote.

Each elected local authority member or substitute shall be entitled to remain on the Forum for so long as the local authority appointing them so wishes, but shall cease to be a member or substitute if they cease to be a member of the local authority appointing them to the Forum or if that local authority removes them.

One officer in support of an attending local authority member may also attend meetings of the Forum. Further attendees will be at the discretion of the Chairman.

Servicing arrangements (including organising and note taking at meetings) will be reviewed annually and it is expected that Local Authorities will rotate the responsibility.

Voting Arrangements

The Forum has no executive powers and any voting on matters does not necessarily reflect the views of any Council. All reasonable endeavours will be made to settle matters by consensus and any decisions must be by the majority of those attending. The LEP and LNP representatives are not entitled to vote as they are not elected members.

Named substitutes may be appointed to the Strategic Planning Forum. Substitutes shall be notified to the clerk at the start of the meeting. The member appointed as a substitute shall have the same voting rights as the member for whom he is substituting and who does not attend.

Chairmanship and Vice-Chairman

Meetings of the Strategic Planning Forum will normally be held at the servicing local authority. The Chairmanship will be the responsibility of the servicing authority. If the Chairman is not in attendance responsibility for chairing the meeting will fall to the vice chairman. The chairmanship and vice-chairman for each municipal year will be reviewed annually at the first meeting after May.

Meetings of the Strategic Planning Forum will be arranged on a 'needs' basis. Meetings will also be held where elected members representing at least three local authorities request the convening of a special meeting which will be arranged within a reasonable period

Draft notes should be circulated within 5 working days to enable member organisations to act as soon as possible if necessary.

Responsibilities

To act in the wider Dorset interest and advise the local authorities and organisations on a Dorset wide approach to strategic planning.

To meet when required to receive reports, evidence and findings from officers of the local authorities and others with an interest in strategic planning matters.

To ensure all local authorities remain fully informed and engaged with the Strategic Planning Forum.

To engage neighbouring authorities in strategic planning matters where there are cross boundary issues and ensuring the legal duty to cooperate is met.

February 2018

