



## The Community Plan for Weymouth & Portland 2013-2016

### Foreword

I am delighted to see the publication of this three year Community Plan for Weymouth and Portland. This plan highlights the action required for the Partnership to work towards improving the quality of life for everyone who lives and works within Weymouth and Portland.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our Partners and members of the local community for their contribution to this plan. We look forward to working in partnership to deliver positive improvements for our communities over this plan period.

**Anne-Marie Vincent**  
**Chair**

### What is the Community Plan?

The Local Government Act of 2000 placed a duty on local authorities to prepare 'community strategies', for promoting/improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas, and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development of the UK. Community Plan's are intended to meet the following key objectives<sup>1</sup>:

- allow local communities (based upon geography and/or interest) to articulate their aspirations, needs and priorities;
- co-ordinate the actions of the council, and of the public, private, voluntary and community organisations that operate locally;
- focus and shape existing and future activity of those organisations so that they effectively meet community needs and aspirations; and
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development both locally and more widely, with local goals and priorities relating, where appropriate, to regional, national and even global aims.

The Community Plan highlights the key priorities, or strategic objectives, which need to be addressed in order to improve the quality of life of those who live and work in Weymouth & Portland. The priorities cover the whole of Borough life, and include the work of the partner organisations such as the local authority, police, housing and health providers. The Plan provides a framework for action and improvement which will help partners work towards achieving a vision for the future.

The Community Plan spans a three year period and is intended to enable collaborative work, whilst retaining the flexibility to respond to the rapidly changing local scene and shape of local and national government services.

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup> "Preparing Community Strategies: Government Guidance to Local Authorities" Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006

## **How has the Community Plan been developed?**

The first Community Plan for the Borough covered the period 2002-07 and a full review took place during 2006. The Community Plan for 2007-16 was released following several stages of research and consultation.

Government guidance and best practice recommends that Community Plans are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they continue to accurately reflect the needs and aspirations of the community. This document presents a refreshed version of the Community Plan for the period 2013-2016 and has been developed following a review of the statistical data for the Borough, a 'Visioning' exercise with partner organisations and community representatives, discussions with local organisations and community consultation. The Plan also takes into account the findings of a range of other recent community consultations and strategic documents.

## **What is the Weymouth & Portland Partnership?**

The Community Plan is developed by the Weymouth and Portland Partnership which unites individuals and organisations in work to meet the needs of the local community, shape the future of the Borough and achieve real change. The Partnership was established in 2001 and includes organisations such as the Borough Council, Dorset NHS, Weymouth College, Dorset Police and Aster Communities, along with a wide range of agencies working in the area, voluntary and community groups.

The Partnership is governed by a Board which includes representatives of public sector bodies, Borough and County Councillors, voluntary and community groups and other local organisations, with an Independent Chair.

Between 2007-2012, WPP funded a total of 93 local projects through funding received through Dorset NHS and the Department of Health (Communities for Health), Dorset Strategic Partnership, Dorset County Council and the Local Transport Plan.

During 2012, WPP undertook a review of its operational structure and membership, and has made some significant changes. WPP has adopted a new constitution and framework aimed at placing communities at the heart of partnership working practices and to deliver more effective local solutions.

## Changing Context

Following the change of Government in 2010, combined with the Global Financial Crisis, recent years have seen major changes in the shape of public services and the work of local organisations. These changes are still manifesting in the local area, but it is increasingly evident that partnership working is becoming more critical as organisations need to maximise their resources and respond to local needs.

The Localism Act has provided the legislative framework for increased rights for communities, through the Community Right to Challenge, Community Right to Bid and Community Right to Build. The new National Planning Policy Framework and ~~new style~~ the introduction of Neighbourhood Plans also provide a mechanism for communities to communicate their needs and aspirations.

There have also been great changes to the public sector structures and the way services are delivered locally. Key developments have included the move of Public Health to Local Government, the development of new Health & Wellbeing Boards, moves to GP Clinical Commissioning within the NHS and introduction of the Police & Crime Commission. Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Nature Partnerships are developing across the Country and in the Dorset area.

There have also been changes to the local Partnership landscape within the Dorset area. Dorset Strategic Partnership restructured and streamlined activities following a review in 2011 and several Local Community Partnerships across Dorset have now ceased to operate. The recent move towards a shared service structure between Weymouth & Portland Borough Council and West Dorset District Council has meant that support for the Weymouth & Portland Partnership and West Dorset Partnership now sits within the same framework.

## **Weymouth & Portland – An overview**

According to the 2011 Census, the population of Weymouth & Portland now stands at 65,200 and the area has seen a 2.4% increase in the ten year period since the last Census. The Borough is the most densely populated area in Dorset, outside of Bournemouth and Poole. There are areas within the Borough which suffer from high levels of need, including low levels of income, child poverty and health needs.

The Borough of Weymouth and Portland is made up of communities with distinct characteristics and a mixture of urban and rural settings. Portland is characterised by the unique coastline, geology and rugged landscape and has the Tout Quarry SSSI Nature Reserve and two Butterfly Conservation Reserves. Prior to the closure of the naval dockyards in the 1990's, the Royal Navy occupied a prominent site on the Island, which has seen significant regeneration in recent years, with more improvements planned.

Weymouth has a high number of listed buildings, including the Georgian seafront. The beach has consistently won awards for quality and cleanliness, the most recent being a 2013 Seaside Award from Keep Britain Tidy.

Over 30% of land within Weymouth & Portland is protected by an environmental designation, which equates to almost 1,300 hectares of land. The Borough sits as part of the Natural World Heritage Coast and there are several Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and of international importance, including Radipole Lake RSPB Nature Reserve, Lodmoor RSPB Reserve, Chesil Beach and the Fleet Lagoon. The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Sailing Events put an international spotlight on the unique natural environment, coastline, heritage and culture of the area.

## **A Vision for Weymouth & Portland in 2016**

Weymouth & Portland has a prosperous economy with a wide variety of businesses operating in the area. There are diverse work options available for local people and exciting opportunities for young people. Education and training is available to all age ranges and is of an excellent standard, providing for the needs of the area.

The Borough is a healthy and safe place to live, where all residents have equal access to high quality health facilities, care and housing that is appropriate to their needs. Our local communities are thriving, with all ages, abilities and cultures having an active role in their area and in the planning of community services.

The Borough is a place to be proud of with its internationally recognised natural environment, heritage, landscape and coastline. We value the built and natural environment and recognise the importance of protecting the natural assets and unique characteristics of the Borough. We acknowledge the central place the environment holds in our healthy lifestyles, thriving area and economy.

We are maximising the opportunities presented by the hosting of the 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Sailing events and Cultural Olympiad to provide a wealth of high-quality outdoor and cultural activities. The Borough is known as a hub for creative and innovative working which has had real benefits for our communities.

## Priorities for Action for 2013-2016

### 1. Economy

*Weymouth & Portland has a prosperous economy with a wide variety of businesses operating in the area. There are diverse work options available for local people and exciting opportunities for young people. Education and training is available to all age ranges and is of an excellent standard, providing for the needs of the area.*

#### Key issues

- In 2010 there were more enterprise closures (270) than start-ups (165), with the overall number of start-ups less than the previous year (200)
- In the Borough, 62.2% of enterprises which launched in 2007 survived for at least three years, compared with 63.5% and 69.2% for the previous two years
- In July 2011-July 2012, the employment rate for the resident population was 75.4%, which is higher than the national average of 70.4%
- 13.3% of people in the Borough are self-employed, compared with 24.5% in West Dorset, but in line with the national figure of 13.8%
- In Feb 2012, there were a total of 6,780 benefit claimants, equivalent to 17.4 % of the 16-64 age group, compared to 10.6% in West Dorset
- The highest proportion of local units are in the retail sector (15%)
- The highest proportion of people aged 16-64 (30%) are employed in the Public Administration, Education and Health sectors
- 71% of the total employees are employed in the Private Sector, with a high proportion of jobs within the service sector
- In 2012, there were 2,400 people with no qualifications. There has been a significant increase in the proportion of the population (aged 19-64) qualified to at least Level 4, a 19.9% increase over a ten year period (2001-2010).

#### Aims

- To encourage a broader range of local employers and year-round employment
- Support local businesses to grow
- Work with local employers and educational providers to ensure training needs are met
- To support regeneration of key areas of the Borough, particularly Weymouth Town Centre
- Improve promotion of Weymouth and Portland, and develop opportunities around cultural, environmental and specialist tourism
- Improve links with the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership and communicate local issues
- To work with partners to seek funding opportunities and secure investment into the Borough

## 2. Communities

The Borough is a healthy and safe place to live, where all residents have equal access to high quality health facilities, care and housing that is appropriate to their needs. Our local communities are thriving, with all ages, abilities and cultures having an active role in their area and in the planning of community services.

### Key issues

- There are significant levels of multiple deprivation within the Borough, with levels of child poverty at the highest in Dorset (13.6%) (excluding Bournemouth)
- Life expectancy for males (78.1) and females (82.6) is the lowest in Dorset (excluding Bournemouth)
- 42.3% of the population enjoy good health
- 19.4% of the population live with a long term limiting illness, which is higher than most of Dorset
- The Borough has the highest number of obese children in Dorset in Reception Year (10.1%) and Year 6 (17.8%)
- The Borough ranks highest in Dorset (excl Bournemouth) in terms of health needs including teenage pregnancy, adult smokers, binge drinking adults, respiratory disease, deaths from all cancer and mental health issues<sup>2</sup>
- There is a significant affordability gap between wage levels and house prices, with over 57% of young working households are unable to afford a property at the lower end of the market, compared to 30% for England
- The rate of crime is higher at 90.1 per 1000 population than the Dorset average of 71.5, but the Borough only accounts for 16% of the overall population

### Aims

- Undertake targeted work to improve health inequalities in communities with the highest level of need
- Support work to tackle childhood poverty and assist families
- Encourage individuals of all ages and abilities to engage with their communities and have a strong voice in communicating their needs and aspirations
- Support communities to lead regeneration initiatives in their area
- Promote eating well, physical activity, play and access to nature as part of a healthy lifestyle
- Support provision of creative activities and events to build community cohesion, combat social isolation and mental health issues
- Improve the supply and quality of affordable housing for all
- Investigate new ways of tackling housing issues and prioritising for local people
- Encourage home owners and landlords to make homes more energy efficient
- Support individuals in need through debt counselling, food banks and other support services
- Undertake targeted work with communities to tackle anti-social behaviour
- Create a more appealing and inclusive environment in Weymouth Town Centre

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<sup>2</sup> Health data from NHS information Centre, 2012

### 3. Environment

The Borough is a place to be proud of with its internationally recognised natural environment, heritage, landscape and coastline. We value the built and natural environment and recognise the importance of protecting the natural assets and unique characteristics of Weymouth and Portland. We acknowledge the central place the environment holds in our healthy lifestyles, thriving area and economy.

#### Key issues

- There is a pressing need to protect the natural biodiversity of the area. There are several sites within the Borough which are classed as Priority Habitats<sup>3</sup> and Strategic Nature Areas<sup>4</sup>
- The State of Nature report 2013 suggests that 60% of the UK's animal and plant species studied have declined in the past 50 years
- Weymouth Town Centre, the Park District and the Chiswell area of Portland are particularly vulnerable to flooding. Weymouth Town Centre currently has 447 properties at risk from a 1 in 200 year tidal event with wave overtopping. This is predicted to increase to 1007 for the same event in 2035, and then 4042 properties in 2126<sup>5</sup>
- Parts of Bowleaze Cove, Furzy Cliffs and Portland Harbour are most at risk of coastal erosion
- Tourism is central to the economy of the local area, which rests heavily on the quality and character of the historic and natural environment
- There are many barriers that exist between the natural environment and local residents and, in spite of recent projects such as Wild About Weymouth and Portland, local nature sites are not visited by the full cross-section of our communities

#### Aims

- Encourage more re-use, recycling and efficient energy use
- Encourage more cycling and use of sustainable transport
- Promote the 'Natural Weymouth & Portland' brand<sup>6</sup> and the '*Hidden Gems*' within the local environment to residents and as part of the tourism offer
- Improve access to nature for all people in the local community and visitors to the area
- Support initiatives to link the natural environment, healthy lifestyles and cultural activities
- Support organisations involved in managing the local natural environment and protecting biodiversity and marine life, including RSPB, Dorset Wildlife Trust, Lorton Valley Nature Park, Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site and Portland Quarry Nature Park Partnership
- Support research and monitoring of the natural environment to provide a strong evidence base in order to protect the natural assets
- Support the objectives of the Local Plan for Weymouth & Portland and West Dorset, as adopted
- Support the development an appropriate response to the threat posed to property and infrastructure by natural erosion, rising sea levels and flooding, acknowledging the need to protect natural assets such as the World Heritage Site where possible
- Support and enhance the Borough's parks and gardens, including supporting Friends' groups
- Encourage and support more community growing initiatives and community gardens

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<sup>3</sup> including coastal saltmarsh, shingle and reedbeds

<sup>4</sup> Dorset Environmental Records Centre Biodiversity Audit 2012

<sup>5</sup> West Dorset District Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council, Local Plan Background Paper 2013

<sup>6</sup> developed as part of 2012 Olympic & Paralympic events

## 4. Innovation

We are maximising the opportunities presented by the hosting of the 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Sailing events and Cultural Olympiad to provide a wealth of high-quality outdoor and cultural activities. The Borough is known as a hub for creative and innovative working which has had real benefits for our communities.

### Key issues

- According to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, four wards within Weymouth & Portland fall within the top 20% of the most deprived communities in the country
- Key areas of Weymouth and Portland require investment and regeneration
- In 2011, the arts and cultural sector had a turnover of £12.8 billion and a gross value added <sup>7</sup>of £5.9 billion. Arts and culture generated more per pound invested than the health, wholesale and retail, and professional and business services sectors. Tourists spent £856m a year on our culture that year and culture was responsible for 0.45% of total UK employment. While the UK economy as a whole has been consistently below output since 2008, the cultural sector has actually grown<sup>8</sup>
- During the Summer of 2012, 100,000 people took part in activities within the Beach Sports Arena, 60% of which were local people. More than 400,000 'have a go' sessions were delivered by qualified coaches. This demonstrates a real need for affordable access to outdoor activities
- The 'Maritime Mix' element of the Cultural Olympiad generated upwards of £13 M for the tourism economy of Weymouth & Portland between Sept 2011 and Sept 2012 <sup>9</sup>
- Maritime Mix helped to engage new audiences and communities in the Borough and use local places of interest in a new way. Local arts initiatives, including 'Let's Make it' have demonstrated a need and desire for more creative activities in the Borough

*"912 postcodes were gathered in Weymouth & Portland over five days. The results from Weymouth are of particular interest, as they turn the predicted engagement on its head, i.e. the audience was primarily from 'harder to reach groups'*

Red Ball UK Evaluation Report

### Aims

- To actively seek funding opportunities and secure investment into the Borough
- To explore and facilitate new ways of working between agencies and promote examples of best practice for the benefit of the local community
- To support and facilitate high-quality outdoor, sporting and cultural activities, building on the excitement and engagement developed through the Cultural Olympiad and 2012 Olympic Sailing & Paralympic Sailing events
- Ensure that the full cross-section of our communities have opportunities to engage in cultural and sporting activities in the area.
- Support the work of Dorset Loves Arts and other organisations leading on cultural provision in the Borough and County<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The economic measure of the value of what we make and sell

<sup>8</sup> Arts Council of England 'The Contribution of the Arts & Culture to the National Economy', 2013

<sup>9</sup> Dorset County Council, Maritime Mix, London 2012 Cultural Olympiad by The Sea, Evaluation Report 2013

<sup>10</sup> Dorset Loves Arts is a collaboration of 50 key arts providers across Dorset, Poole and Bournemouth



***Working with You....***  
**Underhill, Westham, Melcombe Regis and Littlemoor**

Bringing together organisations which form the Weymouth & Portland Partnership and in support of the Community Plan objectives, “**Working with You**” is an initiative designed to place communities at the heart of partnership working practices, encourage more collaborative working at all levels and deliver community improvements.

According to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, the four wards of Underhill, Westham, Melcombe Regis and Littlemoor fall within the top 20% of the most deprived communities in the country. Therefore, ‘Working with You’ is targeting these priority communities within the next Community Plan period.

Between January and June 2013, community consultations took place in the four priority wards in order to clarify the priorities for each community to inform the ‘Working with You’ programme. Consultations took the form of drop-in sessions, community lunches, Business breakfasts and a School Parent’s Evening. These events have been taken into account, along with the results of other recent consultations, such as Portland Neighbourhood Plan, Big 4 Littlemoor and the Local Plan. This information is being used to develop a partnership action-based programme of work looking at short, medium and longer term targets, the roles of various partners and how projects can be effectively financed. More information is available from [www.weymouthandportlandpartnership.org](http://www.weymouthandportlandpartnership.org)

## What happens next?

Following the review of the Weymouth & Portland Partnership, WPP now has four key groups - **Economy; Communities, Innovation** and the **Natural Weymouth & Portland Partnership (NWPP)**<sup>11</sup>. The four groups bring together public and private sector partners, local businesses and community organisations and will provide the central mechanism to co-ordinate work linked to the Community Plan and 'Working with You' to deliver improvements in the local area. Now that the Plan is formulated and released, the groups will be developing action plans to address the issues that have been highlighted and identifying new funding opportunities.

We will monitor how projects and actions are being implemented and delivered, and report progress to partners and the wider community. Information will appear regularly in the local press on our website and in regular email bulletins. If you would like to be added to this circulation list, please email your details.

### More information

If you would like more information on the Community Plan or would like to get involved, please contact Louise Stewart, Community Planning Officer on 01305 838364 or [l.stewart@westdorset-weymouth.gov.uk](mailto:l.stewart@westdorset-weymouth.gov.uk) or visit [www.weymouthandportlandpartnership.org](http://www.weymouthandportlandpartnership.org)

**If you need this information in large print, Braille, in audio format, another language or would like to talk to a member of staff to discuss your needs, please contact us on 01305 838000.**

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<sup>11</sup> NWPP was established in early 2012 to raise the profile of the natural environment in line with 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games and is an Olympic Legacy project, involving organisations such as Natural England, RSPB and Dorset Wildlife Trust.