

**From:** Robert Bailey [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 09 April 2025 11:44  
**To:** NeighbourhoodPlanning  
**Subject:** Objection to Policy W25 – Mount Pleasant Old Tip: Environmental, Safety and Strategic Concerns

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Good Morning

Although I have several concerns regarding the overall feasibility of the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan, I am writing to formally object to Policy W25: Land at Mount Pleasant Old Tip – Transport Interchange, as outlined on page 112 (December 2024 version). Please also note the supporting site is incorrectly referenced as Map 26 in parts of the Plan—it should be Map 24.

While I recognise the aim of creating a multi-modal transport hub and integrating renewable energy infrastructure is in principle commendable, the proposed location at Mount Pleasant Old Tip is fundamentally flawed on environmental, ecological, and strategic grounds. The site borders Lorton Valley Nature Park and lies adjacent to a grassland habitat restoration area managed by Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT)—areas that are already under pressure from increased human activity, noise, and pollution.

The proposal includes facilities such as an EV charging depot for 30+ vehicles, overnight campervan use, a coach stop, solar infrastructure, and potential pop-up leisure businesses. These plans risk disturbing ground-nesting birds, migratory species, and the fragile biodiversity supported by the restoration area. Increased light pollution, waste, and vehicular access will degrade the tranquillity of this buffer zone. Additionally, the flexibility of the site may unintentionally encourage long-term, unregulated use by traveller communities, given its isolated and unsecured nature.

### **Fire Safety Risks of EV Infrastructure**

Policy W25 also fails to address the growing and well-documented fire safety risks associated with EVs and lithium-ion battery charging infrastructure. According to the London Fire Brigade, incidents involving lithium batteries—particularly from e-scooters and e-bikes—are increasing sharply. The Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) also raises concerns about fires in enclosed or semi-enclosed car parks, where thermal runaway can lead to intense, long-burning, and hard-to-extinguish fires.

Without dedicated spacing, ventilation, and suppression systems, EV charging hubs can pose serious public safety threats. The UK Government's own fire safety guidance on covered car parks underscores this danger. Moreover, such infrastructure must comply with the IET Code of Practice for safe EV installations and be subject to independent environmental and fire safety assessments, which are not specified in W25.

## **Strategic Contradictions**

This site was previously deemed unsuitable for residential or employment use due to stability and environmental sensitivity, as noted in the Site Options Assessment Report. Yet W25 now seeks to introduce a dense and mixed-use development under the label of a “mobility hub”, with no clear justification for overturning previous assessments.

Furthermore, despite stating a commitment to nature restoration, the policy allows for camping, commercial activity, and solar development on or near the restoration area. This will likely lead to habitat fragmentation, trampling, increased litter, and disruption from pets and footfall.

The claim that landscaping and solar panels will ‘offset’ the development's impact is also misleading. Landscaping is cosmetic, and cannot compensate for ecological degradation or loss of biodiversity in a site specifically earmarked for recovery and preservation.

## **Community and Access Impact**

The existing running track on the site is widely used by athletics clubs, disabled groups, and families. The wording of the policy—referring to an “equivalent capability nearby”—is unclear, imprecise and potentially harmful or risky due to its lack of specificity, which could lead to misinterpretations or unintended consequences and threatens the permanent loss of one of the few inclusive, off-road community health assets in the area.

In addition, there are serious access and egress concerns. The area surrounding the Mercery Road and Veasta Roundabouts regularly suffers delays due to accidents and congestion. The design of the relief road, with its inherent defects including allowance for head-on collision risks at speed with no barrier protection, makes this a poor location for any increase in vehicle movement.

## **Conclusion & Recommendations**

Policy W25 should be withdrawn or significantly revised. It is ecologically incoherent, poorly evidenced, and unsafe in its current form. If transport infrastructure and renewable initiatives are to succeed, they must not come at the cost of one of Weymouth’s most sensitive ecological and recreational areas.

I therefore recommend the following:

- Remove overnight camping and leisure elements entirely from W25.
- Restrict all development strictly to the existing Park & Ride hardstanding.
- Guarantee permanent retention and legal protection of the running track, without relocation loopholes.
- Address access risks around the Veasta and Mercery Road roundabouts as part of any transport modelling.
- Require a full, independent Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).
- Pause the policy until meaningful consultation with Dorset Wildlife Trust and Natural England is completed and made public

- If the scheme cannot be delivered without significant ecological compromise, it should be dropped or relocated to a more appropriate site.

Kind regards,

**Sue & Rob Bailey**

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