



Dorset Council **Local Plan**

January to March 2021
consultation

Consultation Statement



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1. Introduction

1.1. The draft Dorset Council Local Plan

- 1.1.1. Dorset Council produced a draft Local Plan containing proposals and policies for guiding future development in the Dorset Council area up to 2038. The plan outlined the strategy for meeting the growth needs of the area for housing, employment, and community services including schools, retail, leisure and community facilities. The draft plan proposed to direct development to the most suitable locations near to existing facilities, and included detailed policies to promote high quality development that respects and enhances the character of each area. The draft plan also proposed policies to protect Dorset's natural environment and contributes towards the mitigation and adaptation to climate change.
- 1.1.2. Once adopted, the Dorset Council Local Plan will replace the local plans adopted by the district and borough councils that existed before Dorset Council was formed. Neighbourhood plans form part of the development plan and, once made will sit alongside the local plan.
- 1.1.3. The work that had already been undertaken by the former district councils on reviews of the currently adopted local plans has helped to shape the draft Dorset Council Local Plan. In addition to this, new evidence has been gathered, new sites sought, and existing sites and policies reviewed.
- 1.1.4. Consultations are an integral part of plan making. It is important that the public, organisations, businesses and experts can engage in consultations as they provide policy makers with vital information needed to help write appropriate policies for the area.

Figure 1: Stages of local plan preparation

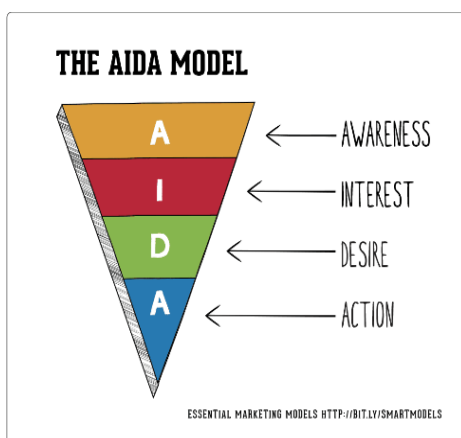


- 1.1.5. There are various stages of local plan formation, and the process can span a period of many years with stage 3 – consultation and stage 4 – amending the plan, being repeated as necessary.
- 1.1.6. The first stage 3 consultation on the Dorset Council Local Plan took place between January 18 and Monday 15 March 2021 where a draft plan was presented, and comments invited. The intention was to encourage stakeholders to engage as much as possible with the plan through the consultation period.
- 1.1.7. This document summarises the consultation methodology and results. The sections appended to this report summarise the main messages from the responses we received.

1.2. Consultation objectives

- 1.2.1. The consultation opened on 18 January 2021, but the communications strategy started in December 2020 with the release of the Dorset Council Cabinet report for the consultation. The consultation strategy had the following objectives:
 - producing a legally compliant consultation;
 - knowing the audience and tailoring the consultation to reach as many people as possible from a wide age range of backgrounds;
 - using the AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action) marketing model to reach the audience and encourage them to respond:
 - raising Awareness: utilising different advertising and marketing techniques to let a wide range of age groups know about the consultation;
 - increasing Interest: increase the understanding of planning and the process of producing a local plan to reduce misunderstandings and therefore anxiety that often arises from the premise of new development;
 - increasing Desire: repetitively reach different groups of people and show them why they should respond to the plan to encourage them to act; and
 - measuring Action: enable easy responses and measure results.

Figure 2: AIDA, a marketing model 1



2. Objective 1: Legal compliance

2.1. Introduction

- 2.1.1. In order to find a plan 'sound' and therefore able to be adopted and used to determine planning applications, local plans must have 'been prepared in accordance with legal requirements'¹. It was therefore important that the primary objective of ensuring a legally compliant consultation was met.
- 2.1.2. There are many legislative requirements that need to be met in order to achieve a legally compliant consultation. These are explained in detail in this chapter but in brief they are:
- consult on the plan in accordance with a Local Development Scheme²;
 - consult on the plan in the manner set out in a Statement of Community Involvement³;
 - consult with prescribed bodies⁴ on the Preparation and Publication of a draft plan;
 - work with neighbouring councils – known as the duty to cooperate⁵;
 - ensure the plan and consultations do not discriminate against those with protected characteristics established in the Equalities Act 2010⁶;
 - ensure consultation materials are accessible⁷.
- 2.1.3. Prior to Dorset Council being formed in 2019, each of the legacy district councils had started reviewing their adopted local plans. Each of these reviews involved gathering of evidence and undertaking consultation. This work has helped to inform the early work on the Dorset Council Local Plan.
- 2.1.4. The early stages of the Dorset Council Local Plan preparation took place during the Covid-19 pandemic and legislation was amended to enable local plan consultations to continue without the need for hard copy documents to be made available for inspection. These temporary measures were in place from 16 July 2020 to 31 December 2021 and therefore covered the period of the local plan consultation.

¹ National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf

² Localism Act 2011 (legislation.gov.uk)

³ Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (legislation.gov.uk)

⁴ Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/767/regulation/18/made>

⁵ Localism Act 2011 (legislation.gov.uk)

⁶ Equality Act 2010 (legislation.gov.uk)

⁷ The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018 (legislation.gov.uk)

2.2. Local Development Scheme

- 2.2.1. The National Planning Practice Guidance provides guidance for communication and engagement. One part of which stipulates that local planning authorities must publicise and maintain their timetable for producing their local plan. This timetable is known as a Local Development Scheme.
- 2.2.2. Dorset Council's Local Development Scheme is updated periodically, and the latest version can be found on the council's website at <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy>.

2.3. Statement of Community Involvement

- 2.3.1. Section 19 (3) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that Local Authorities should produce a Statement of Community Involvement and Section 19 (3) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 continues, 'in preparing development documents (other than their Statement of Community Involvement) the authority must also comply with their Statement of Community Involvement'⁸. The National Planning Practice Guidance⁹ explains how local authorities should engage with communities on the preliminary stages of plan-making, including at survey stage.
- 2.3.2. Dorset Council's Statement of Community Involvement can be found on the council's website at <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy>.

2.4. Prescribed Bodies

- 2.4.1. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 dictate that consultations must take place during the development of a Local Plan. Regulation 35 sets the period over which local plan documents should be made available for comment during their production. Although there is no prescribed upper limit the requirement is that for consultation on a local plan prior to submission for examination (regulation 19), comments should be invited for a minimum 6-week period.
- 2.4.2. There is no prescribed period over which a consultation under regulation 18 should take place but the general presumption is that a minimum of a 6-week consultation period would be appropriate. However, the Dorset Council Local Plan consultation (under regulation 18) took place over an 8-week period between January 18 and Monday 15 March 2021. The responses received to this consultation are to be considered by officers and inform the final drafting of the plan.

⁸ Section 19(3) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/section/19>

⁹ Paragraph: 035 Reference ID: 61-035-20190723 - Plan-making - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

- 2.4.3. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended, also stipulates who should be consulted. This requirement includes specific and general consultation bodies, and 'duty to cooperate' bodies.
- 2.4.4. Specific consultation bodies include:
- Environment Agency
 - Historic England
 - Natural England
 - Homes England
 - NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group
 - Public Health Dorset
 - Highways England
 - Network Rail
 - Marine Management Organisation
 - town and parish councils in Dorset
 - neighbouring county, local and parish councils
 - Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner
 - gas, electricity, water and telecoms providers.
- 2.4.5. General consultation bodies include:
- Voluntary bodies whose activities benefit the area;
 - Bodies representing racial, ethnic or national groups in the area;
 - Bodies representing disabled persons in the area;
 - Bodies representing businesses in the area.
- 2.4.6. The duty to cooperate also requires us to cooperate with the:
- Civil Aviation Authority
 - Office of Rail Regulation
 - Dorset Local Nature Partnership
 - Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership
- 2.4.7. The council regularly updates contacts for each of the specific, general, and duty to cooperate bodies. Emails or letters were sent to each of these bodies on 18 January 2022 informing them of the consultation and how to respond.

2.5. Neighbouring Councils

- 2.5.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹⁰ stipulates that 'Local planning authorities...are under a duty to cooperate with each other, and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries' (NPPF paragraph 24). This means we must discuss proposals with every council that adjoins the Dorset Council boundary, as

¹⁰ National Planning Policy Framework (publishing.service.gov.uk)

shown in Figure 3, namely: South Somerset District Council, Somerset County Council, Hampshire County Council, Devon County Council, New Forest District Council, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, East Devon District Council and Wiltshire Council. In particular, discussions should focus on determining 'where additional infrastructure is necessary, and whether development needs that cannot be met wholly within a particular plan area could be met elsewhere' (NPPF paragraph 26).

Figure 3: Map showing Dorset Council boundary



- 2.5.2. To demonstrate effective working a Statement of Common Ground will be prepared which will set out 'the cross-boundary matters being addressed' (NPPF paragraph 27) as well as any progression made towards addressing these issues.
- 2.5.3. Dorset Council meets regularly with neighbouring councils to discuss planning matters. Meetings are scheduled on a regular basis but there are also on-going discussions that take place on an ad-hoc basis.

2.6. Equality

- 2.6.1. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 clarify what is meant by general consultation bodies with specific mention of 'bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the local planning authority's area', bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in the local planning authority's area' and 'bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in the local

planning authority's area'. In addition to this, The Equalities Act 2010¹¹ requires strategic decisions, amongst other things, to have regard to the desirability of reducing socio-economic inequalities and increase equality of opportunity.

- 2.6.2. The Act promotes equality, diversity and inclusion by protecting the following characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. In addition, it is important to recognise differences associated with ethnicity, rural isolation, and other social inequalities. The Act should be considered in the consultation methodology as well as the content of the plan.
- 2.6.3. The Council undertook an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) to identify and address discrimination of any of the protected characteristics. The Dorset Council EqIA for the draft Dorset Council Local Plan and consultation can be found on the council's website at <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/dorset-council-local-plan/about-the-dorset-council-local-plan-january-2021-consultation>

2.7. Accessibility

- 2.7.1. The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations¹² were introduced in September 2018. They apply to the websites or mobile applications of public sector bodies including Dorset Council. Regulation 5 sets out that information displayed on websites or mobile applications must be accessible, meaning people with impaired vision, motor difficulties, cognitive impairments or learning disabilities, deafness or impaired hearing, must be able to access the material and not be excluded. In addition, the NPPF paragraph 16 states that plans should 'e) be accessible through the use of digital tools to assist public involvement and policy presentation'.
- 2.7.2. The online version of the plan, including the form for submitting responses was published in an accessible format. Where possible, the supporting evidence for the plan was made accessible including the EqIA, the commonly asked questions¹³, and the webinars and podcasts.

2.8. Covid 19 implications

- 2.8.1. The pandemic and associated lockdowns forced a change in how the consultation objectives were delivered. The intention had been to host public consultation events as well as having stalls at markets and other public settings. However, at the point of consultation, a national

¹¹ Equalities Act 2010: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/4>

¹² The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018 (legislation.gov.uk)

¹³ <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/dorset-council-local-plan/dorset-council-local-plan-webinars-podcasts-questions>

lockdown was imposed to limit the spread of Covid-19. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Coronavirus)(Amendment) Regulations 2020 were introduced to give councils new powers to hold public meetings remotely: 'Local authorities in England have been handed new powers to hold public meetings virtually by using video or telephone conferencing technology'¹⁴. These measures were in place from Saturday 4 April 2020 until 7 May 2021.

- 2.8.2. It was considered that there would be significant economic and social implications if the consultation was delayed, as the length of the national lockdown and the restrictions around the Covid-19 pandemic were unknown. The delivery of both new homes and employment would both be impacted, and these are critically important to residents' social and economic wellbeing and the wider economic recovery of the United Kingdom. A review of the consultation methods was undertaken to ensure the consultation could still proceed without disenfranchising anyone from responding, despite the circumstances.
- 2.8.3. A risk assessment of in-person public events was undertaken which concluded it was unsafe to hold them given the risks associated with Covid-19. Face to face events would introduce risks to the public and staff members even if precautionary measures to reduce risk, such as one-way systems, wearing of face coverings, social distancing, and regular wiping down of surfaces were introduced. There was also uncertainty about the degree of any lockdown and any further restrictions that could be introduced making it difficult to reliably plan for, advertise and manage face to face events.
- 2.8.4. In addition, the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 made a temporary change to regulation 35 of the 2012 regulations removing the requirement to make hard copies of the documents available for inspection. Planning practice guidance stated that: 'Regulations to remove the requirement on a local planning authority to provide hard copies of documents made available under regulation 35. Documents are still required to be made available on the local planning authority's website. This modification will apply until 31 December 2020.' (Paragraph: 079 Reference ID: 61-079-20200715).
- 2.8.5. Alternative approaches were put in place to enable consultation to take place as openly as possible. Amongst other measures, hard copies of the consultation documents were made available for loan from libraries, online briefing sessions were held for people to attend and a dedicated phone line was made available.

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/councils-given-new-powers-to-hold-public-meetings-remotely>

3. Objective 2: Knowing our audience

3.1. Local Plan engagement and consultation

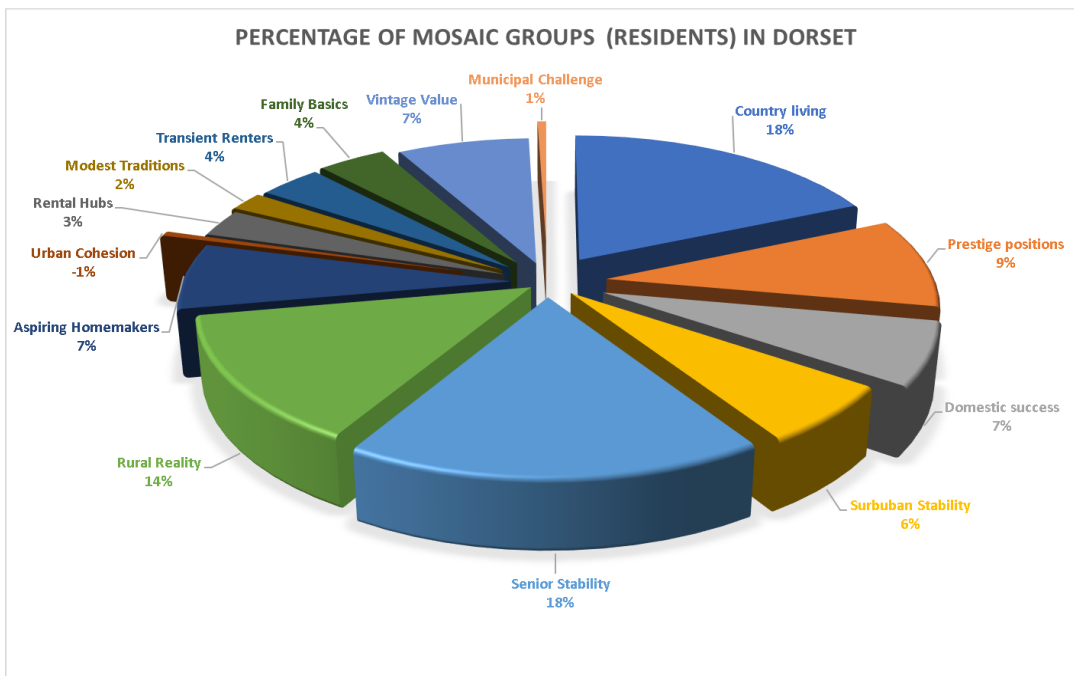
- 3.1.1. As well as the general and specific consultation bodies and the duty to co-operate bodies as required by the Town and Country Planning Act, NPPF paragraph 16c specifies that plans should be shaped by early, proportionate, and effective engagement between plan makers and communities. There is no guidance to suggest how to undertake this engagement, but the council believes that consultation is very important. Communities have detailed knowledge of an area that is invaluable to the plan making process and as such, through consultation the council can enable communities to shape the plan.
- 3.1.2. In the local plan consultations undertaken by previous district authorities, a typical response rate of around 1% was achieved as shown in Figure 4 (with the exception of the New Homes for Purbeck consultation in 2018 that was guided by consultation specialists, and the Regulation 18: Preferred Options in 2016). Furthermore, respondents to previous consultations tended to be aged over 65 years.

Figure 4: Table showing the number of respondents compared to population of areas in former district consultations

Former District	Number of respondents	Population of area	Percentage of respondents
Purbeck District Council - Regulation 19: Pre-submission (2019)	195	47,140	0.4
Purbeck District Council - Regulation 18: New Homes for Purbeck (2018)	6,893	47,140	14.6
Purbeck District Council - Regulation 18: New Homes for Purbeck (telephone survey) (2018)	1,002	47,140	2.1
Purbeck District Council - Regulation 18: Preferred Options (2016)	3,300	47,140	7.0
Purbeck District Council - Regulation 18: Issues and Options (2015)	484	47,140	1.0
West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland District Councils - Regulation 18: Preferred Options (2018)	900	168,620	0.5
North Dorset District Council - Regulation 18: Issues and Options (2018)	377	70,840	0.5
East Dorset and Christchurch District Councils - Regulation 18: Preferred Options (2018)	1,700	139,920	1.2

- 3.1.3. For the Dorset Council Local Plan consultation, the intention was to ensure all residents and businesses operating in the area, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, mobility etc., were aware of the plan consultation and not only to have the opportunity to be involved but to interest them in the plan so they felt motivated to respond.
- 3.1.4. To this end, the second objective of the consultation was to understand the audience and to use this understanding alongside the EqIA, to shape the consultation methodology. By understanding the audience, different consultation methods, and advertising techniques could be used to reach the different sectors of the plan’s stakeholder groups.
- 3.1.5. A detailed analysis of the residents of Dorset was undertaken using MOSAIC data as shown in Figure 5. The communication preferences of each group were considered as well as their location in the county.

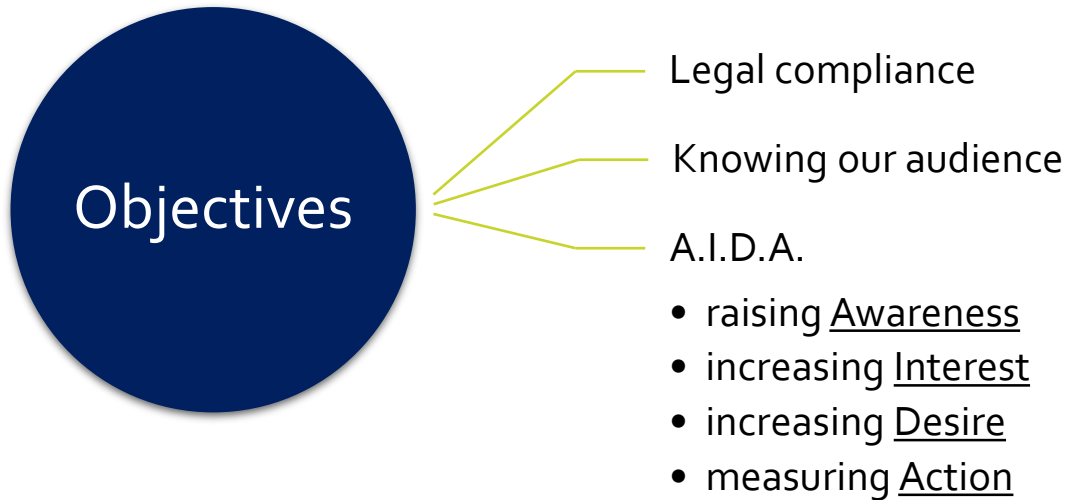
Figure 5: Pie chart showing Mosaic groups and their prominence in Dorset.



4. Objective 3: Reaching our audience and encouraging responses

4.1. The Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action (AIDA) Model

- 4.1.1. The AIDA Model is a marketing technique that identifies the stages an individual goes through during the 'buying process' for a product or service. It can be applied as a tool to prompt someone to act on something such as responding to the consultation. The model is predicated on the first two sections, Awareness and Interest, occurring on multiple occasions before individuals are moved through to the final two stages.



4.1.2. The council’s marketing strategy achieved the first two elements of Awareness and Interest via multiple mechanisms utilised again and again in order to move individuals through to acting and finally responding to the plan.

Figure 6: Mechanisms used for marketing the local plan



4.2. Raising Awareness

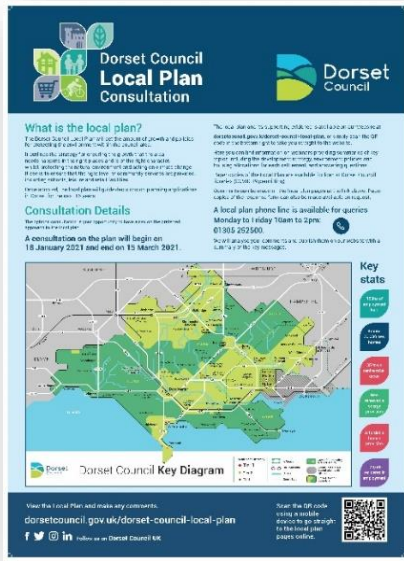
- 4.2.1. Methods used to attract the public’s attention are explained below. Appendix 1 outlines how the techniques met the consultation objectives.
- 4.2.2. All information (electronic and paper) was branded clearly and consistently using approved colour schemes and containing website, telephone and postal/email contact details. This helped to highlight information relevant to the consultation easily and quickly making the consultation material instantly recognisable.

Specific groups

- 4.2.3. To achieve the objective of reaching a wide and diverse audience it was essential that specific groups of people were reached in a way that appealed to them.
- 4.2.4. Town and parish councils play a key role in helping to distribute information to communities. In February and March 2020, the Planning Policy team undertook engagement with town and parish councils to explain the proposed settlement hierarchy for inclusion in the Dorset Council Local Plan. The presentations and summary reports relating to these consultations can be accessed online¹⁵. They were informed via letters, posters, and e-newsletters and via the Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils (DAPTC) network. Meetings were also held with some town and parish councils to request their input into ways of reaching a non-digital audience.
- 4.2.5. Planning staff attended the local gypsies and travellers liaison meeting to discuss the changes proposed and collect direct feedback.
- 4.2.6. Where contacts for specific organisations were available, contact was made directly. In addition, consultation posters were given to the MoD HIVE at Blandford and Bovington military camps.
- 4.2.7. E-newsletters were sent to local schools to highlight the consultation to school staff and to parents with information often included in school newsletters.
- 4.2.8. The methods deployed to ensure other age groups were not disenfranchised included:
 - Podcasts;
 - Webinars on YouTube;
 - Organic posts on Facebook and Twitter;
 - Advertising on Facebook (targeting geographic areas);
 - Advertising on Spotify;
 - Online advertising (targeting geographic areas); and
 - Organic posts on Instagram.

¹⁵ Dorset Council Local Plan January 2021 consultation - Dorset Council

Figure 7: Poster advertising the local plan consultation



The use of household leaflets

- 4.2.9. The cost and benefits of sending a leaflet to every door in Dorset Council area was explored. The industry standard for an unsolicited direct mail campaign is a response rate of between 0.5 – 1%. So, for an outlay of approximately £70k between 1,882 – 3,764 responses would be expected from residents (latest population of Dorset Council area is 376,480).
- 4.2.10. With the anticipated response rate being relatively modest and the costs being significant especially in the context of the climate emergency, it was not considered appropriate to print excessive amounts of paper and increase Dorset Council’s carbon footprint.
- 4.2.11. Given the profile of the residents of Dorset it was estimated that a direct mailout would only appeal to a proportion of the audience (approximately 43%) many of whom would also be likely to respond to other ways of advertising such as:
- advertising on local radio;
 - displays in town centres;
 - Dorset Council news;
 - community or parish magazines; and
 - news releases to local press and media
- 4.2.12. Additionally, Dorset Council’s recently completed residents’ survey suggested that only a relatively small percentage (between 6% and 18%) do not use the internet. This means that most people could be reached via some sort of digital mechanism, but those without access to the internet could be reached through the alternative mechanisms listed.

Ease of response

- 4.2.13. To enable people to engage in the consultation, it was important that making a response was as easy as possible. The plan was presented in an accessible format on the Council's website where users could navigate through the various sections and respond to any questions asked. The accessible online version of the consultation document supported screen readers and other adaptive software. A response form was available to download in pdf or MS Word format or for collection in hard copy from libraries and town and parish councils. Hard copy forms were also available upon request from the council offices. Large print or alternative format documents were available during the consultation period, again upon request.

Figure 8: Dorset Council Local Plan display boards in Tourist Information Centre



Innovative techniques

- 4.2.14. Several innovative methods were utilised in this consultation, in particular:
- webinars¹⁶ were hosted where officers verbally explained the plan's content using PowerPoint presentations;
 - [Podcasts](#) were recorded where staff explained and discussed the content of the plan, and addressed frequently misunderstood planning issues;
 - infographics and videos¹⁷ were presented to promote the consultation and explain why people should respond;
 - a dedicated telephone line and email address were available where people could request information and ask questions and officers could respond; and

¹⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EeMCbPCjSOk&list=PL4QCF5PXxl-unXpyX4Qf5JMQ81rbGfLSM>

¹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1kHKMUCy4A>

- planning surgeries were offered where officers attended online video calls with groups of interested people, again upon request.
- 4.2.15. Public consultation events are traditionally opportunities to explain the content of the plan, allow people to ask questions and allow officers to answer any queries about the plan's proposals. As the pandemic meant holding public consultation events was not possible, alternative approaches were utilised that enabled the same outcomes.
- 4.2.16. Public events tend to appeal to a limited audience; primarily those aged over 65 who are often able to attend events during the working day. Alternative approaches were used to achieve the same outcomes for the same groups of people including:
- a dedicated telephone line for the consultation
 - webinars that customers could phone into using a standard phone line
 - e-newsletters;
 - adverts on local radio;
 - displays in town centres;
 - Dorset Council news on the website;
 - community or parish magazines; and
 - news releases to local press and media;
- 4.2.17. Other groups normally in attendance at face-to-face meetings were town and parish councils, our own councillors, local forums, and interest groups. Online surgeries were organised for these groups with planning staff and the planning Portfolio Holder to address any issues and answer questions. Town and parish councils were encouraged to assist by spreading the word about the consultation within e-newsletters, by displaying posters around their local area and urging responses from interested people. Some went further and produced their own leaflets and a video. Many also used their social media channels to promote the consultation such as in the example at Figure 9.

Figure 9: Tweet by a Councillor advertising Bridport Town Council's video promoting the consultation



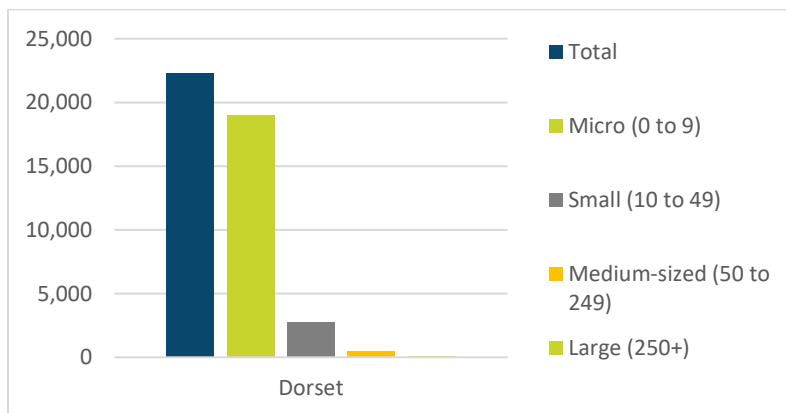
- 4.2.18. Whilst recognising that some of the methods of consultation were different to what some people are used to, using these alternative approaches gave an opportunity to reach out to a wider audience, including people who wouldn't normally attend public events.

- 4.2.19. Paper copies of documents could not be made available at council offices as they were closed. Instead, a selection of the consultation documents were available for loan from local libraries as part of a safe 'order and collect' service offered by Dorset Library Service.
- 4.2.20. In order to make the consultation documents and website accessible the council:
- Produced an online form and plan in accessible format;
 - Allowed for accessible documents to be available on request; and
 - Provided webinars with captions and the ability to phone-in and listen.

Businesses

- 4.2.21. The Dorset Council area has very few large businesses but many small and medium sized enterprises. The communications employed to inform and engage this group included:
- E-newsletters
 - Advertising on LinkedIn
 - Organic posts on the Dorset Council 'The Natural place to do business' Facebook page.
 - Organic posts on Twitter
 - Local Radio advertising
 - news releases to local press and media

Figure 10: Businesses in Dorset by size (Oct 2018)



4.3. Increasing Interest

Increasing understanding of planning

- 4.3.1. An inherent problem with local plan consultations is capturing the interest of the reader. The documents are large, complex, and often deal with abstract concepts. To overcome this, the local plan was made more understandable by avoiding the use of technical terms and explaining concepts and terms where necessary. This was achieved through online surgeries, [webinars](#) and [podcasts](#).
- 4.3.2. The design of our online form allowed people to 'dive into' the area or topic they were interested in without needing to read through the detail of the rest of the plan.

- 4.3.3. Online channels were used to encourage dialogue, promoting the Council’s actions around the consultation and to enable responses to questions about the plan. Videos were also used to explain why responding to the consultation was important.

4.4. Increasing the Desire to respond

- 4.4.1. In order to engage communities with the content of the local plan, a variety of more personal methods were used. These included the use of members of the planning team to present [webinars](#), using a personal approach to explaining the plan’s content, and using plain English wherever possible. This helped to demonstrate an enthusiasm for the place-making aims of the local plan which in turn helped to build trust with local communities.

- 4.4.2. The following different media types were used to raise awareness of the local plan consultation via multiple different channels and on multiple occasions

- 4.4.3. [E-newsletters](#) were sent throughout the consultation period:

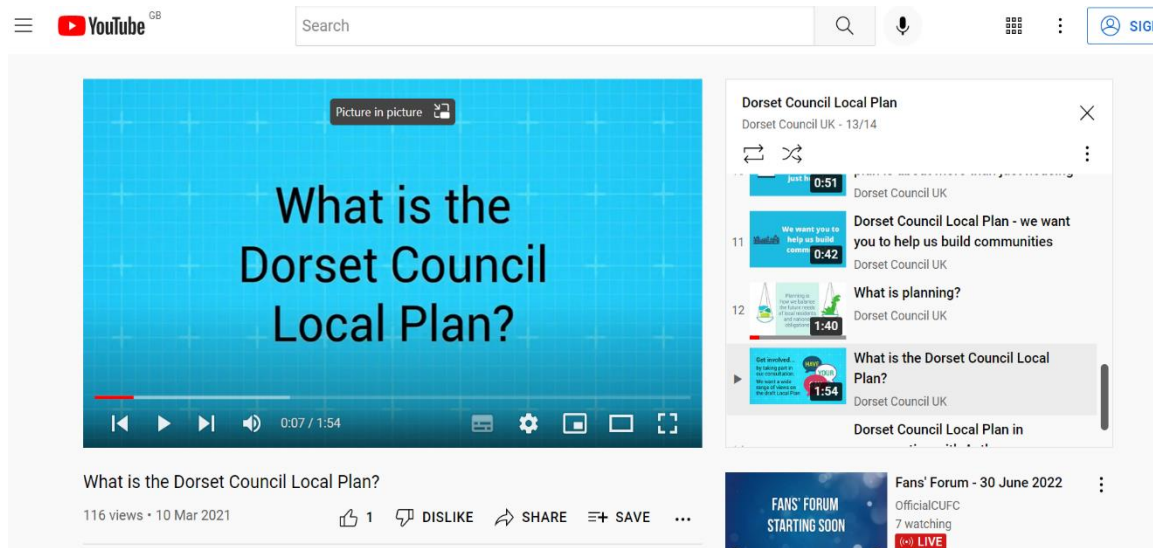
Group	Number of e-newsletters sent
all Town and Parish Councils -----	6
all Dorset Council Councillors -----	6
all Dorset Residents on the Council’s contacts database -----	3
Dorset Council Local Plan mailing list -----	1
Coast and greenspace mailing list -----	1
Family information service -----	1
Travel & Transport contacts -----	1
Businesses -----	2
Schools -----	1

- 4.4.4. Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram) were used to raise awareness to a wide audience in an accessible way, encouraging people to respond to the consultation:

Posts made by the Council -----	192
Clicks on these posts -----	1,800
Reach (number who actually saw the post at least once) -----	2,600,000
Impressions (no of times the ad. was on screen) -----	350,100
Engagement rate -----	2.72%
Shares -----	435
Likes -----	630
Comments monitored and questions answered -----	188

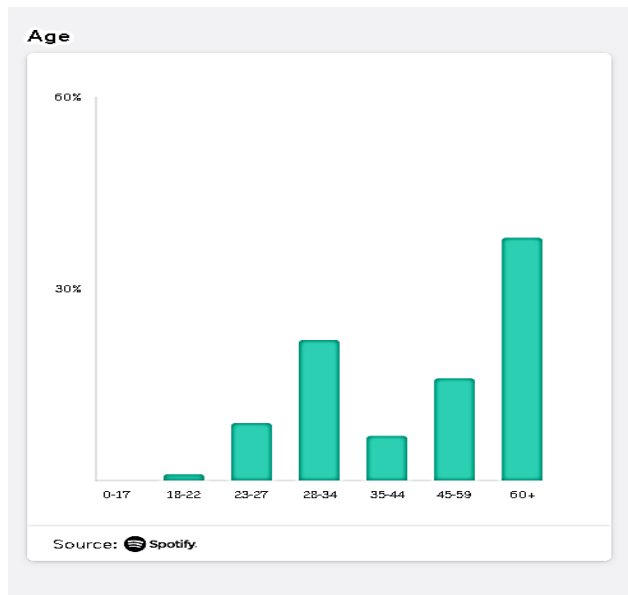
- 4.4.5. [Webinars](#) were prepared and placed on the Council’s YouTube channel. These received 5,500 views along with three telephone calls into live webinars. Similar videos explaining planning and the local plan had 212 views between them, with ‘sound bites’ from the planning portfolio holder receiving over 200 views.

Figure 11: Screenshot of a YouTube video and the Dorset Council Local Plan channel



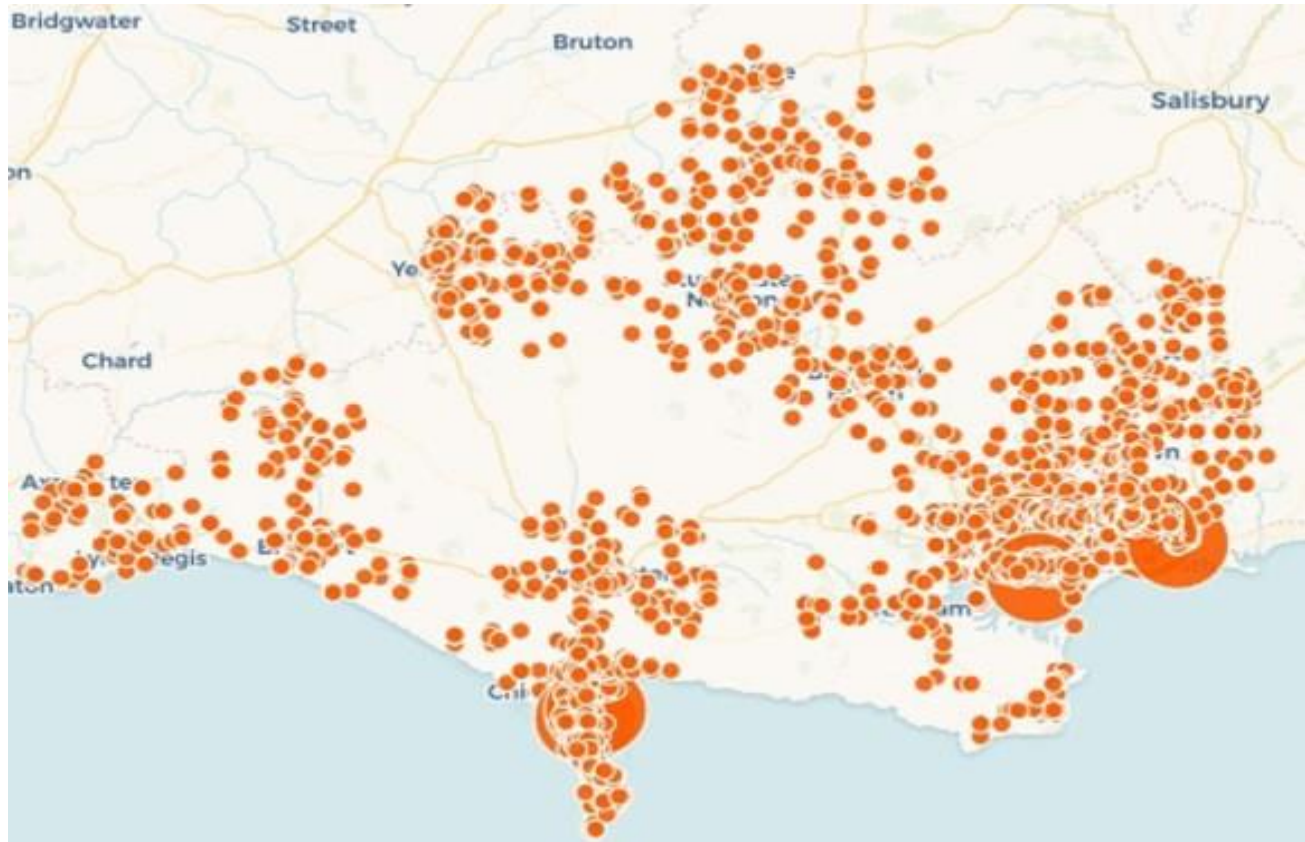
4.4.6. Five [podcasts](#) were recorded covering a range of topics with the intention of explaining different aspects of the Local Plan in easy-to-understand chunks. These received 929 plays with a significant proportion of listeners being aged 28-34.

Figure 12: Age breakdown of podcasts audience



4.4.7. 3D Reach online advertising targeted people aged 18+ who were online (browsing, using apps etc.) in a 5-mile radius of 24 tier1 & tier 2 towns. This enabled targeted advertising around specific locations where there were proposals within the local plan with the spread of 'clicks' shown in Figure 13. This received 6,161 clicks and 274,368 impressions and a click through rate (those who followed on to look more deeply into the consultation material) of 2.25%.

Figure 13: Heat map of 3D advertising clicks around Dorset



4.4.8. Local radio stations were used to raise awareness of the local plan consultation with a campaign being run on six stations

Radio station	dates of advertising campaign
Radio Wimborne	26/1 – 14/3
Forest FM	15/2 – 14/3
Air 107.2	15/2 – 26-1
Keep	15/2 – 26/1
This is Alfred	15/2 – 8/2
Abbey 104	15/2 – 14/3

4.4.9. During the consultation period, the Dorset Council Local Plan web pages received a high number of visits from individual users showing a marked increase from before the consultation commenced.

Month	Number of visits
December (the month before consultation started)	344

January	11,620
February	19,977
March (to 15)	12,618
Consultation period (18/01/21 - 14/03/21)	44,215

- 4.4.10. Press and media contacts operating across the County were sent 4 press releases during the consultation period. About 95 items of coverage were achieved from this, including interviews with all local radio stations and a TV interview. A total of 58 comments were received on the Dorset Council Newsroom articles all of which were responded to. Before a press release was made, all Dorset Council Councillors were informed and sent a link to the corresponding newsroom article.

4.5. Measuring Actions

- 4.5.1. People who wished to respond to the consultation were encouraged to do so by a variety of means. The online version of the consultation document enabled direct links to a consultation form where, once registered, comments could be made, and response attachments uploaded.
- 4.5.2. Where the online approach was not favoured, an email address was made available where comments could be submitted by email or as an attachment to an email. Written comments could also be posted to the council where they were collated and processed. A response form was made available as a download or in paper form to facilitate responses.
- 4.5.3. Around 1.6% of Dorset responded to the consultation. This may not seem high, but many previous local plan consultations received less than 1% response rates. Figures 14 and 15 show the number of respondents and the percentage of the population for the Dorset Council Local Plan compared with previous local plan consultations undertaken in the area over recent years.
- 4.5.4. Around 5,960 individuals responded to the consultation. These comprised a variety of sources, including:
- Members of the public
 - Parish and town councils
 - Statutory organisations
 - Local environmental and community groups
 - Developers and landowners
 - Businesses
 - Neighbouring authorities
 - A 5,146 signature petition was also received.

Figure 14: Number of responses to previous local plan consultations in Dorset

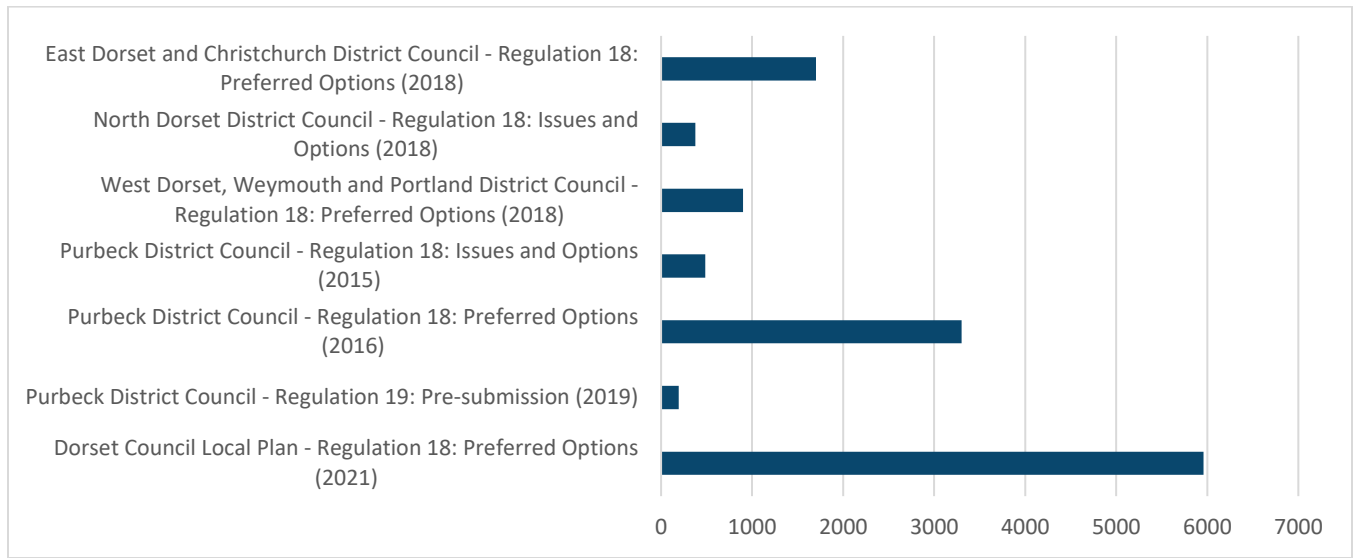
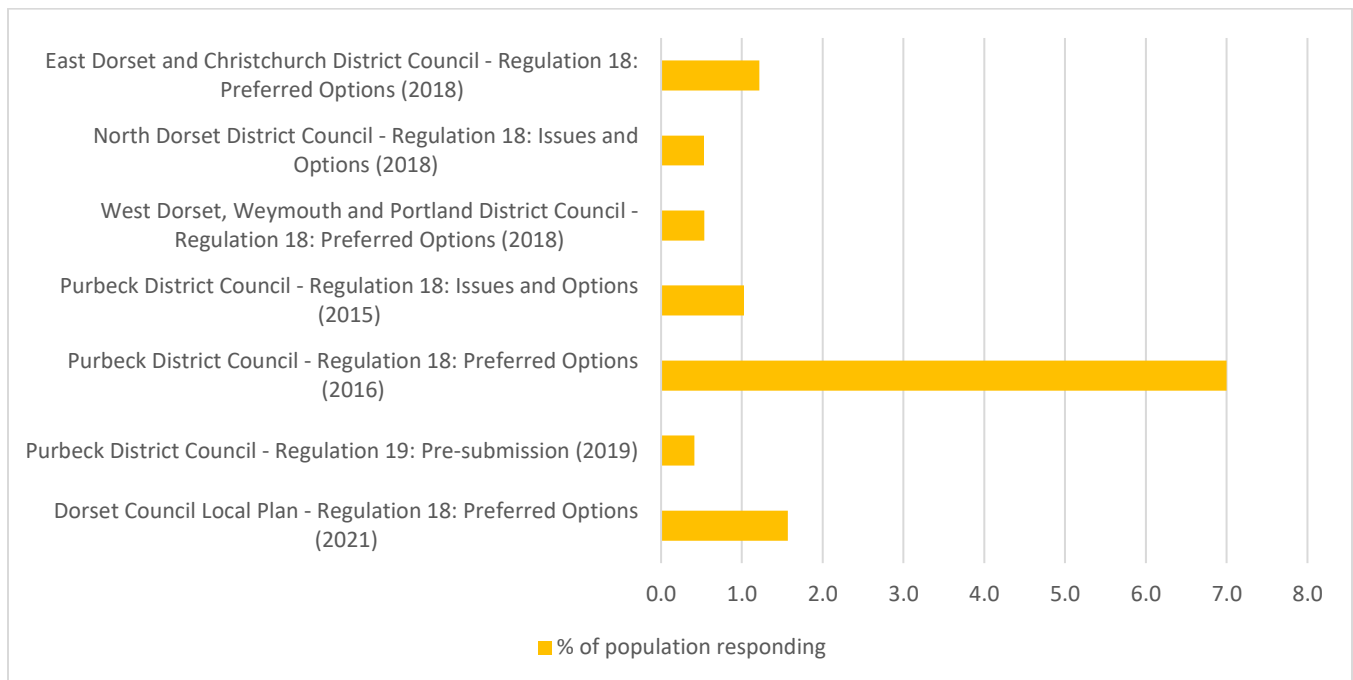
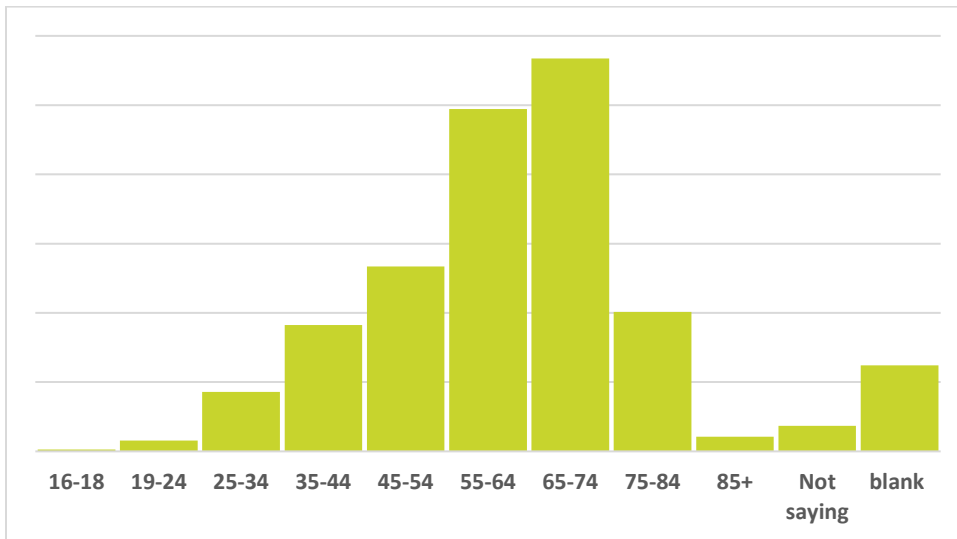


Figure 15: Percentage of residents responding to previous local plan consultations in Dorset



4.5.5. Respondents were asked to provide information about their age, gender etc. but this was not mandatory and not everyone provided it. Those who did provide their information indicated a wider range of respondents than previously achieved as shown in Figure 16. Responses were also received from 2 young adults aged under 16 years of age. However responses were still largely concentrated in older age groups. Around 3% of the respondents who used our online form declared some form of disability.

Figure 16: Graph showing the age breakdown of respondents



Duty to cooperate bodies

- 4.5.6. Several neighbouring councils responded to the consultation. These were East Devon District Council, New Forest National Park, New Forest District Council, Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council, Wiltshire Council, Hampshire Council, Gloucestershire County Council and South Somerset District Council.

Specific consultation bodies

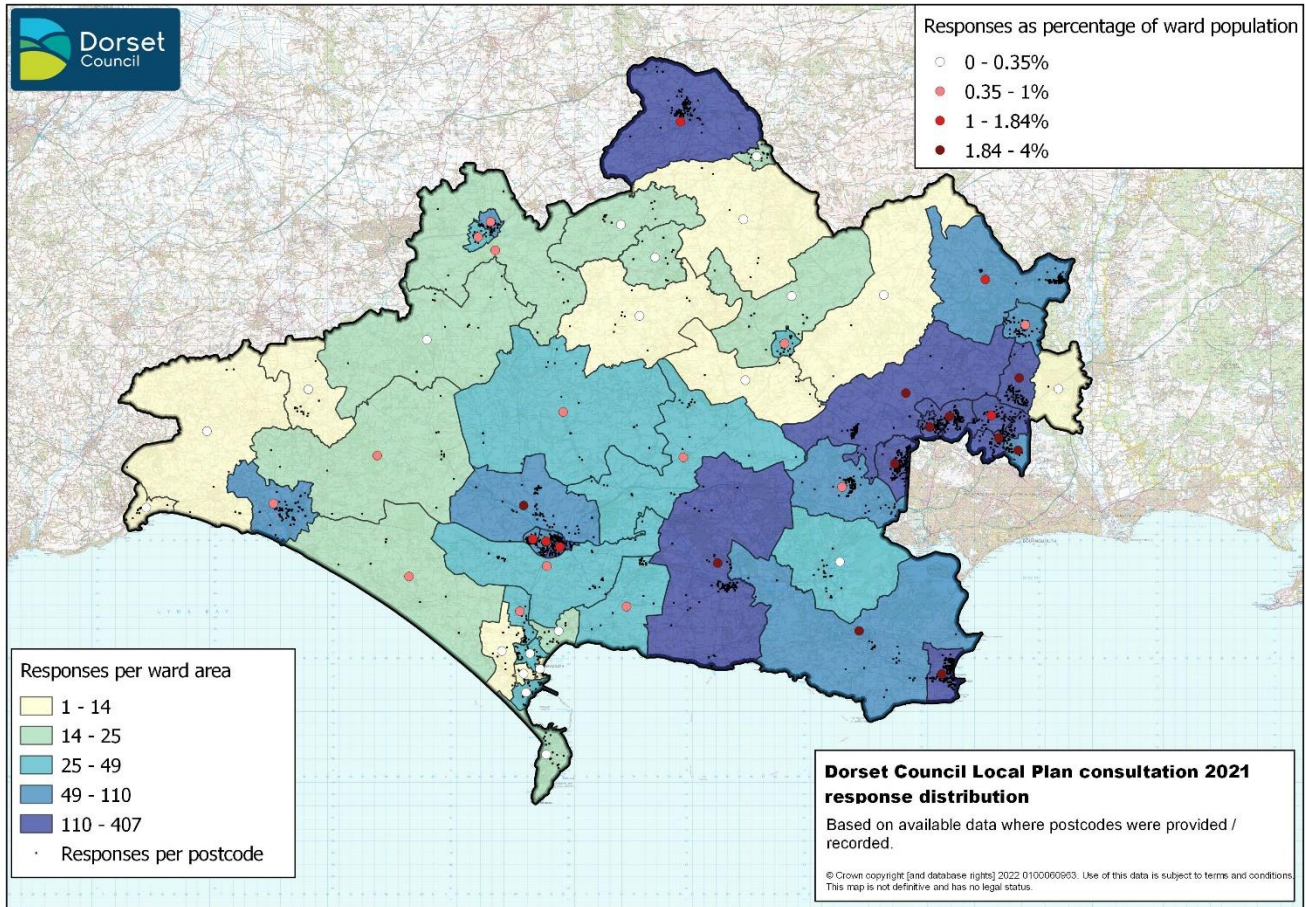
- 4.5.7. A range of statutory consultation bodies responded. These were Dorset Clinical Commissioning group, Cranborne Chase AONB, Defence Infrastructure Organisation, Dorset AONB, Dorset LEP, Dorset Police, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Forestry England, Go South Coast, National Highways (Highways England), Historic England, Homes England, Marine Management Organisation, National Grid, Natural England, Office of Nuclear Regulation, Network Rail, NHS, Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, Portland Port, Primary Care Infrastructure, Dorset County Hospital, South West Railway, Sport England, Swanage Railway, Wessex Water and The Woodland Trust.
- 4.5.8. A total of 105 town and parish councils responded from across the Council area.

Geographic spread of responders

- 4.5.9. The post codes of around 70% of responders were recorded from which 97% originated from the Dorset council area. Figure 17 details the geographical spread of responses within the Dorset council area (where post codes were recorded), as well as response numbers per Ward area, and an indicative percentage of responses per ward population.
- 4.5.10. Responses were received from across the council area. The most significant densities of responses originated from in and around the settlements of:
- Corfe Mullen
 - Dorchester
 - Ferndown and West Parley

- Gillingham
- Lytchett Matravers
- Swanage
- West Moors
- Wimborne and Colehill
- Wool

Figure 17: The geographical spread of responses across Dorset.



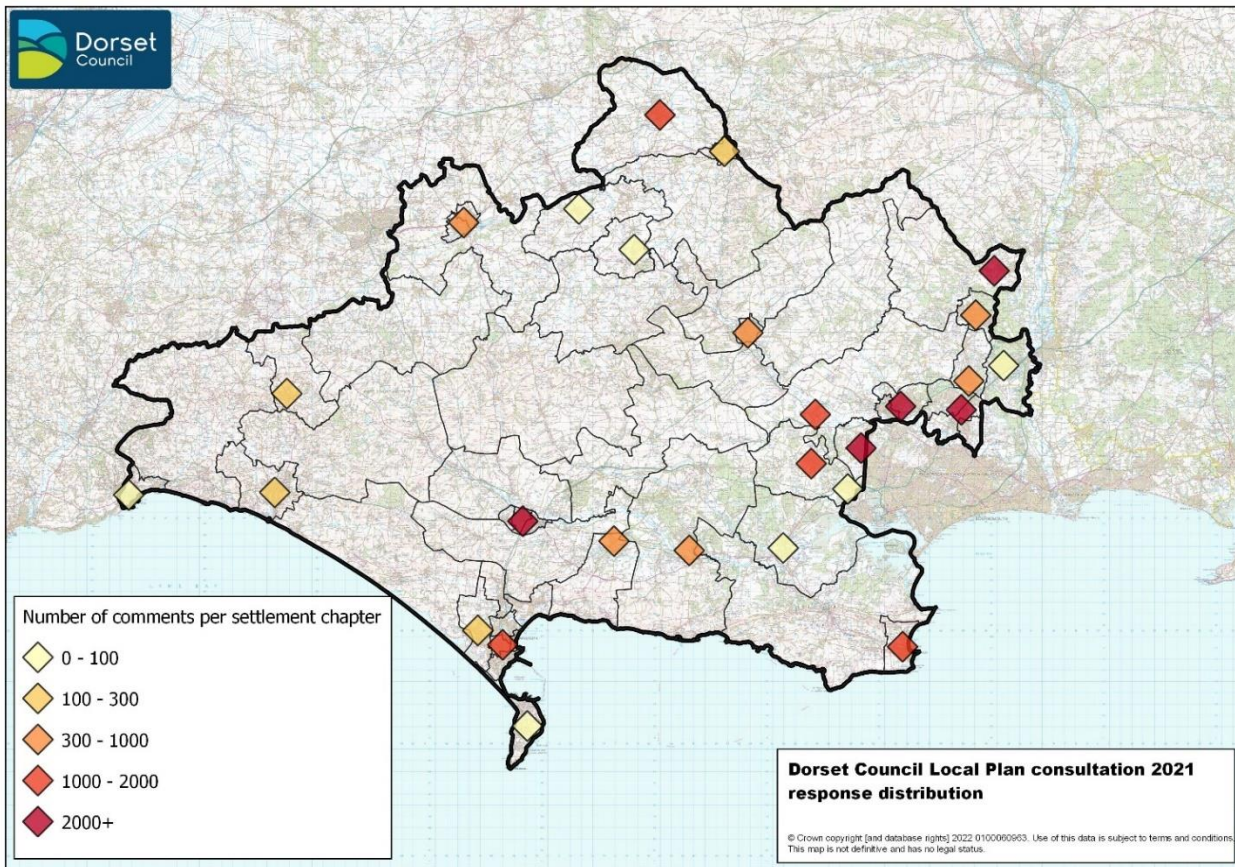
4.5.11. The percentage of responders per ward population largely reflects the above list of settlements. The following ward areas saw a response level of at least 1% of the population, based on responders whose post codes were recorded:

- Charminster St. Mary's Ward
- Colehill & Wimborne Minster East Ward
- Corfe Mullen Ward
- Cranborne & Alderholt Ward
- Dorchester East Ward
- Dorchester Poundbury Ward
- Dorchester West Ward
- Ferndown North Ward
- Ferndown South Ward
- Gillingham Ward
- Lytchett Matravers & Upton Ward

- Puddletown & Lower Winterborne Ward
- Sherborne East Ward
- Sherborne Rural Ward
- Sherborne West Ward
- Southeast Purbeck Ward
- Stour & Allen Vale Ward
- Swanage Ward
- Upwey & Broadwey Ward
- Verwood Ward
- West Moors & Three Legged Cross Ward
- West Parley Ward
- West Purbeck Ward
- Wimborne Minster Ward
- Winterborne & Broadmayne Ward

4.5.12. The 5,960 responders to the consultation generated over 50,000 comments on the separate policies. Figure 18 indicates where the most comments were directed in terms of the settlement chapters and policies of the draft Plan.

Figure 18: Numbers of comments per settlement chapter in the draft Dorset Council Local Plan.

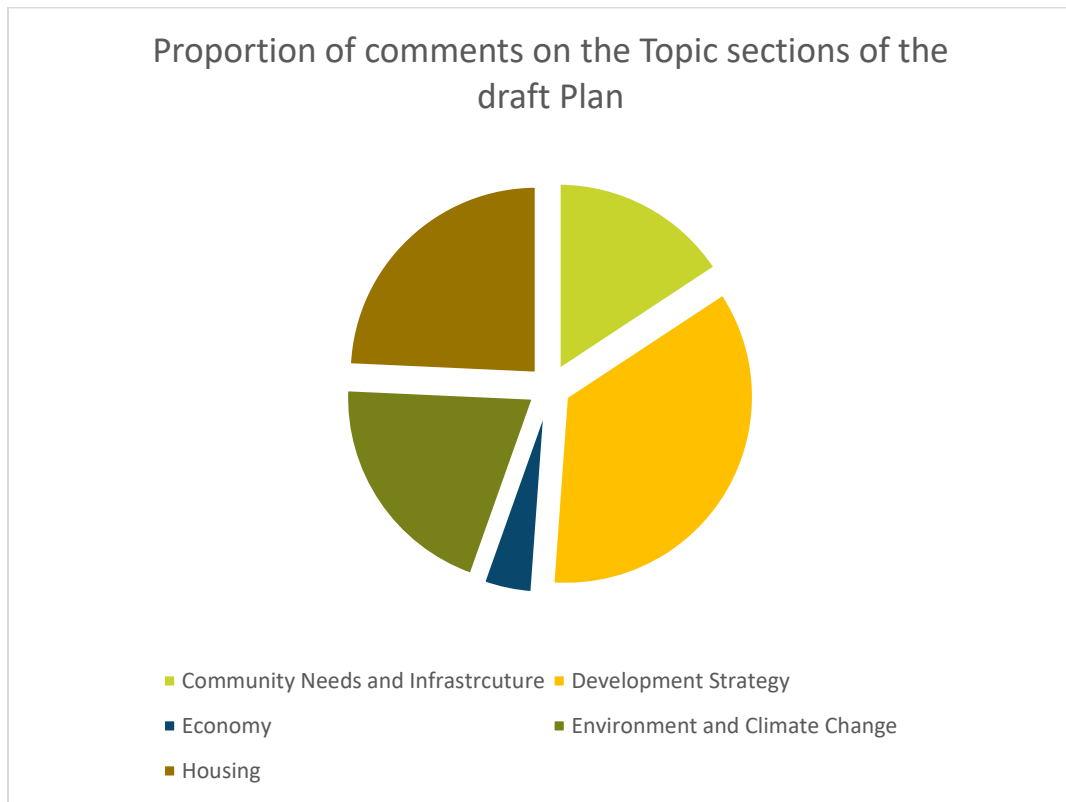


4.5.13. The highest number of comments were concentrated on the settlement chapters of Dorchester, Corfe Mullen, Ferndown & West Parley, Wimborne & Colehill and Alderholt.

4.5.14. As detailed in Figure 19, responses on the topic chapters of the plan were focused on the Development Strategy chapter but also with a fairly even distribution across the Community Needs and Infrastructure, Environment and Climate Change and Housing chapters.

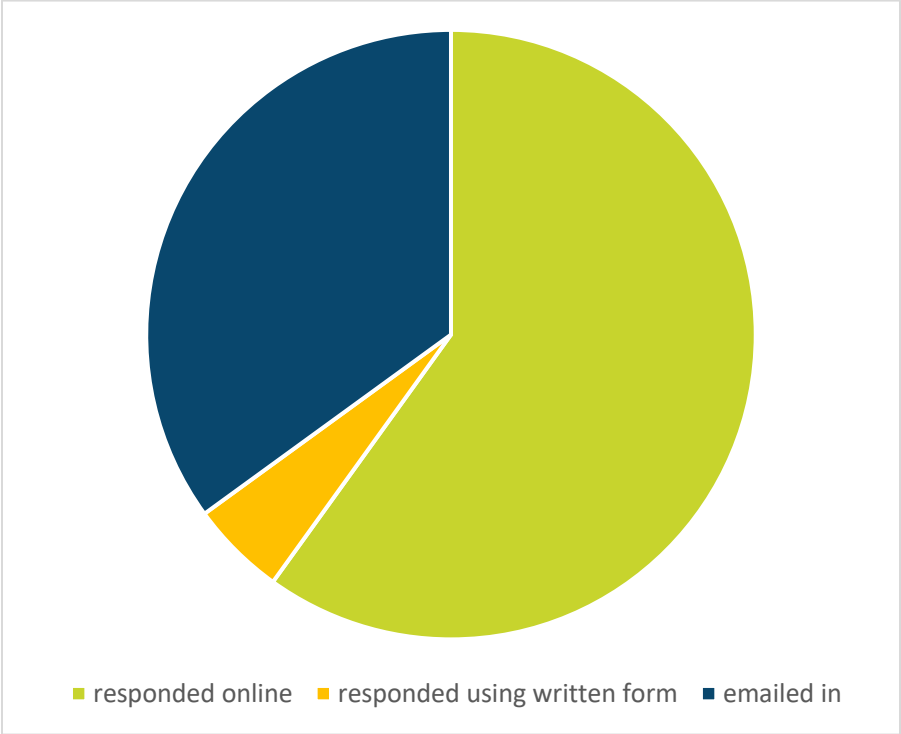
- 4.5.15. In relation to specific policies or questions, Policy DEV1 (The housing requirement and the need for employment land in Dorset) received the highest number of comments. Questions centred around the Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy, the Vision and Strategic Objectives, and review of Green Belt also saw significant numbers of comments.
- 4.5.16. On the Housing chapter, Affordable Housing (HOUS2), Housing Mix (HOUS1), and Traveller sites policies (HOUS10-HOUS13) received a higher number of comments than most along with the questions around addressing second homes issues. Policies relating to Transport (COM7) and Renewable Energy Development (COM10) saw the most comment for the Community Infrastructure chapter. In the Environment chapter, most comments were spread across the policies for Designated Wildlife Sites (ENV2), Biodiversity Net Gain (ENV3), Landscape (ENV4), and Design (ENV7). Finally, the Economy chapter saw most comment spread across Supporting Vibrant and Attractive Tourism (ECON6), Caravan and Camping Sites (ECON8) and Protection of Other Employment Sites (ECON2), as well as more general comments on the economy in Dorset.

Figure 19: Indication of numbers of comments relating to the Topic sections of the draft Plan.



- 4.5.17. The majority of people responded online, either via the online form or via email.

Figure 20: Graph showing the breakdown of how people responded to the Dorset Council Local Plan consultation



5. Summary of consultation responses

- 5.1.1. All comments on the consultation have been read. Officers have summarised the key points raised for each chapter and these summaries are included in the associated documents published alongside this report. The comments received will help inform the next iteration of the local plan.
- 5.1.2. It is normal to receive criticism of the proposals within the consultation document. It is often the case that those who disagree with a proposal are more likely to respond than those who are either ambivalent or supportive. However, positive comments were received with some interaction via social media being very supportive. It is difficult to know whether those who supported the proposals in the consultation document also responded to the consultation.
- 5.1.3. In addition to the consultation summaries in the associated documents, the full detail of the consultation responses can be viewed via the Council's consultation database at <https://wa.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/LocalPlanDCCComments/pages/View.aspx>. Please note however that these comments are not necessarily the view of Dorset Council. There has been a redaction process to try to identify and remove anything offensive but there may be comments that some people find offensive within the submitted comments. Please email planningpolicy@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk or call 01305 838334 to report any comments that are of an offensive nature so that a decision can be made about redacting or removing them from public view.

Appendix 1: Matrix of consultation techniques against consultation objectives

	Reaching more people	Ensuring legal compliance including responding to the EqIA						Helping people understand planning	Moving people to act	
		Wider age range	Different groups of society	Online users	Lack of face-to-face events	Offline users	Accessible		Grabbing attention	Interesting
Newly designed website	✓			✓			✓		✓	✓
Webinars	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Podcasts	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓
Press releases			✓		✓				✓	
E-newsletters	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
3D advertising	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
Radio Broadcasts	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓
Emailing contacts				✓						
Letters to contacts						✓				
Posters/information boards			✓						✓	✓
Dorset Council magazine			✓		✓	✓			✓	✓
Library copies and forms			✓		✓	✓				
Downloadable forms			✓	✓						
Online accessible form and plan	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓

	Ensuring legal compliance including responding to the EqIA							Moving people to act		
	Reaching more people	Wider age range	Different groups of society	Online users	Lack of face-to-face events	Offline users	Accessible	Helping people understand planning	Grabbing attention	Interesting
Facebook adverts	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓
LinkedIn adverts	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓
Instagram adverts	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓
Twitter adverts	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓
Talking to T&PC's			✓	✓	✓	✓				
Talking to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling showpeople	✓		✓			✓			✓	✓
E-newsletters to schools		✓	✓	✓					✓	✓
Posters placed in MOD HIVE's	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓