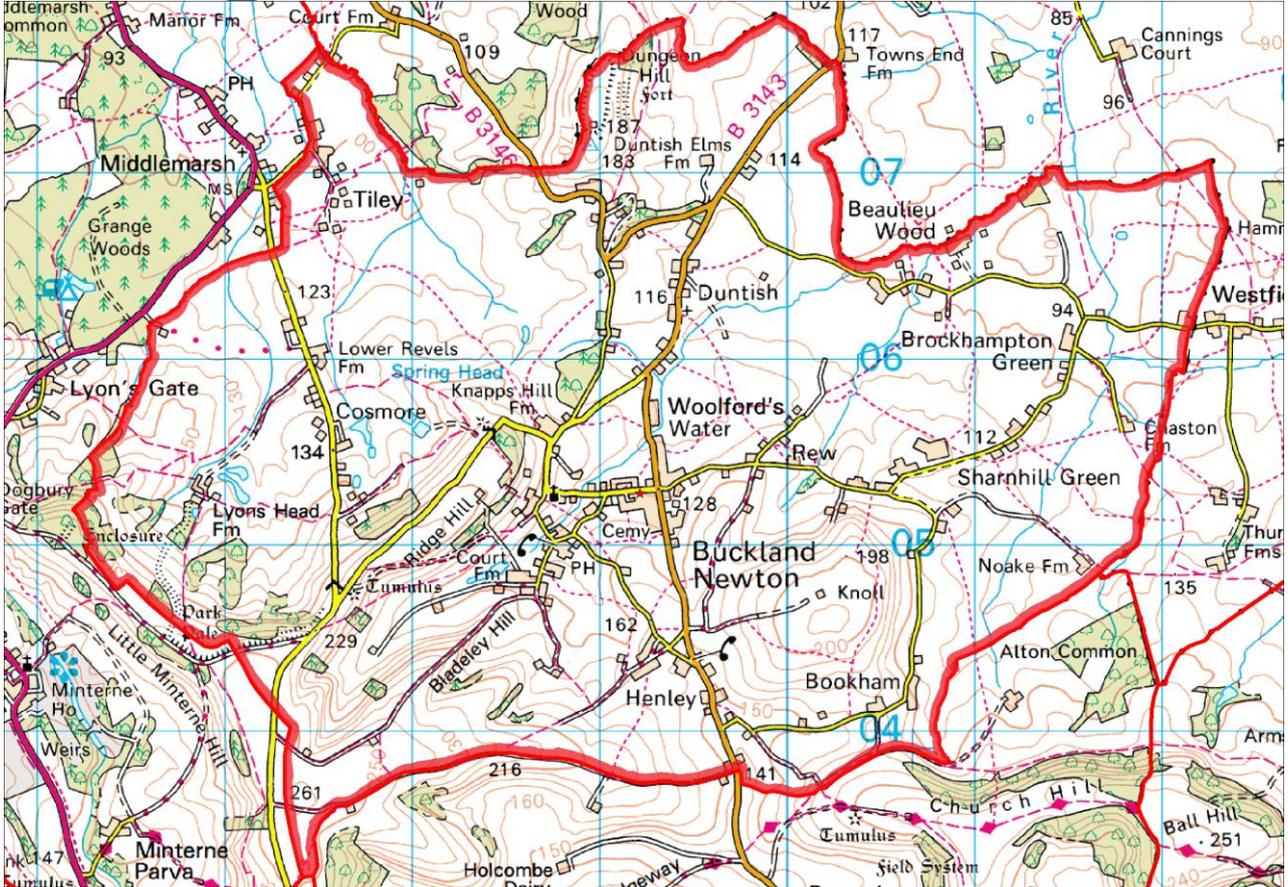


Buckland Newton Neighbourhood Plan



Overview of the plan preparation process and Consultation Summary

This report forms part of the evidence based for the examination of the Buckland Newton Neighbourhood Plan. It provides information on how the plan was prepared, the details of those consulted, how they were consulted, the main issues and concerns raised, and how these concerns and issues have been considered and where relevant addressed in the proposed plan. It is accompanied by more detailed reports for each stage of the plan's preparation, and altogether these form the Consultation Statement as required by the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.

Overview of the plan preparation process and Consultation Summary

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Introduction

This report forms part of the evidence based for the examination of the Buckland Newton Neighbourhood Plan. It provides information on how the plan was prepared, the details of those consulted, how they were consulted, the main issues and concerns raised, and how these concerns and issues have been considered and where relevant addressed in the proposed plan. It is accompanied by more detailed reports for each stage of the plan's preparation, and altogether these form the Consultation Statement as required by the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.

In the beginning of 2011, Buckland Newton Parish Council decided to start the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish. A Working Group was set up of both Parish Councillors and other Parishioners who were interested in taking part in this project.

In late 2011 the Parish Council decided to prepare a Parish Plan concurrently with its work on the Neighbourhood Plan to minimise the number of public consultation events, etc, and for this initial stage it was decided that the two plans together would be called the Buckland Newton Community Plan.

Community Plan/Parish Plan

2012 Public Consultation

A public consultation was planned and carried out during autumn 2012 in order to identify the issues, concerns and aspirations of the parishioners and others who worked in the parish. The Working Group decided to consult on the following topics:

- Housing
- Employment and Business
- Roads, Traffic and Transportation
- Environment
- Community Facilities and Services
- Young People's Interests
- Crime and Safety
- Health and Social Care

A questionnaire was designed and distributed to every household in the parish. Additionally meetings were organised and held in the Village Hall before the deadline for the return of the questionnaires for interested parishioners to discuss the issues involved. These meetings were publicised by a leaflet to every household, an announcement in the village news, and posters around the parish.

For most topics the questionnaire asked:

- Three issues that concern you the most
- Three things you think are good about (each topic) in the parish
- Any other concerns and possible solutions

The full questionnaire can be seen as an appendix to the "2012 Public Consultation Full Report".

The results were collated and, for the purposes of drawing up the Parish Plan, where issues and concerns mentioned were similar in nature, or where they were mentioned in a different section of the questionnaire, these were amalgamated. The top five issues/concerns for each topic were taken forward. Again, the full results can be seen in the “2012 Public Consultation Full Report”.

Following the analysis of the questionnaires, a series of focus groups was set up for the various topics to draw up Action Plans which form the basis of the Parish Plan. These focus groups, together with the working group were open to all those interested.

Topics which required Planning/land use considerations, particularly housing and business/employment premises, were included in the Parish Plan

Main land use issues (summarised)

- Provision for property to enable downsizing (both open market and affordable)
- Provision of smaller open market housing
- Provision of affordable housing for local people
- Provision of affordable low cost housing and accommodation for people working in the area.
- Ensure opportunities available for business expansion
- Create new trading premises for appropriate small to medium size businesses, preferably from pre-existing redundant buildings
- Minimise detrimental effects of increased business and employment
- Improved mobile signal
- Investigate options for location of bus shelter

All the ‘action points’ against these issues were to consider them in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Parish Council agreed and adopted the Parish Plan in late 2013.

Neighbourhood Plan

Area designation

The area for our Neighbourhood Plan was approved by West Dorset District Council in February 2013 after an eight week public consultation run by the District Council.

Housing site identification

The preparation of the Parish Plan necessarily caused a delay in the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan until early 2014.

It became clear from the work on the Parish Plan and the 2012 public consultation that the main thrust of our Neighbourhood Plan would be concerning the provision of housing, particularly affordable homes, to promote the long term sustainability of our community.

The Housing Focus Group then set about identifying potentially suitable sites for consideration. Starting with blank plans of the parish, the group identified all potential sites that were either infill sites within nucleated settlements or sites adjoining existing nucleated settlements. Because of the “particular rural quality of the area” identified in the 2009 Appraisal, the Conservation Area was at this stage excluded from consideration.

Site visits were then carried out. Initially this was a ‘weeding out’ exercise, to exclude those sites which the group felt were unsuitable because of:

- Poor highway access/visibility
- Unsuitable terrain for development
- Unduly visible within the AONB / undue extension in open countryside
- Undue affect on the privacy of neighbouring properties

In March 2014 every household in Buckland Newton parish received a leaflet asking them to put forward any land for development they wished to be considered for the Neighbourhood Plan. An additional 7 sites not previously identified were put forward by landowners, and it was decided that these should go forward for further consideration.

A total of 18 sites then went forward for further assessment by the Working Group and the following consultees:

- Dorset County Council Highways
- West Dorset District Council Technical Services
- West Dorset District Council Conservation Team
- Dorset ANOB Team

Additionally a professional Phase 1 Environmental/Ecological Survey was commissioned from Abbas Ecology to cover all the sites.

The results of this work informed the Autumn 2014 public consultation

Housing needs survey

In March of 2014 a housing needs survey was carried out, questionnaires being delivered to every household in the parish.

A total of 35 people responded to the questionnaire, of whom 17 said they will be looking for housing within the parish within the next 10 years, 3 upsizing and 11 downsizing (3 respondents did not specify). For full results please see “2014 Public Consultation – Housing Needs Survey” document.

The results of this survey informed the Autumn 2014 public consultation

Autumn 2014 Public Consultation

A Public Consultation was held in September 2014, for the last 3 weeks of the month. This included a total of 8 display sessions held either in the Village Hall or the Parish Room. Publicity for the consultation and events was by:

- Posters around the parish
- Banners around the parish
- Copy in the Lydden Vale News
- The Neighbourhood Plan website <http://www.bncommunityplan.co.uk/>

Parishioners were asked to complete a form and give their comments on the 18 potential housing sites plus other topics, which included questions on:

- Housing design
- Renewable energy
- Business and employment
- Green spaces
- Community facilities

Consultation forms were made available at the display sessions in the Village Hall or Parish Room, as well as the Old Chapel Stores. For those unable to make any of the 8 display sessions, alternative arrangements were advertised to view the display in the Parish Room at other mutually agreeable times by contacting the chairman of the working group; a total of 4 people took advantage of this arrangement.

Completed forms could be handed in at any of the display sessions, by posting in a sealed box at the Old Chapel Stores, or by delivering or posting them to the chairman of the working group.

A total of 108 completed comments forms were received.

Following collation of the comments and representations received from both the parishioners and consultees (see “2014 Public Consultation Comments Appendix”), the Working Group then met on three occasions in October and November 2014 to make recommendations to the Parish Council about which sites and number of homes should go forward to the draft plan. These, together with suggestions for policies for the other topics mentioned above (see covering report), were passed onto to our professional planning consultant, Jo Witherden, to include in the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

In summary the main issues and actions arising were as follows:

Topic	Issue	Actions
Housing sites	Site specific concerns and level of community support for proposed sites	The number of sites going forward to the draft plan would be reduced from 18 to 12, with some sites having reduced total numbers and site specific mitigation
	Ability to phase development over the plan period	After consideration the decision was taken not to phase development on the basis that this was overly complex and unrealistic to administer, and that the growth would be organic given the range and different sizes of sites
	Delivery of affordable housing	The proposed sites should deliver just over 50% as affordable
Housing design	Strong support for a variety of materials, shapes and forms of housing	Include design guidance to achieve suitable mix in draft plan
Renewable energy	Mixed support with some in favour of large scale renewable and some strongly opposed. No overall consensus.	Given lack of overall consensus, decision taken to leave this aspect to the local plan policies
Business and employment	No strong consensus and recent evidence of lack of demand for new sites.	Decision taken to leave this aspect to the local plan policies
Green spaces	Good support for protection of proposed local green spaces	Inclusion of local green space designations in the draft plan
Community facilities	Good support for tennis court / all weather pitch	Inclusion of site specific proposals in the draft plan
	Strong support for better signage	Consider how best to include this as a policy on the draft plan

Draft Plan

Our professional planning consultant then prepared a first version of a draft plan. This was discussed and debated within a small group consisting of our district councillor and two parish councillors.

Version 4 of the draft plan was then discussed at a Working Group meeting in April 2015, and various additions and amendments made.

After further discussions and 4 more amended versions it was finally agreed by the Parish Council for public consultation.

May – July 2015 Statutory Public Consultation

The statutory public consultation on the draft plan commenced on Thursday 21st May 2015 and ended on Saturday 4th July 2015, allowing just over six weeks for comments. The draft plan was on public display at the 8 consultation events held during this period, paper copies were available for reference at:

The old Chapel Stores The Gaggle of Geese
The Village Hall The Church Porch

And the draft plan was also available online at the following websites:

www.bncommunityplan.co.uk www.bucklandnewton.com

Flyers were delivered to every household with details of the public consultation events, banners were put up around the parish, and notices put in the village news. The event was advertised in the Blackmore Vale Magazine dated 22nd May 2015 and on its website www.blackmorevale.co.uk from the 22nd May until the 28th May.

Additionally the following statutory and other consultees were informed and invited to comment, as potentially having interests that may be affected by the proposals:

Dorset County Council
West Dorset District Council
North Dorset District Council
Neighbouring Parish Councils / Meetings
 Cerne Valley Parish Council
 Piddle Valley Parish Council
 Minterne Magna Parish Council
 Glanvilles Wootton
 Pulham
 Mappowder
Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP
Dorset AONB Team
Environment Agency
Natural England
Historic England
Highways Agency
Homes and Communities Agency
BT Openreach
Southern Electric Power
Wessex Water

Comments were received from 37 parishioners, plus several of the consultees. These were collated into a single document “2015 Statutory Consultation Comments by Policy”. From these, the main issues were identified, and advice taken from the planning consultant on potential changes to the plan in light of the comments received. The issues and draft responses were considered at a meeting of the working group on 15th October 2015. The purpose of this meeting being to put forward appropriate responses and changes to the draft plan for the Parish Council to consider before plan submission.

A further consultation was run (see below) in light of the changes to affordable housing thresholds and also providing people with the opportunity to comment on removing the allotments as a local green space (as requested by the County Council).

The main issues and responses are set out in full in “Responses to comments from Public Consultation on draft plan May – July 2015”, but the most significant have also been summarised below:

Topic	Issue	Actions
Housing sites	Affordable housing definition – conformity with NPPF	Update plan in relation to Starter home proposals – but make clear that these will need to be in perpetuity and at affordable re-sale value
	Links and phasing on Sites A, B and H in light of possible higher affordable housing thresholds	Group the sites into a single policy to allow their delivery with the affordable housing units being provided in tandem.
	Some sites are some distance from Buckland Newton and therefore less sustainable and may not be in full conformity with the Local Plan policies	No change - the focus of growth is at the larger village of Buckland Newton (in line with the Local Plan strategy) however a small element of housing in the other parts of the parish is considered appropriate and unlikely to cause significant environmental harm.
Green spaces	The River Lydden corridor might be considered to be an extensive tract of land, which could be contrary to the NPPF	Clarify that the river corridor extends to 5 metres beyond the top of the riverbank on either side of the river
Community facilities	The allotment site was bought by the County Council with the intention for use as a replacement school in the future – designation as a local green space would undermine this future potential.	Remove Local Green Space designation and list the allotments under Policy C1 – Existing Community Facilities

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening

West Dorset District Council prepared a Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report which was published in July 2015, to determine whether or not Buckland Newton Neighbourhood Plan required a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

The SEA screening exercise concluded that the Buckland Newton Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental impacts, largely due to the characteristics and local scale of the proposals, and the protection already provided in the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan parent document.

Natural England, Historic England, and the Environment Agency were all consulted on the contents of the SEA screening report. All parties agreed with the conclusion that the Buckland Newton Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.

September - October 2015 Supplementary Public Consultation

During the period in which the consultation responses were being considered, the judgement quashing the government policy on affordable housing contributions was announced. This meant that the Local Plan was amended (through the examiner's recommendations) to revert back to requiring all sites to contribute to affordable housing, and raised a potential conformity issue (as confirmed by a subsequent email with the District Council).

On this basis, it made sense to consult on further changes to bring the Neighbourhood Plan in conformity with the emerging Local Plan which was to be adopted on 22 October 2015. In addition, this provided an opportunity to consult on the suggestion made by Dorset County Council requesting that the allotments site currently covered by Policy C4: Protection of Local Green Spaces be moved to come under Policy C1: Existing Community Facilities, the opportunity was taken to check whether this change would . Policy C4 restricts the flexibility of the future use of that site which the Council owns, as the Parish Council indicated that they were minded to agree with this change.

All the parishioners who submitted comments on the draft plan were individually notified of these proposed changes and asked if they wished to make further comments. Additionally the proposed changes were put into the village news which went to every household, and were advertised on the website www.bncommunityplan.co.uk Six weeks were allowed for further comments to be submitted from 18th September until 31st October.

It was decided that of the statutory consultees, the only ones that needed to be consulted specifically on these changes were West Dorset District Council and Dorset County Council, due to the limited nature of the changes.

Only one person responded (other than the County Council who were supportive of the proposed change), and this was not directly related to the above proposed changes.

Draft Plan for Submission

The changes agreed to the draft plan by the Working Group were then circulated to all Parish Councillors. The Parish Council then held a special meeting on the 14th December 2015 in order to discuss these changes, and approved the plan for submission.