

INTRODUCTION

Neighbourhood Plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan, and local planning authorities should set out clearly their strategic policies for the area.

This note has been prepared to draw neighbourhood plan groups' attention to this issue and to help neighbourhood plan groups understand which policies of the Local Plans the councils regard as strategic.

Please be aware however that neighbourhood plan examiners may take different views on which policies are strategic. Recent case law has confirmed that the identification of 'strategic policies' is not precise but a matter of judgement, and the fact that a local planning authority has identified a policy as strategic does not necessarily mean that it is. Changes in national policy or other circumstances may affect this judgement, and officers in commenting on draft neighbourhood plans, or advising neighbourhood plan groups, will comment if they consider this may be the case.

NORTH DORSET LOCAL PLAN PART 1, 2016

The North Dorset Local Plan adopted in 2016 sets out strategic policies and was originally intended to be supplemented by a Part 2 containing other policies (though preparation of Part 2 is now being combined with a review of Part 1).

The Part 1 plan is divided into:

- Topic-based policies (1-15)
- Place-based policies (16-20)
- Strategic Site Allocation (Gillingham) (21)
- Development management policies (22-33)

Officers' advice is that the development management policies are not regarded as strategic policies, but all the others – policies 1-21 - are strategic policies. The saved Policy 1.7 of the previous North Dorset District-wide local plan (1st revision) is also regarded as a strategic policy.

WEST DORSET, WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND LOCAL PLAN, 2015

Rather than specifying whether or not individual policies are strategic, the 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 each policy fits with the Strategic Approach is set out in the Appendix below.

As part of the ‘strategic approach’, the local plan states that certain development allocations are **‘strategic allocations’**. This means that the principle of development cannot be changed through neighbourhood plans, though details such as design policies for them may be set out in neighbourhood plans. The strategic allocations are identified in Table 3.7 on pages 68-69 of the local plan, and are set out in the Appendix of this note.

NATIONAL POLICY CHANGES

The Government is consulting on proposals for a standardised methodology for assessing district wide housing requirements. This consultation also proposes that local planning authorities in future will need to provide housing requirement numbers for neighbourhood areas, in their local plans. We will await the results of the consultation but will provide updated advice as soon as possible.

APPENDIX: POLICIES OF THE WEST DORSET, WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND LOCAL PLAN

POLICY	SUBJECT	STRATEGIC ASPECTS
INT1	Presumption in favour of sustainable development	Strategic policy (reflects national policy, as well as strategic objectives of the local plan)
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
ENV5	Flood Risk	Strategic Approach includes directing development away from areas at risk of flooding
ENV6	Local flood alleviation schemes	Linked to policy ENV5 above
ENV7	Coastal erosion and land instability	Strategic approach includes directing development away from areas at risk of coastal erosion
ENV8	Agricultural land and farming resilience	Not specifically covered in Strategic Approach
ENV9	Pollution and contaminated land	Strategic Approach includes directing development away from areas at risk of air and water pollution
ENV10	Landscape and townscape setting	Strategic Approach includes that development should be of high quality design, and contributing to local identity of area
ENV11	Pattern of streets and spaces	Strategic Approach includes that development should be of high quality design, and contributing to local identity of area

POLICY	SUBJECT	STRATEGIC ASPECTS
ENV12	Design & positioning of buildings	Strategic Approach includes that development should be of high quality design, and contributing to local identity of area
ENV13	High levels of environmental performance	Strategic Approach includes that development should be of high quality design, and contributing to local identity of area
ENV14	Shop fronts and advertisements	Strategic Approach includes that development should be of high quality design, and contributing to local identity of area, but does not specifically refer to shopfronts and advertisements
ENV15	Efficient and appropriate use of land	Strategic Approach includes that development should be of high quality design, and contributing to local identity of area
ENV16	Amenity	Strategic Approach refers to enhancing quality of life for residents and visitors
SUS1	Level of economic and housing growth	Strategic Approach includes the requirement figures for housing and employment
SUS2	Distribution of development	Strategic Approach includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
SUS3	Adaptation and reuse of buildings outside defined development boundaries	Not strategic
SUS4	Replacement of buildings outside defined development boundaries	Not strategic
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.
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.
ECON2	Protection of key employment sites	Strategic Approach includes the protection of existing employment sites, taking into account their significance – the key employment sites are clearly the more strategically significant ones.
ECON3	Protection of other employment sites	Strategic Approach includes the protection of existing employment sites, taking into account their significance.

POLICY	SUBJECT	STRATEGIC ASPECTS
ECON4	Retail and town centre development	Strategic Approach includes directing retail and town centre uses to the town centres of Weymouth, Dorchester, Bridport, Sherborne and Lyme Regis, or to local centres, and avoiding development that would undermine the functioning of any centre or adversely affect its vitality or viability. This indicates that criteria i-iv are strategic but that criteria v-vi are not.
ECON5	Tourism attractions and facilities	Not strategic, except for the strategic locational principles reflected in criteria ii-iii and originating in policy SUS2
ECON6	Built tourist accommodation	Not strategic, though criterion ii reflects a strategic aspect of policy ECON4
ECON7	Caravan and camping sites	Not strategic
ECON8	Diversification of land-based rural businesses	Not strategic
ECON9	New agricultural buildings	Not strategic
ECON10	Equestrian development	Not strategic
HOUS1	Affordable housing	<p>Strategic Approach sets out that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the type, size and mix of housing will be expected to meet local needs as far as possible and result in balanced communities • opportunities will be taken to secure affordable homes to meet local needs • New open market housing sites should make provision for affordable housing. <p>The percentage of affordable housing on market housing sites, thresholds above which it is sought, and tenure split within the affordable provision, are not part of the strategic approach.</p>
HOUS2	Affordable housing exception sites	The Strategic Approach refers to flexible policies that encourage affordable housing to come forward, but does not refer to exception sites so this is not a strategic policy. The local plan policy allows these sites only for affordable housing, but the text indicates that if a community wants to allow open market cross-subsidy on exception sites they could do this in neighbourhood plans without being contrary to the strategic policies.
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, as reflected in this policy, so it is strategic.
HOUS4	Development of flats, hostels and houses in multiple occupation	Not strategic
HOUS5	Residential care accommodation	Not strategic
HOUS6	Other residential development outside defined development boundaries	Not strategic
COM1	Making sure new development makes suitable provision for community infrastructure	Strategic Approach states that new local community facilities will be provided as part of developments where possible and practicable
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

POLICY	SUBJECT	STRATEGIC ASPECTS
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
COM6	The provision of education and training facilities	Strategic Approach states that community facilities should be provided within local communities, recognising the benefit of reducing car travel
COM7	Creating a safe and efficient transport network	Strategic Approach states that 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, and that development contributions towards transport infrastructure will be made
COM8	Transport interchanges and community travel exchanges	Not regarded as a strategic policy, but Strategic Approach does refer to providing choices for greener travel options where practicable
COM9	Parking standards in new development	Not strategic, though may be impacts on COM7 on safe and efficient transport networks
COM10	The provision of utilities service infrastructure	Strategic Approach refers to developer contributions towards strategic infrastructure needs
COM11	Renewable energy development	Not identified in the plan as a strategic policy, but there is national policy on the subject which must be taken into account
WEY1	Weymouth Town Centre Strategy	Strategic allocation sites
WEY2	Town centre core and Commercial Road area	Part of WEY1 strategic allocation
WEY3	Station area and Swannery car park	Part of WEY1 strategic allocation
WEY4	Custom House Quay and Brewery Waterfront	Not strategic
WEY5	The Esplanade (south)	Not strategic
WEY6	Ferry Peninsula	Part of WEY1 strategic allocation
WEY7	Westwey Road and North Quay area	Part of WEY1 strategic allocation
WEY8	Lodmoor Gateway and Country Park area	Part of WEY1 strategic allocation
WEY9	Bingleaves Cove	Not strategic
WEY10	Land at Markham and Little Francis	Strategic allocation
WEY11	Land off Louviers Road	Strategic allocation
WEY12	Land at Wey Valley	Strategic allocation
WEY13	Land at the Old Rectory, Lorton Lane	Not strategic
WEY14	Bowleaze Cove	Not strategic
WEY15	Tumbledown Farm	Not strategic
PORT1	Osprey Quay	Not strategic
PORT2	Former Hardy Complex	Strategic allocation
PORT3	Portland Quarries Nature Park	Not strategic
LITT1	Littlemoor urban extension	Strategic allocation

POLICY	SUBJECT	STRATEGIC ASPECTS
LITT2	Land at Icen and Weyside Farms	Not strategic
CHIC1	Land at Putton Lane	Strategic allocation
CHIC2	Chickerell urban extension	Strategic allocation
CHIC3	Land off Rashley Road	Not strategic
DOR1	Poundbury mixed use development	Strategic allocation
DOR2	Poundbury Parkway Farm Business Site Extension	Not a strategic policy (but part of the strategic allocation above)
DOR3	Dorchester Roman Town Area	Not strategic
DOR4	Charles Street	Not strategic
DOR5	Future town centre expansion	Not strategic
DOR6	Weymouth Avenue Brewery Site	Strategic allocation
DOR7	Red Cow Farm	Not strategic
DOR8	Land south of St George's Road	Not strategic
DOR9	Land off Alington Avenue	Not strategic
DOR10	Dorchester Transport & Environment Plan	Not strategic
CRS1	Land at Crossways	Strategic allocation
CRS2	Land around Crossways	Not identified as strategic (though will influence future local plan policies and may lead to strategic allocations in future plans)
BRID1	Land at Vearse Farm	Strategic allocation
BRID2	Land off Skilling Hill Road	Not strategic
BRID3	Land to the east of Bredy Veterinary Centre	Not strategic
BRID4	Future town centre expansion	Not strategic
BRID5	St Michael's Trading Estate	Not strategic
BEAM1	Land to the north of Broadwindsor Road	Strategic allocation
BEAM2	Land at Lane End Farm	Not strategic
LYME1	Land at Woodberry Down	Strategic allocation
LYME2	Land around Lyme Regis	Not identified as strategic (though will influence future local plan policies and may lead to strategic allocations in future plans)
SHER1	Land at Barton Farm	Strategic allocation
SHER2	Future town centre expansion	Not strategic
SHER3	Land at Sherborne Hotel	Not strategic
SHER4	Former gasworks site, Gas House Hill	Not strategic