

# Askerswell Neighbourhood Plan

## Basic Conditions Statement - February 2018

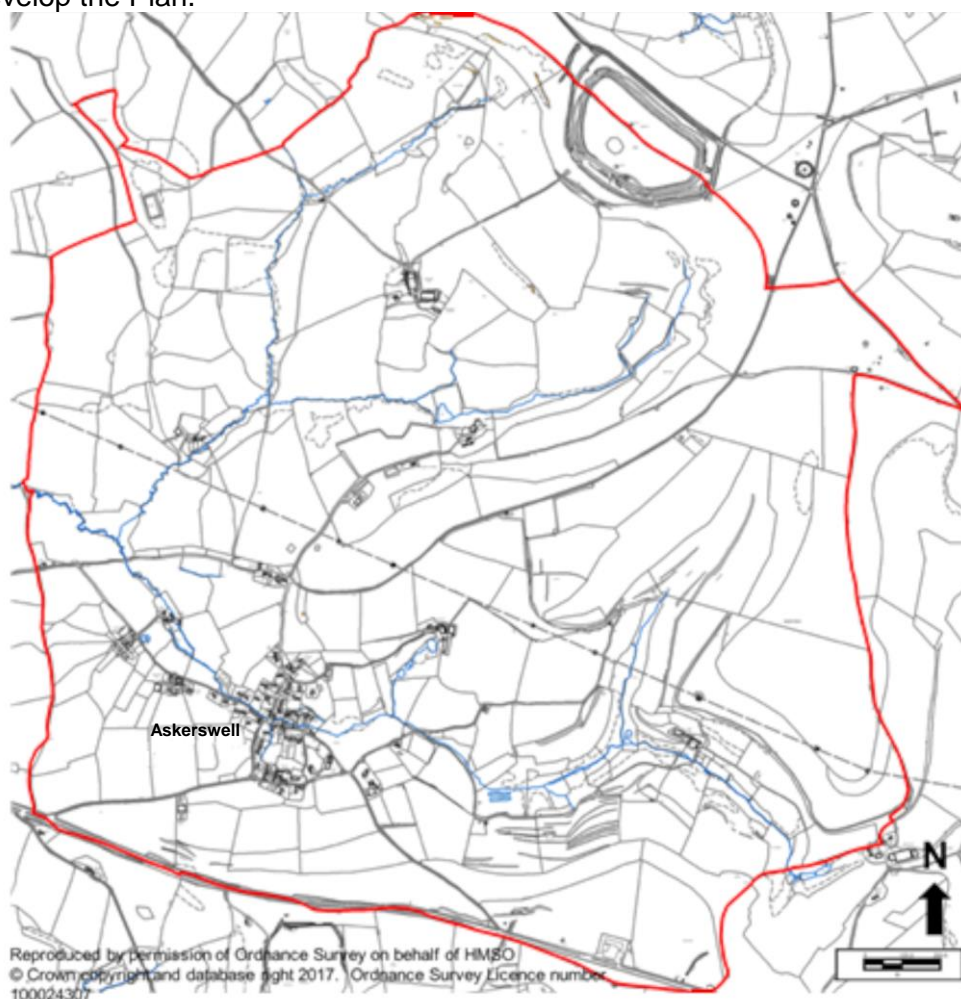
### 1: Introduction

Paragraph 8 of Schedule 4b of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Localism Act 2011) states that a neighbourhood plan proposal submitted to the local planning authority must be accompanied by a statement. This is known as the basic conditions statement. It explains how:

- the plan meets the legal requirements in terms of its contents and coverage
- the plan has had appropriate regard to national policy and is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the local area
- the plan will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and is compatible with EU obligations.

### 2: Askerswell Neighbourhood Area

The area encompassed by the Askerswell Neighbourhood Area (Fig 1) is the Parish of Askerswell. West Dorset District Council (WDDC) designated the Askerswell Forum as the group to develop a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for this area on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2015. A Neighbourhood Forum was required to take the lead in the absence of a Parish Council (Askerswell has a Parish Meeting) that would otherwise develop the Plan.



**Figure 1:** The Parish of Askerswell with its boundary marked in a red continuous line. Published as sub- licensee of WDW&P Licence No. 100024307/100019690. 2018

### 3: Contents and coverage – meeting the legal requirements

#### Has the draft plan been submitted by a qualifying body?

<b>Yes</b>	The Askerswell Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared and submitted by Askerswell Forum. West Dorset District Council (WDDC) as the Local Planning Authority designated the Askerswell Forum as the group to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for this area on 10th February 2015.
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#### Is what is being proposed a neighbourhood development plan making provision in relation to land or sites in the neighbourhood area?

<b>Yes</b>	The plan proposal relates to planning matters (the use and development of land) and has been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements and processes set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.
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#### Does the proposed neighbourhood plan state the period for which it is to have effect?

<b>Yes</b>	The Askerswell neighbourhood plan will have effect from 2018-2028 (10 years) as specified in section 1.5 of the plan.
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#### Do any of the policies relate to excluded development?

<b>No</b>	The neighbourhood plan policies do not deal with county matters (mineral extraction and waste development), nationally significant infrastructure or development that falls within Annex 1 to Council Directive 85/337/EEC.
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#### Do any of the policies relate, extend beyond the neighbourhood area or cover an area where there is a neighbourhood development plan already in place?

<b>No</b>	The neighbourhood plan policies relate to the Askerswell Neighbourhood Plan Area (the parish) and to no other area. There are no other neighbourhood plans relating to the parish.
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#### Do any of the policies or the process undertaken breach or conflict with EU obligations?

<b>No</b>	<p>A SEA screening was carried out by West Dorset District Council prior to the consultation on the pre-submission draft plan. Natural England, Historic England, and the Environment Agency were consulted on the contents of the SEA screening report, in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. The screening report included information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the vision and aims (which are unchanged),</li> <li>• likely scope (based on an early draft of the plan) and</li> <li>• potential rural exception sites</li> </ul> <p>All parties agreed with the conclusion that the Askerswell Neighbourhood Plan was unlikely to have significant environmental effects. Natural England also confirmed in their response at that time that in their opinion, based on the likely scope, the Plan would not require a separate Habitats Regulation Assessment.</p> <p>There has been no indication that it is in breach of Human Rights legislation or other EU obligations.</p>
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#### Has the plan had regard to national policy and guidance from the Secretary of State and is in conformity with the strategic policy of the development plan for the area or any part of that area?

<b>Yes</b>	See Section 4.
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#### Does the plan contribute to sustainable development?

<b>Yes</b>	See section 5.
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## 4: National and Local Policy context

The following sections review the extent to which the policies of the submitted Askerswell Neighbourhood Plan have regard to national policy and guidance and are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan, which was adopted by West Dorset District Council on 22nd October 2015.

Rather than specifying whether or not individual policies are strategic, the Local Plan includes strategic objectives and a summary of the 'strategic approach' for each theme of the plan. These 'strategic approaches' are set out on pages 12-14 of the plan, in the introductory chapter, and are also repeated at the beginning of each chapter of the plan. Paragraph 1.3.2 of the introduction states that 'Communities preparing Neighbourhood Development Plans will need to show how their proposals are in general conformity with this strategic approach'.

Policy SUS5 on Neighbourhood Development Plans also states that neighbourhood development plans should 'show how they are contributing to the strategic objectives of this plan and be in general conformity with its strategic approach'.

The 'strategic approach' sections therefore form the local planning authority's stated view, in its adopted local plan, of what aspects of policy should be regarded as strategic. This does however mean that part of a policy may be strategic and part not. An indicative assessment of how the relevant policies fits with the Strategic Approach is set out in Table 1.

### Environment

#### National Planning Policy - key extracts

- 17 Contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
- 58 Neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics, respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.
- 109 The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible.
- 115 Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in such areas.

#### Local Plan Strategic Approach

Development should protect and enhance the natural environment - its landscape, seascapes and geological conservation interests, its wildlife and habitats and important local green spaces - by directing development away from sensitive areas that cannot accommodate change. Where development is needed and harm cannot be avoided, appropriate mitigation to off-set any adverse impact to the landscape, wildlife and green infrastructure network will be required. High priority will be given to protecting and enhancing the area's heritage assets – including its Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, and other features with local historic or cultural associations, particularly where they contribute to the area's local distinctiveness. Development will be directed away from areas where there is likely to be significant risk to human health or the wider environment, through flooding, coastal erosion and land instability, air and water pollution. Development should be of high quality design to help achieve sustainable, safe and inclusive communities, enhancing quality of life for residents and visitors, and designed in keeping with, or to positively contribute, towards the local identity of the area.

## Relevant Local Plan Policies and Strategic Element

- ENV1 Landscape, seascape and sites of geological interest: Strategic Approach includes the protection of landscape, seascape and sites of geological interest, and mitigation where appropriate
- ENV2 Wildlife and habitats: Strategic Approach includes protection of wildlife and habitats, and mitigation where appropriate
- ENV3 Green infrastructure network: Strategic Approach includes protection of important local green spaces, and mitigation where appropriate
- ENV4 Heritage assets: Strategic Approach includes protection of heritage assets
- ENV10 Landscape and townscape setting: Strategic Approach includes that development should be of high quality design, and contributing to local identity of area

## Conformity Assessment

### Policy E1: Protection of Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Looks to build on the protection given to the AONB, where national and local policy is clear that development should not harm its character, special qualities or natural beauty. The specific qualities of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Beauty includes its characteristic landscape quality and diversity, uninterrupted panoramic views, individual landmarks, sense of tranquillity and remoteness. In particular it highlights those views which are considered especially important in the enjoyment of the area's natural beauty.

### Policy E2: Protection of Special Landscape and Historic Features

This policy builds on national policy and includes a number of measures to protect the special landscape and historic features in the parish that are considered important to retaining and reinforcing local character and history. It supports opportunities to remove or screen detrimental features.

### Policy E3: Protection of Wildlife Habitats

This policy has special regard to the national policy to minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains where possible, based on the main ecological characteristics of the area

### Policy E4: To Protect and Enhance the Character and Appearance of the Area

This policy is also about reinforcing the distinctive local character of the area by having regard to the buildings, styles and materials that help provide this character. The guidance is intentionally worded so as not to be overly prescriptive and would not prohibit innovative designs that would contribute positively to this character.

## Community

### National Planning Policy

- 28 Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages.
- 70 Neighbourhood plans should promote the retention and development of local services and facilities in villages.
- 74 Playing fields should not be built on unless an assessment has been undertaken that they are surplus to requirements or would be replaced by equivalent or better provision.

### Local Plan Strategic Approach

Community facilities that help promote social interaction as well as minimise the need to travel by car should be provided within local communities. Where possible and practicable (for example on larger developments), new local community facilities will be provided as part of the development, creating attractive and vibrant places to live. Existing local facilities will be protected through a flexible approach which recognises the changing needs in society. Providing a safe transport route network for all types of travel, and providing choices for "greener" travel options where practicable, are also a key part of the strategy. Some community facilities or infrastructure play a much wider, strategic role in our communities, such as flood defences, the strategic road and rail network and communications technologies. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be used to plan for these, with development

contributing towards their delivery through either planning obligations or the Community Infrastructure Levy.

### **Relevant Local Plan Policies and Strategic Element**

- COM2 New or improved local community buildings and structures: Strategic Approach states that community facilities should be provided within local communities, recognising the benefit of reducing car travel.
- COM3 The retention of local community buildings and structures: Strategic Approach states that existing facilities will be protected through a flexible approach which recognises the changing needs in society.
- COM4 New or improved local recreational facilities: Strategic Approach states that community facilities should be provided within local communities, recognising the benefit of reducing car travel.
- COM5 The retention of open space and recreation facilities: Strategic Approach states that existing facilities will be protected through a flexible approach which recognises the changing needs in society.

### **Conformity Assessment**

#### **Policy C1: Safeguarding Community Assets**

This policy designed to safeguard a number of assets that the community values. It is consistent with the Local Plan policies but adds to it by being more specific in terms of which facilities in the parish should be protected.

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## **Economy**

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### **National Planning Policy**

- 17 Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs.
- 28 Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should: support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings; promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses; support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside.

### **Local Plan Strategic Approach**

A continuing supply of land and premises suitable for employment uses is needed, of a type and scale appropriate to the characteristics of the local area, to provide sufficient opportunities for employment needs to be met locally, to reduce the need to travel and promote economic growth and social inclusion. This will be delivered through the allocation and provision of new sites (with the greater proportion of development at the towns), the suitable protection of existing employment sites (taking into account their significance), and flexible policies to allow development to come forward on other suitable sites. The development of new retail and town centre uses will be directed to the town centres of Weymouth, Dorchester, Bridport, Sherborne and Lyme Regis. Outside the town centres, smaller scale development of shops, financial and professional services, food and drink, office, leisure and community uses will be directed towards local centres. Development should not undermine the functioning of any centre, or adversely affect its vitality or viability.

### **Relevant Local Plan Policies and Strategic Element**

- ECON1 Provision of employment: Strategic Approach includes the general support for employment development as expressed in this policy. The specific wording on live-work units is not considered to be strategic.

## Conformity Assessment

### Policy B1: Local Employment and Business

The policy provides flexibility to support employment development but recognising the environmental sensitivity of the area.

## Housing

### National Planning Policy

- 17 Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth.
- 55 To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby. Avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances.
- 184 Neighbourhood plans and orders should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan.

### Local Plan Strategic Approach

A continuing supply of housing land is needed to help meet the changing demographic and social needs of the area, and to help reduce the need to travel and promote economic growth and social inclusion. The type, size and mix of housing will be expected to reflect local needs as far as possible and result in balanced communities.

Although the total projected need for affordable housing is not expected to be met in the plan period, opportunities will be taken to secure affordable homes to meet local needs. This will include ensuring all new open market housing sites make a contribution (through providing new affordable homes or, where this is not possible, making a financial contribution) and through a range of flexible policies that encourage affordable housing to come forward where there are suitable opportunities.

### Relevant Local Plan Policies and Strategic Element

- SUS1 Level of economic and housing growth: Strategic Approach includes the requirement figures for housing and employment
- SUS2 Distribution of development: Strategic Approach includes:
- the principles that have led to the proposed distribution (p55-56)
  - the strategic site allocations as listed in Table 3.7
  - reference to the settlement hierarchy and development within settlement boundaries
  - general restriction of development in rural areas – but recognition that neighbourhood plans may allocate additional sites, add or extend development boundaries, and that some development types are needed to support the rural economy.
- SUS5 Neighbourhood development plans: Neighbourhood plans need to take account of this policy, which sets out expectations of how neighbourhood plans will relate to the local plan. The Strategic Approach identifies that neighbourhood plans can allocate development beyond that allocated in the local plan, and can extend or add settlement boundaries. But it also sets out principles such as concentrating development where jobs and facilities are accessible, and development being at an appropriate scale to the size of the village.
- Neither SUS3 nor SUS 4 are considered by the Local Planning Authority to contain strategic elements
- HOUS3 Open market housing mix: Strategic Approach refers to the type, size and mix of housing being expected to reflect local needs as far as possible and result in balanced communities.

## Conformity Assessment

### Policy H1: Location of housing

This policy introduces a defined development boundary for the settlement of Askerswell. This is specifically allowed for in the Local Plan, and has been drawn with regard to the limited amount of development that would be appropriate in such a small settlement with a limited number of community facilities, within the Dorset AONB. It does not support unsustainable isolated dwellings in the countryside

It also provides a more flexible approach to the reuse of buildings in the countryside, in line with national policy. The more restrictive policy in the Local Plan (SUS3) has been confirmed by WDDC as non-strategic.

### Policy H2: Size of new open market dwellings

This policy is in line with the Local Plan policy HOUS3, given the limited size of sites likely to come forward in the plan area, and allowing some flexibility given the possible limitations resultant from the site characteristics.

## 5: Contributing to the Achievement of Sustainable Development

The National Planning Policy Framework states that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Sustainable development is about positive growth – making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations. Neighbourhood Plans should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Table 1 seeks to demonstrate how this requirement has been assessed, by using the sustainability objectives derived from the 2015 adopted Local Plan.

**Table 1:** An indicative assessment of how the relevant policies fit with the Strategic Approach of the adopted Local Plan.

Objective	Decision-making criteria	NP	Comment
1.To maintain or enhance features of historic and cultural importance	How will it impact upon archaeological sites, scheduled ancient monuments, conservation areas and listed buildings, in addition to other culturally important features?	✓	Policy E2 identifies undesignated heritage asset considered worthy of protection After consultation with appropriate experts, sites likely to harm heritage assets or their context were excluded from the defined development boundary.
2. To maintain, protect and enhance the landscape and village character	How will it impact upon the special character of the Dorset AONB?	✓	Policy E1 recognises the importance of the AONB and views that are important After consultation with appropriate experts, sites that might harm the AONB were excluded from the defined development boundary.
	How will it impact upon the distinctive qualities and features of the area?	✓	Policy E2 identifies landscape features considered worthy of protection Policy E4 seeks to Protect and Enhance the character and appearance of the area through appropriate designs and use of materials

Objective	Decision-making criteria	NP	Comment
3. To reduce our contribution to climate change	How will it impact upon air quality and produce greenhouse gases?	x	In rural areas there is always likely to be a need for residents to travel by private car for many trips. However the quantum of likely development allowed through the Neighbourhood Plan is limited
	How will it impact upon energy and water conservation and efficiency?	o	Energy and water conservation and efficiency is primarily achieved through Building Regulations
4. To reduce vulnerability to climate change	How will it impact upon vulnerability to flooding?	o	Although the defined development boundary includes part of the Asker flood plain, standard policies relating to avoiding flood risk will still apply
	How will it impact upon self-sufficiency, and resilience to climate change impacts?	o	No notable impacts identified
	How will it impact upon productive agricultural land, which provides local food security?	o	No notable impacts identified
5. To maintain or enhance soil and water quality	How will it impact upon soil quality, particularly productive agricultural land	o	No notable impacts identified
	How will it impact upon water quality?	o	No notable impacts identified
6. To protect or enhance biodiversity, geodiversity and the quality of natural habitats	How will it impact upon habitats, species and sites of wildlife interest, and designated areas on the basis of ecological importance (such as SAC, SPA, SSSI and SNCI)?	✓	After consultation with appropriate experts, sites that might harm local ecological interests were excluded from the defined development boundary. Policy 3 specifically seeks to safeguard local biodiversity interests
	How will it impact upon the provision of new or improved wildlife habitats and corridors?	✓	As above
	How will it impact upon sites of geological interest?	o	No notable impacts identified

Objective	Decision-making criteria	NP	Comment
7. To encourage the development of sustainable, safe and vibrant communities to improve quality of life	How will it impact upon access to essential services (such as health facilities), leisure facilities, community facilities, and cultural activities by sustainable modes of transport?	o	Existing community facilities are protected as community assets. However most services will still be provided outside of the parish, necessitating travel by private car for many trips
	How will it impact upon access to recreational facilities, such as green open spaces, by sustainable modes of transport, promoting healthy lifestyles?	o	As above
	How will it impact upon human health?	o	No notable impacts identified
	How will it impact upon the amount of criminal activity, the fear of crime, and anti-social activity to create a safer community?	o	No notable impacts identified
8. To encourage sustainable economic growth	How will it impact upon economic activity or provide employment opportunities?	✓	The plan seeks to support economic growth, although recognising that demand will be limited and particularly reliant on superfast broadband and the quality of the environment
	How will it impact upon accessibility to training and education facilities?	o	No notable impacts identified
9. To provide decent, affordable housing that meets the need of the local community	How will it impact upon availability of decent, affordable housing?	✓	Affordable housing exception sites could come forward adjoining the settlement. Policy H2 also ensures that new open market housing should be modest in scale.
	How will it impact upon providing the appropriate type and amount of housing to meet the needs of the local community?	✓	The plan provides for some housing growth through the inclusion of a defined development boundary and flexible approach to the reuse of rural buildings
	How will it impact upon the number of people that are homeless or in temporary accommodation?	o	No notable impacts identified

Impact key	Very Positive	✓✓	Positive	✓	None	o	Negative	x	Very Negative	xx
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The above assessment indicates that the plan should contribute to sustainable development, the main adverse impacts being the continued reliance on the private car for many trips given the rural nature of the area. However, the government recognises that different policies and measures will be required in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas. The neighbourhood plan does not contain policies that would generate significant amounts of movement.