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To: NeighbourhoodPlanning
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Dear Community Planning Team

Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan – Submission Consultation

Thank you for providing National Highways with the opportunity to comment on the submission version of the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan, covering the period to 2038. We note that the plan covers the whole of the area which falls under Weymouth Town Council including Sutton Poyntz.

As you are aware, National Highways is responsible for operating, maintaining and improving the strategic road network (SRN) which in this case comprises the A35 trunk road which passes to the north of the plan area. The plan area is bisected by the A354 which provides a direct connection to the A35 at the Stadium Roundabout south of Dorchester. Large scale development in Weymouth therefore has the potential to impact on the safe and efficient operation of the SRN, which experiences congestion particularly during the network peak hours.

We have noted that the plan proposes to allocate a number of sites for development, in addition to the strategic sites identified within the adopted West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan (2015) which remains the relevant local plan at this time given the current status of the emerging Local Plan for the new unitary authority of Dorset Council.

Proposed allocations are listed within policy W19, with details provided in individual site policies W20, 21 and 22 (for residential development), 23A, B and C (employment and leisure), 24 (mixed uses) and 25 (transport interchange). It is noted that policy W20 which provides for up to 250 dwellings at Wyke Oliver Farm includes a specific requirement for an assessment of traffic impacts/travel plan measures under 4 ix) which is welcomed. However, this has not been included within policy W21 (150 dwellings on land at Redlands Farm). We would suggest that given the scale of the development allocated under policy W21 this should also include the same reference to transport assessment and travel plan requirements.

However, it is noted that policy W51 Transport and Travel includes an over-arching requirement for development to assess traffic impacts and potential necessary mitigation and this is welcomed. As previously stated, National Highways would expect any large-scale development to be supported by an appropriate assessment of traffic impacts and travel plan measures. The assessment should consider the impact of the development on the safe and efficient operation of the SRN in line with national planning practice guidance and DfT Circular 01/2022 *The strategic road network and the delivery of sustainable development*. Where proposals would result in a severe congestion or unacceptable safety impact, mitigation will be required in line with current policy.

In terms of the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan, we are continuing to work with the Council in developing their transport evidence base to understand the impact of the proposed spatial strategy on the SRN, and any requirements for mitigation at key strategic junctions which may be necessary to accommodate the proposed levels of growth.

This does not however prejudice any future responses National Highways may make on site specific applications as they come forward through the planning process, which will be considered by us on their merits under the prevailing policy at the time.

Kind regards
Gaynor

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