
Fontmell Magna: Neighbourhood Plan Scoping

This note is intended to provide the context for the project plan of the Fontmell Magna Neighbourhood Plan, based on the emerging scope.

LOCAL PLAN CONTEXT FOR FONTMELL MAGNA

The North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 has recently been adopted (January 2016). The Local Plan identifies Stalbridge and the 18 larger villages (including Fontmell Magna) as the focus for growth to meet local needs outside of the four main towns. It also sets a 'minimum' figure for the amount of new housing to be built during the plan period (825 dwellings in rural areas between 2011 - 2031).

It defines the settlement boundaries around these villages (based on the previously adopted 2003 Local Plan). Within the settlement boundary are areas considered to be more sustainable and suitable for development (unless specifically protected under other policies), and therefore where any growth should be focused. Outside of the boundary there is a general policy of restraint, which means:

- No new shops or employment sites, or extensions to allow a business / commercial enterprise to be run from the home (only redevelopment or limited expansion of existing employment sites for employment purposes)
- No new open market housing unless re-using an existing building. The only types of housing allowed would be for a rural worker (such as a farmer) who needs to be on site because of special work requirements, or for affordable housing adjoining the settlement boundary (which may if necessary be cross-subsidised by a small number of open market homes)
- Any changes to existing homes cannot substantially increase the size of a house - either through its replacement or extension, or any increase in garden size

The plan also covers other issues such as design, parking standards etc

Work is already starting on a review of the Local Plan, in light of more recent studies that suggest that more housing is needed to support economic growth.

The Local Plan recognises that through Neighbourhood Plans, local communities can decide whether they want to take a lead in defining sites for development and reviewing detailed policies. A number of areas are specifically highlighted as issues that could be usefully considered through the Neighbourhood Plan process. The overall message being that the Neighbourhood Plan can help a community explain its "vision" and objectives for the area, identify local needs that should be met and consider options to meet these needs. It may also shape the issues and policies being considered in the Local Plan Review.

Changes to policies that might be made through a Neighbourhood Plan include:

- Reviewing the settlement boundary or establishing a new settlement boundary
- Developing more detailed policies relating to infilling

- Allocating sites for development (particularly where local needs cannot be met through existing policies alone) – including housing sites, employment sites and community facilities
- Identifying rural exception sites for affordable housing
- Considering proposals for heritage-led regeneration
- Including proposals for the reuse of buildings in the countryside
- Addressing the provision and retention of community facilities
- Reviewing the Important Open and Wooded Area (IOWA) designations (or these will otherwise be reviewed through the Local Plan review, with a view to deleting those which do not require complete protection)
- Designating areas as a Local Green Space
- Considering the amount of open space and other green infrastructure by setting appropriate standards (if the standards in the Local Plan are not right for the area)
- Identifying non-designated heritage assets
- Influencing what new buildings should look like, through local guidelines on character
- Determining the most appropriate and effective use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions in achieving the infrastructure required in the area¹
- Considering local community actions that will help to mitigate and adapt to climate change (there is a policy requirement in the Local Plan that Neighbourhood Plans should specifically cover this)

For more information on the local plan strategy see

<https://www.dorsetforyou.com/planning/north-dorset/planning-policy>

¹ The benefit of having a Neighbourhood Plan in place is that when the District Council starts charging CIL, the parish council can expect to receive 25% of that income generated from development in the parish, whereas without a neighbourhood plan it would only receive 15% of that income, and this would also be capped at a maximum of £100 per existing council tax dwelling in any one year

INITIAL SCOPING

A scoping session was held with the local community in July 2015, at the Fontmell Pub, facilitated by Jo Witherden (Dorset Planning Consultant). The event was publicised through the parish magazine and posters placed on local notice boards. 4 Parish Councillors and 41 local residents attended and took part. This event had three facilitated sessions on identifying local needs, local assets and development opportunities. It therefore highlighted some possible areas that could be considered through the Neighbourhood Plan:

Possible need for housing

Such as affordable housing for local people, housing for young people, family housing and retirement homes/flats or sheltered accommodation in the village

Possible need for employment

Sufficient opportunities so that local people can find work in village, whether through employment space or providing tourist / holiday accommodation

Importance of village amenities

Protect existing community facilities - Doctors Surgery, Fontmell Pub, Village shop and Post Office, Village school, Church, and possible improvements such as extension to the village hall, updated playground.

Importance of broadband & mobile networks

Better faster broadband service and improved mobile network signal were also mentioned – though this was improving with the roll-out of superfast broadband.

Importance of rural character and green spaces in the village

It was clear that local residents felt strong that the village has a good mix of green open and wooded areas, and that the stream, access to and views of the countryside important were all important.

With the establishment of working groups, further work has been undertaken to look specifically into these issue and areas,

Transport and parking issues

Concerns were also raised about the A350 (lack of footpath, difficulty crossing, speed and volume of traffic) and general traffic speeds and care around the village. Better access and parking for the school were also highlighted.

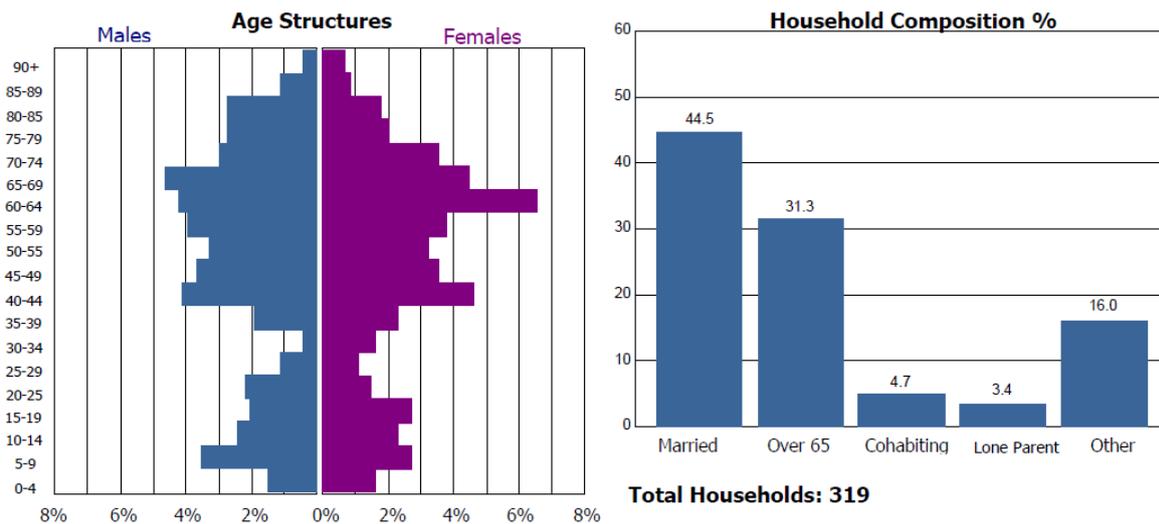
Working groups have been established to consider and research these issues in greater depth. A questionnaire has also been drafted to establish some initial evidence and local opinion on particular issues.

FONTMELL MAGNA'S SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTS

The population (2011 Census) recorded 734 usual residents in the parish of Fontmell Magna, in 334 houses. The age profile shows a higher than average proportion of people in the 40 – 80 age bracket, and comparatively few aged in their mid 20s – mid 30s.

Fontmell Magna

All usual residents	734			Age 0-15	114	15.53%	Median Age	51
Male	359	48.91%		Age 16-64	415	56.54%	Persons per hectare	0.6
Female	375	51.09%		Age 65+	205	27.93%		



Source: <https://apps.geowessex.com/census/>

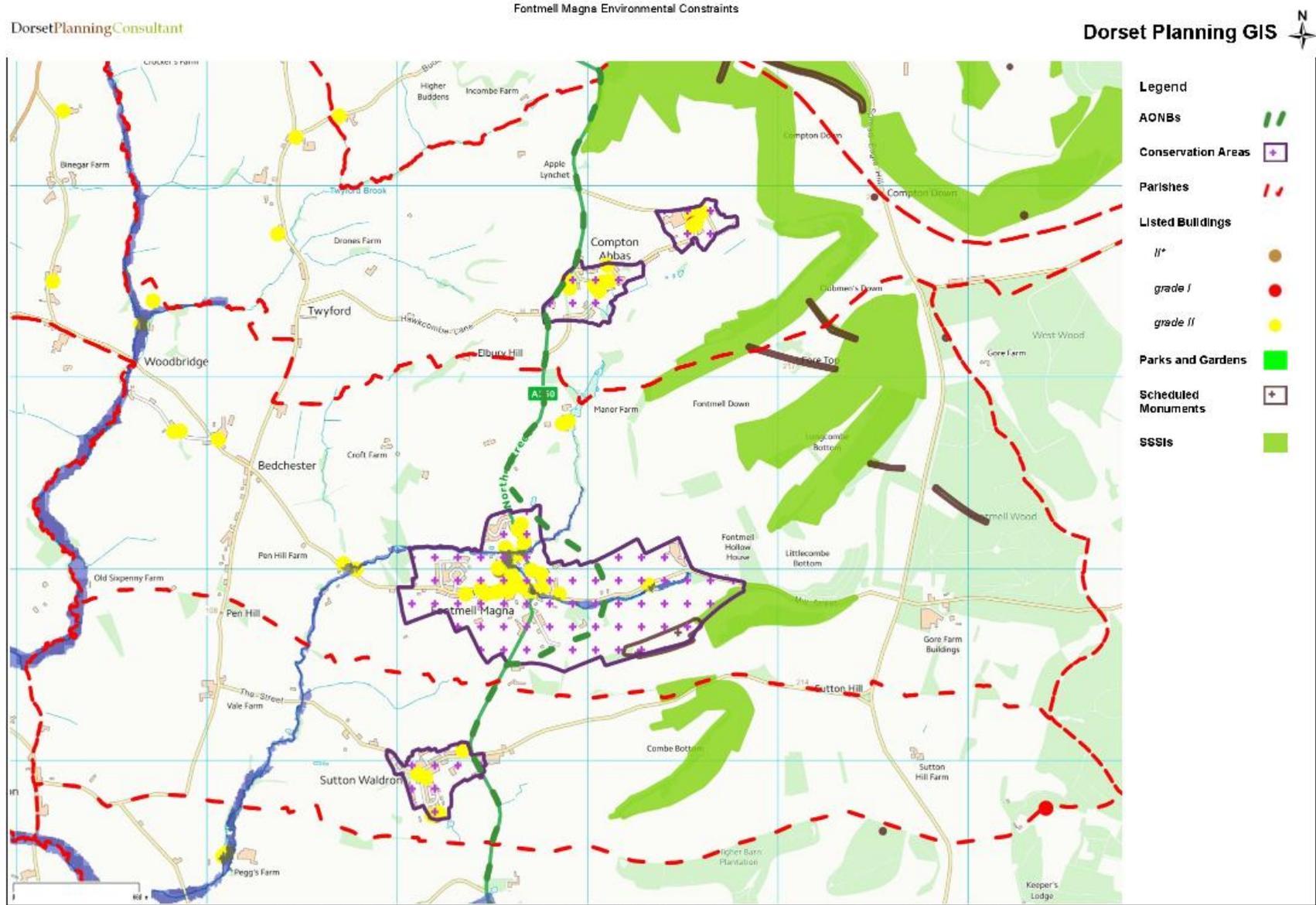
The number of affordable homes available to rent is slightly higher than average (15%). However as a whole housing remains unaffordable for those on an average wage, and lower-priced 1 and 2 bedroom open market housing is also under represented in local housing stock. There are no communal establishments (such as extra care housing) in the parish.

Residents are reasonably highly skilled. There is a much higher than average level of self-employment, and about 15% of people working are based from home (and a further 6% walk or cycle to work).

The area is subject to some significant environmental constraints. Most notable are:

- **Wildlife** – nationally and internally important wildlife sites on the downs east of the settlement.
- **Landscape** – most of the land west of the A350 lies within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- **Flooding** – areas of risk of flooding lie either side of the Fontmell / Collyer's Brook, which runs from east to west through the main village.
- **Heritage** – the entire built up area of the village is designated as a Conservation Area, and there are also nationally important scheduled monuments (most notably Medieval strip lynchets 450m south of Springhead Farm) and Listed Buildings

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS MAP



Date Created: 12-3-2016 | Map Centre (Easting/Northing): 386890 / 117451 | Scale: 1:25000 | © Environment Agency 2016 © English Heritage

POTENTIAL ISSUES FOR THE PLAN AND HOW THEY MIGHT BE COVERED

Issue	How / what	Possible policies
Vision and Objectives	Vision can be drafted by the Neighbourhood Plan group in consultation with local residents. Objectives could be based on the main issues and scope <i>NB possible use of DPC for short facilitated session</i>	<i>(required by NPPF)</i> n/a (supporting text only)
Possible need for housing	Review housing needs information (available data plus household questionnaire returns) → see allocating land (below)	+ Policy giving some guidance on the type of housing that would be supported <i>NB see further down re possible site allocations</i> ?? community project such as Community Land Trust
Possible need for employment	Review employment needs information (business survey of main employers regarding their needs for expansion or relocation plus household questionnaire returns) → see allocating land (below)	n/a (supporting text only) <i>NB see further down re possible site allocations</i>
Importance of village amenities	Map community facilities that should be retained and/or improved Contact service providers to identify any infrastructure capacity issues and expansion / relocation requirements (and discuss site implications) → see allocating land (below)	+ Policy listing the community facilities that should be retained <i>NB see further down re possible site allocations</i> ?? community project to bring forward specific improvements
Importance of broadband & mobile networks	Contact service providers to investigate infrastructure issues, and whether there are any potential solutions to improve broadband and mobile phone coverage that could be incorporated into the plan.	+ Policy – exact scope to be confirmed following discussions with operators and consideration of environmental impacts <i>NB this is generally a lobbying rather than land use matter although policies can support better connectivity and highlight particular local issues</i>

Issue	How / what	Possible policies
Importance of rural character and green spaces in the village	<p>Identify and map important green spaces and other important rural character features for review (include IOWAs and those highlighted through the household questionnaire)</p> <p>Assess for inclusion (against pre-agreed criteria – eg there are specific requirements for local green spaces that should be assessed)</p> <p>Consult with local residents on ‘local value’ (and also contact landowners if sites are in private ownership)</p>	<p>+ Policy designating local green spaces</p> <p>+ Policies protecting other specific features, eg rural lanes, dry stone walls etc</p>
... and the built character	<p>Map and collate information on existing heritage assets</p> <p>Hold a PlaceCheck style village walkabout</p> <p><i>NB involvement of NDDC or own specialists in this work should be considered</i></p> <p>Based on the above analysis, identify and map key features / general design styles that reinforce local character.</p>	<p>+ Policy listing and protecting locally important buildings / features</p> <p>+ Policy providing design guidance</p> <p><i>NB may be different guidance for different areas</i></p>
Transport and parking issues	<p>Identify and map particular local traffic access / speeding issues and ideas for solutions</p> <p><i>NB this has already had considerable investigation and is being check through household survey</i></p> <p>Contact DCC highways (Steve Savage) re site visit to discuss potential solutions and possible limitations on development (general and site specific)</p>	<p>+ Policy giving some guidance on the highway issues that may need to be addressed if certain locations are considered for development</p> <p><i>NB this will also influence possible site allocations</i></p> <p>?? community project such as local traffic scheme or bus service</p>
Allocating land for development to meet local needs	<p>Run call for sites and request NDDC to notify SHLAA landowners, map potential available sites</p> <p><i>NB this could include possible re-use of existing buildings</i></p> <p>Review sites to assess suitability for development against potential constraints and need requirements. Desktop plus site visits – against pre-agreed criteria.</p> <p><i>NB the assessment may be linked to the environmental issues identified in a Strategic Environmental Assessment (if required). Involvement of specialists in the assessment work is advisable</i></p> <p>Consult on possible options with local residents (also useful to include key consultees at this stage)</p>	<p>+ Policy allocating sites for development or revision to the settlement boundary</p> <p>+ Policy regarding the re-use of existing buildings (if this would be different from the Local Plan)</p>

Issue	How / what	Possible policies
Climate change and renewable energy schemes	<p>Research practical requirements for community renewable energy scheme (wind / solar) – in liaison with renewable energy providers and the AONB team. NB landscape sensitivity study provides useful guidance <i>NB include in assessment of available sites (see above)</i></p> <p>Research permitted development rights on buildings and consider what key issues there may be where constraints would mean schemes require approval</p>	<p>+ Policy allocating areas suitable for solar / wind energy development (or other forms of renewable energy) ?? community project such as renewable energy co-operative + Policy specifying where domestic scale renewables may be supported if they are not fully in keeping with local character <i>NB this would need to link with any design guidance (see above)</i></p>

DRAFT PROJECT PLAN – THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

Fontmell Magna Neighbourhood Plan timescales				2016												2017				
Action	Who	DPC Days	Other	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May			
Locality Grant application	NPG/FMPC																			
Household / Business / Community Questionnaires																				
- organisation	NPG		PR																	
- distribution and collection	NPG		SM																	
- analysis	NPG/DPC	0.5	SM																	
Additional research: broadband and mobile	NPG																			
Rural character and green spaces																				
- identification of sites and features to consider	NPG																			
- hold local drop-in event	NPG		V, PR																	
- analysis of feedback and further checks	NPG																			
Transport and parking - review issues	NPG																			
Climate change research	NPG																			
Vision and objectives setting	NPG/DPC	(MM)																		
SEA screening / scoping request	DPC	0.5																		
- SEA decision issued	NDDC																			
Site specific allocations																				
- organise call for sites	NPG		PR, SM																	
- mapping and desktop checks	NPG																			
- Placecheck event (NPG plus wider public)	NPG/DPC	1.5	V, PR																	
- DCC walkabout	NPG/DPC	0.5																		
- specialist checks - ecology	Ecology		SC																	
- specialist checks - heritage	Heritage		SC																	
- specialist checks - landscape	Landscape		SC																	
Review policy options	NPG/DPC	1.0																		
Locality Grant application	NPG/FMPC																			
Options consultation																				
- organisation	NPG		PR, SM																	
- event / distribution and collection	NPG		V, PR																	
- analysis	NPG/DPC	0.5	SM																	
Draft plan																				
- plan drafting	NPG/DPC	2.0																		
- Initial policy conformity checks	DPC	0.5																		
- SEA if required	DPC	1.5																		
- Parish Council approval of draft for consultation	NPG/FMPC																			
Locality Grant application	NPG/FMPC																			
Pre-submission consultation																				
- organisation	NPG		PR, SM																	
- events / distribution and collection (6 weeks)	NPG		V, PR																	
- analysis	NPG/DPC	0.5	SM																	

This draft project plan has been prepared to outline the stage and work likely to be required to cover the proposed scope of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Local volunteers will be actively involved in researching and developing the plan, with work coordinated through regularly monthly steering group meetings. It has been assumed that planning consultant support will continue at the steering group meetings, and as such the days for DPC shown are for the additional work outside of these meetings.

It is likely that specialist support will be required for the next phase, depending on the potential sensitivity of sites that could be allocated for development.

12 months and beyond...

Fontmell Magna Neighbourhood Plan timescales				2017											
Action	Who	DPC Days	Other	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec			
Post-consultation review and amendments															
- consider and agree final changes to plan	NPG/DPC	0.5													
- finalise evidence inc Basic Conditions Statement	NPG/DPC	1.0													
- finalise Consultation Statement	NPG/DPC	0.5													
- finalise SEA if required	DPC	1.0													
Submission															
- Parish Council approval of draft for submission	NPG/FMPC														
- Submission to NDDC	NPG														
- Submission checking	NDDC														
Examination															
Consultation (6 weeks) & Examiner appointment	NDDC														
Examination	NDDC														
Consideration of Examiners report	NPG/FMPC/DPC	0.5													
Consideration of Examiners report	NDDC														
Referendum															
Referendum arrangements (approx 6 weeks)	NDDC														
Referendum	NDDC														
Plan officially 'made'	NDDC														
Resources in general															
Also assumes costs to be included for															
V = venue	- Hall hire / support for steering group meetings														
PR = printing and publicity	- DPC - attendance at monthly meetings														
SM = survey monkey															
SC = specialist consultant cost (if NDDC unavailable)															

In the event that the District Council (or experts from the County Council or AONB) are unable to provide the level of support needed, potential candidates that have worked previously with Dorset Planning Consultant can be recommended.

Based on experience elsewhere, there will be very little work carried out over the main holiday periods, and as such these periods have been left void.

The plan currently assumes an options consultation prior to plan drafting – this is considered to be a realistic requirement. If there were few reasonable alternative options, this stage could be omitted.

As a result of all these assumptions, the programme predicts that a draft plan will be produced by early 2017, and should be submitted for examination by July 2017. Providing that no significant changes are made, it should then go through referendum in early 2018.