



Purbeck Core Strategy Development Plan Document

Examination into the soundness of the plan

**Statement on behalf of Purbeck District Council
and Dorset County Council**

Hearing date: Tuesday 8 May 2012 – 2pm

Matter 3: Accessibility and Transport (Policies IAT and ATS)

Issues

- 3.1 What are the transport implications of the locational strategy for housing and employment?
- 3.2 Have transport needs been properly identified and have those needs been adequately addressed?
- 3.3 What is the 'subsequent plan' referred to in policy ATS?

Introduction

1. This statement considers all the issues within Matter 3: Accessibility and Transport (Policies IAT and ATS). The statement has been prepared jointly by the Council with the Dorset County Council's transport section

Statements of common ground

2. Two statements of common ground (SCG) have been agreed between Purbeck District Council and Dorset County Council and Purbeck District Council and the Highways Agency.

Why the Council considers the core strategy sound

3. Each issue raised by the Inspector is considered in turn below:

3.1 What are the transport implications of the locational strategy for housing and employment?

4. The Core Strategy divides the District into five different spatial areas, north west, south west, central, north east and south east. Each spatial area policy lists the geographically relevant schemes from the Purbeck Transport Strategy (PTS) to be applied within the area. Further detail on the PTS is set out in part 3.2 of this statement. Development within each area which generates additional trips on the network will contribute towards the provision of transport improvement schemes within that area. This ensures that the development contributions are directly related to the development and that transport schemes will mitigate the impact of that development. This approach is in full accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 204).
5. Core Strategy Background Paper 10¹ sets out a settlement strategy for the District and provides the evidence underpinning Policy LD: General Location of Development. The recommendations of the settlement strategy direct development towards the most sustainable settlements that have the widest range of facilities and services, including sustainable transport provision. Wareham and Swanage are identified as settlements that should be the focus of the bulk of development due to their roles as market and coastal towns (Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Development policy B settlements). Residential development in the towns will provide good walking and cycling access to new and existing services and facilities as well as employment provision within a reasonable distance. Development in the towns will also benefit from bus and train links to employment opportunities further afield in Holton Heath Industrial Estate, Dorset Green Technology Park, Poole, Bournemouth, Dorchester and Weymouth.
6. Upton is identified as a more constrained settlement with some additional development recommended due to its proximity to the conurbation of Poole and Bournemouth (RSS Strategically Significant Cities and Towns and Development Policy A settlement). Upton has good bus links to Poole, Bournemouth and Wareham with good dedicated cycle links to Holton Heath Industrial Estate and Poole. The residential development proposed at Upton will enable residents to

¹ CD36: Volume 10: Settlement Strategy

sustainably access the services and employment opportunities within Poole, Bournemouth, and Wareham and further afield.

7. Villages with the highest level of facilities and population and which act as a hub to surrounding settlements and reduce the need to travel are considered to be 'Key Service Villages' (RSS Development Policy C settlements). These villages are identified for the focus of rural development – Bere Regis, Bovington, Corfe Castle, Lytchett Matravers, Sandford and Wool. The additional residential and employment development proposed in Bere Regis and Lytchett Matravers will increase self-containment and support existing and new facility and service provision where sustainable travel options are more limited. The spatial area policies explore opportunities to promote car sharing, improvements to bus links (to Poole, Blandford and Dorchester) and the need for travel planning to reduce car travel from both villages.
8. Villages with a few key and important facilities which also act as a hub are considered to be 'Local Service Villages' (RSS Development Policy C settlements). These villages are identified as needing some growth to sustain vital rural services which could support some additional small scale development and reduce the need to travel by car – Langton Matravers, Stoborough, West Lulworth and Winfrith Newburgh.
9. The locational strategy provides the best option to intensify development in sustainable locations and make use of existing services, facilities and sustainable travel options. The existing public transport services provided by railway, bus and cycle links provide alternatives to single occupancy car travel in close proximity to the proposed development. The locational strategy and spatial area policies provide the opportunity to improve these sustainable travel options in order to increase their attractiveness as viable alternatives to the car. However, the locational strategy will inevitably lead to some increase in development related trips on the A351, which is the prime transport corridor for travel into and out of Purbeck, and which experiences peak time traffic congestion. To reduce traffic congestion along the A351 and to make development proposals acceptable, development will have to mitigate its impact on the network. Mitigation will require transport improvements in terms of traffic management and improvements to junctions, bus, rail, walking and cycling routes. The improvements will encourage sustainable active travel, reduce use of the car and mitigate negative transport impacts on Purbeck's environment. . Infrastructure and service improvements will be supported by Travel Plans including travel information packs for residents and employees.

3.2 Have transport needs been properly identified and have those needs been adequately addressed?
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10. The Council has worked in partnership with Dorset County Council to develop and deliver the transport strategy that underpins the Core Strategy. The role of the Purbeck Transport Strategy (PTS), interim development contributions policy, Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) and the South East Dorset Transport Strategy (SEDTS) in mitigating the impact of development in Purbeck as set out in the Core Strategy is explained below.

Purbeck Transport Strategy

11. Dorset County Council and Purbeck District Council jointly agreed the Purbeck Transport Strategy (PTS)² in response to the Purbeck District Local Plan Inspector's Report in 2002 which stated that any future development, in Purbeck, however small, would have a negative impact on the A351 and would exacerbate an already unsatisfactory situation. This could have led to a situation where future development in Purbeck would not be allowed unless a reduction in congestion on the A351 was achieved. This is clearly untenable as local people need local affordable housing, employment and services.
12. In 2003 Dorset County Council commissioned Buro Happold Consultants to undertake the Purbeck Transport Study³ to develop a District-wide integrated transport strategy and to re-examine the feasibility and deliverability of the long held aspiration of a Sandford bypass. The study investigated new and old routes for a Sandford bypass, however none were judged deliverable due to their unacceptable affects on European protected sites. The study also investigated tunnelling options, however these were prohibitively expensive (£200M+). Therefore, the recommendation from the consultants was that as the scheme would not meet the overriding public interest test, there was little chance of securing planning consent or the national funding required to deliver a scheme and it should not be included in the PTS. Instead a multi-modal integrated transport strategy was recommended incorporating an alternative major scheme to reduce congestion along the A351. This scheme had the additional benefit of also solving the capacity constraint posed by the level crossing at Wool Station. The improvement of the A35 / C6 corridor was proposed to divert traffic travelling from the east (Poole / Bournemouth) to Wool, Lulworth and other areas in the west of the District away from the A351. This proposal included the improvement of the A35, a south eastern Bere Regis bypass, improvements along the C6 (Bere Regis - Wool) and a Wool bypass.
13. The PTS is directly linked to housing and employment growth and provides the transport strategy to inform the Core Strategy and the LTP3. The PTS contains schemes for the improvement of sustainable transport across the District but with a particular focus on the A351 corridor as this is where the most significant impact of development will occur. It identifies schemes to mitigate the impact of development through the provision of junction, traffic management, bus, rail, cycling and walking improvements. The first version of the PTS was adopted by Purbeck District Council and Dorset County Council in 2005, with a revised PTS adopted in 2010. A revision was necessary to ensure that the PTS identifies the transport needed to deliver growth set out in the Core Strategy.
14. To implement the PTS, an interim policy 'Development contributions toward transport infrastructure in Purbeck'⁴ was adopted by Purbeck District Council and Dorset County Council in 2006. This policy is discussed below.

Development contributions towards transport infrastructure

15. From 1st Jan 2007 the Council has collected financial contributions from all development in Purbeck which adds vehicular trips to the network. Traffic generated

² CD160 Purbeck Transport Strategy (PTS) Review 2010

³ CD161 Purbeck Transportation Strategy (February 2004)

⁴ CD156 Development Contributions Towards Transport Infrastructure in Purbeck (2009)

by development in Purbeck has a cumulative negative impact and should mitigate its impact by paying towards transport improvements in the area. Therefore the majority of the funding needed to implement the strategy (90%) comes from contributions from new development. Dorset County Council provides the remaining 10% of funding from its LTP allocation. Under a legal agreement, Dorset County Council puts the development contributions towards the implementation of transport schemes designed to widen travel choice and improve the network to mitigate the direct and cumulative impacts of development on the network in Purbeck.

16. The Council has implemented this policy on an interim basis for five years. The adoption of the Core Strategy will give the policy greater weight through Policy ATS: Implementing an appropriate transport strategy for Purbeck. The interim policy will be replaced by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which is expected to be adopted by 2014. The work undertaken for the PTS will feed into the implementation of CIL.

Transport modelling of Core Strategy growth options

17. Dorset County Council undertook transport modelling work in 2006 and 2008 and most recently in 2010 / 2011⁵ based upon the level of growth and location as set out in the Core Strategy. The modelling identified pinch points on the network; assessed the future impact of development on the network; and tested appropriate schemes to reduce congestion in Purbeck. This ongoing modelling has helped to shape the Core Strategy and resulting transport needs have been identified and addressed through the review of the PTS, as explained below.

Review of the PTS and development contributions policy

18. Dorset County Council reviewed the PTS in 2010 with the costly road building schemes taken out. This was necessary following a failed regional funding bid by Dorset County Council for regional transport funding to deliver the Wool and Bere Regis bypasses. Government advised that there was no future prospect that Purbeck would receive regional or national funding for transport infrastructure as it was a low growth area. A Planning Inspectorate Advisory Visit in 2010⁶ highlighted the need to have a deliverable transport strategy to underpin the Core Strategy. As the road schemes were not deliverable, they were removed.
19. The amount of contributions collected was also expected to decrease following the Council's decision to exempt residential extensions from paying a transport contribution. This change was necessary to ensure fairness as not all residential extensions would require planning permission following changes to the planning regulations. This exemption meant a projected shortfall of £5M in funding for the delivery of the PTS. The Council set up a Policy Development Panel (PDP) to find alternative means of securing funding. After exploring a number of alternatives, the recommendation of the PDP is to scale back the PTS by £5M. DCC transport officers have indicated that the revised PTS would still need to include a range of sustainable transport measures but opportunities for lower cost schemes can be explored. A further revision to the PTS is expected to be adopted in summer 2012.

⁵ CD159 Purbeck Preliminary Transport Assessment 2010

⁶ CD101 Planning Inspectorate LDF Advisory Visit (2010)

20. The 2010 PTS review coincided with a change in national transport policy (DaSTS (2008) towards the promotion of more sustainable, smarter travel choices, which is the principal objective of the revised PTS. The strategy was refocused to give greater priority to low carbon travel and smarter choices for example through travel planning, car sharing, as well as the public transport, traffic management, cycling and walking improvements which already exist in the current PTS.
21. Two key changes were made to the PTS. Firstly, the inclusion of the railway reconnection between Swanage and Wareham. This is an important element of the strategy to widen travel choice and remove vehicular trips from the A351 corridor where possible. £3M is needed for the re-signaling works to provide the physical rail infrastructure necessary to reinstate rail services and this will now be funded through the PTS.
22. Secondly, due to the removal from the PTS of the bypasses that would have improved the attractiveness of the A35/C6 as an alternative route to using the A352 and A351 for traffic travelling east west from Poole / Bournemouth to the Wool / Lulworth area, alternative measures were needed. Instead, a signage strategy will encourage traffic to use the most appropriate routes to reach its destination. Traffic will be signed to use the A35 / C6 to reduce traffic along the A351. Dorset County Council is working with the Highways Agency to ensure Weymouth traffic will be signed along the A35 / A354 rather than the C6 (Bere Regis - Wool) which should reduce the Weymouth traffic along this route. A 10% reduction in the amount of traffic travelling through Bere Regis along the C6 and through Wool has already been recorded since the Weymouth Relief Road opened in 2011. This suggests that the new road to Weymouth is having a positive effect in reducing traffic in Purbeck.
23. The revised PTS provides a justified, effective and deliverable strategy directly linked to the provision of sustainable development and in full accordance with the NPPF. The PTS measures included in the Core Strategy and the LTP3 are realistic in terms of the level of transport infrastructure provision that is likely to be delivered during the plan period. Due to the environmental constraints and lack of funding, Purbeck is greatly restricted in terms of the provision of new road infrastructure. Therefore any release of new road capacity has to be created through delivery of sustainable transport and reducing the need to travel through the creation of sustainable development.

South East Dorset Transport Strategy (SEDTS)

24. During the preparation of the Core Strategy and LTP3, Dorset, Poole and Bournemouth Councils have worked up the South East Dorset Transport Strategy (SEDTS)⁷. The SEDTS has recommended the same transport measures for the north eastern part of Purbeck (including the A351 north of Wareham) as those contained within the PTS. The revised PTS (and SEDTS) were fed into the LTP3⁸ which was adopted in April 2011 and provides the transport strategy that underpins the Core Strategy. This approach is entirely in conformity with the NPPF.

⁷ CD162 South East Dorset Transport Strategy Preferred Strategy 2011

⁸ CD157 Bournemouth Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan 3 Strategy Document 2011-2026

3.3 What is the ‘subsequent plan’ referred to in policy ATS?

25. Policy ATS includes reference to identifying detailed transport proposals in subsequent plans. In effect, this will enable the detailed PTS schemes to be shown on the Proposals Map, detail which is inappropriate for the Core Strategy. The subsequent plans would be either; the Swanage Area Action, or the Site Allocations Plan, which together provide District-wide coverage.

Suggested changes for the Inspector to consider

26. Update as per changes 101 and 102 of the Minor Changes Schedule⁹.
27. In line with the Council’s agreed SCG with Dorset County Council, the Council proposes the following amendments to paragraphs 7.2.8, 7.3.8, 7.4.8 and 7.5.10, as shown in the Minor Changes Schedule as changes 44, 56, 63 and 70:

‘Transport improvements will be provided through development contributions with the aim of providing alternative forms of transport to the car, reducing carbon emissions and traffic congestion, and to improve and help minimise air quality impacts upon protected heathland.’

⁹ SD26: Minor Changes Schedule