



# North Dorset Local Plan - 2011 to 2026

## Part 1

Pre-submission Document

## Polices 16 to 33 and Implementation



# North Dorset Local Plan - 2011 to 2026

## Part 1

### Pre-submission Document

November 2013

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# North Dorset Local Plan - 2011 to 2026

## Part 1

### Contents

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. North Dorset Context .....</b>	<b>13</b>
Issues and Challenges.....	18
Vision for North Dorset .....	21
Objectives for the Local Plan Part 1 .....	22
<b>3. Sustainable Development Strategy .....</b>	<b>25</b>
Introduction.....	25
Policy 1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development.....	26
Policy 2 - Core Spatial Strategy .....	34
<b>4. Environment and Climate Change .....</b>	<b>40</b>
Introduction.....	40
Policy 3 - Climate Change .....	41
Policy 4 - The Natural Environment .....	50
Policy 5 - The Historic Environment .....	69
<b>5. Meeting Housing Needs.....</b>	<b>82</b>
Introduction.....	82
Policy 6 - Housing Distribution .....	83
Policy 7 - Delivering Homes.....	89
Policy 8 - Affordable Housing .....	99
Policy 9 - Rural Exception Affordable Housing.....	109
Policy 10 - Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople .....	118
<b>6. Supporting Economic Development .....</b>	<b>122</b>
Introduction.....	122
Policy 11 – The Economy.....	123
Policy 12 - Retail, Leisure and Other Commercial Developments .....	133
<b>7. Infrastructure .....</b>	<b>145</b>
Introduction.....	145
Policy 13 - Grey Infrastructure .....	149
Policy 14 - Social Infrastructure.....	162
Policy 15 - Green Infrastructure .....	173

<b>8. Market Towns and the Countryside .....</b>	<b>182</b>
Introduction.....	182
Policy 16 - Blandford .....	183
Policy 17 - Gillingham .....	196
Policy 18 - Shaftesbury .....	209
Policy 19 - Sturminster Newton .....	219
Policy 20 - The Countryside .....	229
<b>9. Gillingham Southern Extension .....</b>	<b>236</b>
Introduction.....	236
Policy 21 - Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation.....	238
<b>10. Development Management Policies.....</b>	<b>267</b>
Introduction.....	267
Policy 22 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy .....	268
Policy 23 - Parking .....	277
Policy 24 - Design .....	280
Policy 25 - Amenity.....	289
Policy 26 - Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople .....	297
Policy 27 - Retention of Community Facilities .....	302
Policy 28 - Existing Dwellings in the Countryside.....	307
Policy 29 - The Re-use of Existing Buildings in the Countryside.....	313
Policy 30 - Existing Employment Sites in the Countryside .....	321
Policy 31 - Tourist Accommodation in the Countryside.....	325
Policy 32 - Equine-related Developments in the Countryside .....	330
Policy 33 - Occupational Dwellings in the Countryside.....	337
<b>11. Implementation .....</b>	<b>345</b>
Introduction.....	345
Monitoring.....	345
<b>Appendix A. Replaced and Saved Policies.....</b>	<b>362</b>
<b>Appendix B. Removal of Settlement Boundaries.....</b>	<b>380</b>
<b>Appendix C. Standards and Guidance for Parking Provision .....</b>	<b>383</b>
<b>Appendix D. Glossary of Terms .....</b>	<b>391</b>

## 8. Market Towns and the Countryside

### Introduction

- 8.1 This section explains the Council's approach to shaping the future of places within the District in the period up to 2026. It contains:
- Policies for each of the four main towns that identify the broad locations for future housing and other uses such as employment in Policy 16 Blandford to Policy 19 Sturminster Newton. The Strategic Site Allocation for the southern extension of Gillingham is dealt with by Policy 21 – Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation in Section 9; and
  - A policy for the countryside (including Stalbridge and the villages) where development is more strictly controlled and where there is a focus on meeting local rather than strategic needs in Policy 20 – The Countryside
- 8.2 These policies together with all the other policies in the Local Plan Part 1 as a whole (including the supporting text and any maps, diagrams and figures) set out the strategic priorities for the future development of North Dorset and are the policies that neighbourhood plans need to be in general conformity with.
- 8.3 The Council supports local communities in taking an active role in shaping the places in which they live and work because local people know best what local needs are and how they can be met and as such it encourages the production of neighbourhood plans.
- 8.4 In the market towns, neighbourhood plans can play a key role in enabling local communities to shape strategic growth whilst in the countryside neighbourhood plans are just one of the tools available to local communities to meet local needs. Alternatively they may decide that development permitted through the countryside policy will meet their needs or that 'opting in' to the Local Plan Part 2 may be the best route for them.
- 8.5 Further information on neighbourhood plans and the role they play in delivering growth in North Dorset is set out in Policy 2 - Core Spatial Strategy.

## Policy 16 - Blandford

### Introduction

- 8.6 'Blandford' comprises the main town of Blandford Forum to the north of the River Stour and the smaller built-up area of Blandford St Mary to the south. Effectively, they function as a single settlement which is the main service centre for the southern part of the District. The town lies in the 'Blandford Gap', where the River Stour cuts through the chalk downland and is embraced by two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB): the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB and the Dorset AONB.
- 8.7 Blandford has expanded significantly in recent years, more than 1,400 new homes being built between 1994 and 2012, with over 100 being completed in the last year<sup>220</sup>. This rate of growth has given rise to sustainability concerns, especially the potential for increased commuting to Bournemouth and Poole<sup>221</sup>.
- 8.8 Much of the recent development has taken place on land between the existing built-up area and the by-pass. However, this has not always been in places that are accessible to key locations, such as the town centre. Recent research<sup>222</sup> suggests that there is potential for further growth in more accessible locations, which will help to support the settlement's service centre function and increase self-containment. Nevertheless, accommodating further growth within the town's environmental constraints is a challenge.
- 8.9 Although Blandford has a fairly diverse economic base, Blandford Camp (a large military site located to the north east of the town) is a significant employer of local people and supports a variety of local businesses. It is anticipated that the Camp will remain a military establishment for the foreseeable future but changes to its role during the Plan period could have implications for the local economy.

### Sustainable Development Strategy

- 8.10 Blandford's role as the main service centre in the southern part of the District will be maintained. Housing growth will be matched by employment growth and the provision of supporting infrastructure with the aim of increasing self-containment and reducing the need for commuting, particularly to the South East Dorset conurbation.

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<sup>220</sup> Annual Monitoring Reports, North Dorset District Council (2004-2012)

<sup>221</sup> This issue was raised during the Examination in Public of the former draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). A brief summary of the debate is set out in paragraphs 5.38 to 5.42 of Topic Paper: Spatial Strategy for North Dorset, North Dorset District Council (August 2009)

<sup>222</sup> North Dorset Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2010, North Dorset District Council (August 2011) and the North and north East Dorset Transport Study: Emerging Transport Strategy, Buro Happold (November 2009)



- 8.11 The key spatial aspects of this strategy will be:
- focusing housing in accessible locations, particularly locations close to the town centre;
  - locating mainly B-Class employment uses on the northern edge of the town in locations accessible to the strategic road network;
  - focusing a mix of employment uses (including offices) on the regenerated Brewery site close to the town centre;
  - providing an enhanced green infrastructure network focused primarily on the Stour Valley and the disused railway line that runs through the town; and
  - accommodating growth within environmental constraints: notably two AONBs; the floodplain of the River Stour; and the town's by-pass.
- 8.12 The strategy for the town will see the building out of sites already allocated for development or with planning permission in the early part of the Plan period, with additional greenfield sites being brought forward after that date. New development will be supported by the necessary grey, social and green infrastructure, both to meet the overall needs of the town and the more local needs associated with each new development area.
- 8.13 At the time this plan was written, Blandford Town Council together with Blandford St Mary and Bryanston Parish Councils were discussing the possibility of establishing a single neighbourhood area to cover all three parished areas. In the event that such a neighbourhood area is designated, the four local councils would work together, under the name Blandford +, to produce a single neighbourhood plan.

### Environment and Climate Change

- 8.14 The main issues for Blandford resulting from climate change are most likely to include flood risk and the implications of development on groundwater resources.
- 8.15 The Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment<sup>223</sup> shows that parts of Blandford Forum and Blandford St Mary are at risk of flooding from the River Stour. Parts of Blandford Forum are also at risk of flooding from the Pimperne Brook. Groundwater and surface water flooding<sup>224</sup> could also be issues in Blandford.
- 8.16 Although protected by a flood defence scheme, any proposal within the areas at risk of fluvial flooding in Blandford would be subject to the sequential and exception tests advocated in National Policy, as explained in more detail in Policy 3 - Climate Change. Flood risk, from all sources, will need to be taken into account in

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<sup>223</sup> Bournemouth, Christchurch, East Dorset, North Dorset and Salisbury Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Halcrow Group Ltd (February 2008)

<sup>224</sup> Severe rainfall can raise groundwater levels rapidly, especially in chalk, and cause flooding while surface water flooding occurs where the water running from roads and other hard surfaces overwhelms the drainage system.

considering new development in the town and flood mitigation measures such as sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), in line with Policy 3, will need to be included, where required.

- 8.17 The eastern edge of Blandford lies within a Groundwater Source Protection Area, which needs to be protected from any threats of pollution and demands for water from groundwater sources will need to be managed. All development in the town will need to comply with the principles of the Environment Agency's groundwater protection policy<sup>225</sup> and water efficiency will be encouraged (in line with Policy 3 – Climate Change).
- 8.18 The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB lies to the north and east of Blandford and the Dorset AONB lies to the south west. Small parts of the existing built-up area of Blandford lie within both AONBs. Any development will need to consider the potential impacts on the AONBs and, in particular, the views into and out of the designated areas. A landscape impact assessment of potential housing sites at Blandford and Shaftesbury was undertaken in 2010, which considered potential impacts on AONB landscapes.
- 8.19 The Milldown (to the north west of Blandford Forum) and Stour Meadows (in the floodplain of the River Stour between Blandford Forum and Blandford St Mary) are both Local Nature Reserves. The Cliff, which is an area of ancient woodland on the western bank of the River Stour extending from Blandford St Mary to Bryanston, is also designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). A colony of protected Greater Horseshoe Bats is located at Bryanston and the bats feed over the Milldown and this part of the Stour Valley, including Stour Meadows. The River Stour itself also supports a range of different species, including otters.
- 8.20 Blandford is a historic town and the Georgian town centre has long been recognised as being one of the finest in England. Newman and Pevsner say that the centre of the town 'forms one of the most satisfying Georgian ensembles anywhere in England'<sup>226</sup>. A Conservation Area was designated in 1972 to preserve and enhance Blandford's historic character. It was expanded in 1990 and sub-areas within it were subsequently identified<sup>227</sup>. The town also includes a wide range of listed buildings.
- 8.21 The Council seeks to protect and improve the natural and historic environment of the town and all applications for growth will need to consider the impact on these features and designations.

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<sup>225</sup> Groundwater Protection: Policy and Practice (GP3) Environment Agency (November 2012)

<sup>226</sup> Page 95, The Buildings of England: Dorset - Newman, J. and Pevsner, N. (1972)

<sup>227</sup> These Character Areas are identified and described the Blandford Forum and Blandford St Mary section of the 2003 Local Plan.

## Meeting Housing Needs

- 8.22 It is anticipated that about 960 dwellings will be built in Blandford between 2011 and 2026. In recent years, the greenfield site off Shaftesbury Lane (on the northern edge of the town) and the land behind the new Archbishop Wake Primary School (on Black Lane on the eastern edge of Blandford) have been developed for housing. There remains significant potential to meet housing needs on brownfield sites within the existing settlement boundary<sup>228</sup>. A large mixed-use regeneration scheme for the Hall and Woodhouse Brewery site in Blandford St Mary already has planning permission and other smaller sites, such as the site of the former Magistrates Court on Salisbury Road, will also come forward for housing.
- 8.23 Nevertheless, additional greenfield land will be required for housing development but there are a limited number of potential options for further growth<sup>229</sup> due to environmental constraints. Much of the land around Blandford is constrained by the Dorset AONB, the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB and the floodplain of the River Stour. Within these constraints, there are three main options for further growth, which are:
- Land around Blandford St Mary and west of Blandford Forum, largely outside the Dorset AONB (with capacity for about 500 dwellings);
  - Land to the south east of Blandford St Mary, outside both AONBs (with capacity for at least 200 dwellings); and
  - Land to the north-east of Blandford Forum beyond the by-pass outside, but surrounded by the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB (with capacity for about 800 dwellings).
- 8.24 The Council's preferred approach is to develop land west of Blandford Forum and west of Blandford St Mary. Development in these locations would be more accessible to facilities and services and would have less impact on the landscape than the other options. These issues are discussed in more detail in the Market Towns: Site Selection Background Paper.
- 8.25 Specific sites to take forward housing growth in Blandford will be identified in the Local Plan Part 2. The allocation of specific sites will need to be supported by site-based studies including Site Level Flood Risk Assessments and Transport Assessments. Further sites may come forward through the neighbourhood planning process.

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<sup>228</sup> The settlement boundaries around Blandford Forum and Blandford St Mary are shown on Inset Maps 2 and 2A of the North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (First Revision) – North Dorset District Council (January 2003)

<sup>229</sup> Potential housing sites around Blandford are identified in the North Dorset Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2010, North Dorset District Council (August 2011)

## Supporting Economic Development

- 8.26 The general economic prospects for North Dorset were outlined in the 2008 Workspace Strategy,<sup>230</sup> which was updated in 2012 in respect of employment land projections<sup>231</sup>. The latter study indicates that in order for job growth to match housing growth at Blandford there is a need for at least 6 hectares of employment land to be provided by 2026. The 2012 Workspace Strategy Update showed that there was more than sufficient land already identified to meet these needs, although some of the 10 hectares available in Blandford<sup>232</sup> has subsequently been granted consent for retail uses.
- 8.27 The 2003 Local Plan allocated 5.1 hectares of employment land off Shaftesbury Lane, of which some 4.8 hectares remained in 2011. About 1.1 hectares of this site has subsequently been given planning permission for a 'mixed use' scheme, including an Asda supermarket and a petrol filling station. The remainder of this site will be brought forward for employment uses. 0.4 hectares of land on Stour Park now forms part of a planning consent to extend the existing Tesco store in that location. About 3 hectares of the mixed-use regeneration scheme for the Brewery site will provide a range of employment opportunities. A new brewery building (occupying 0.3 hectares) has recently been constructed and is now operational on the site. Other smaller areas of undeveloped employment land exist at Blandford Heights.
- 8.28 Together, these sites will provide a range and choice of sites to meet the town's needs for employment land until 2026. The provision of this land will help to maintain and enhance the town's employment base and give existing and new residents the opportunity to work locally, rather than having to commute to Poole or Bournemouth. The introduction of fibre optic high speed broadband will also help to consolidate Blandford's economic role in the south of the District.
- 8.29 All these sites (other than the Brewery site, which was recognised as having the potential for mixed use regeneration) were considered to be 'fit for purpose' in the Council's Employment Land Review (ELR)<sup>233</sup>. The retention of existing and developing industrial estates continues to be supported, but the Council now has a more flexible approach to the non B-Class uses that may be permitted on such sites, as set out in Policy 11 - Economy. Additional sites could be brought forward as part of the neighbourhood planning process, augmenting the allocated sites that will be identified in the Local Plan Part 2.

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<sup>230</sup> Bournemouth Dorset Poole Workspace Strategy and Delivery plan - GVA Grimley (2008).

<sup>231</sup> Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Workspace Study Employment land projections update 2012 - Dorset County Council (March 2012).

<sup>232</sup> Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Workspace Study Employment land projections update 2012 - Dorset County Council (March 2012).

<sup>233</sup> Employment Land Review: Review of Existing Sites, North Dorset District Council (April 2007)

- 8.30 Blandford Camp is the home of the Royal School of Signals and is a major training facility for service personnel. This was due to change with the proposed relocation of the training function to Wales, but those plans were scrapped in 2010, pending further review. Defence Estates had previously identified Blandford Camp as a 'Core Site' (which meant that the site would remain in military use for the foreseeable future) with potential to consolidate the Signals presence<sup>234</sup>. However, the further review of military training has increased the uncertainty about how its role might change during the Plan period.
- 8.31 In the event that existing buildings or other previously developed parts of Blandford Camp become available for non-military uses, the Council will investigate the possibility of using these areas for additional employment use in the longer term, if needed.
- 8.32 Blandford town centre provides a range of shops and other services for local people. The main convenience outlets in the town centre are the Morrison's supermarket off Greyhound Square (known locally as Greyhound Yard) and a small Iceland store in Salisbury Street. The Co-op has an edge-of-centre supermarket to the south east of East Street with another, smaller Co-op store in a more suburban location on Salisbury Road. A Tesco supermarket occupies an out-of-town site, on Stour Park in Blandford St Mary.
- 8.33 The town centre has reasonable representation from national multiples (such as Boots, W H Smith, Argos and Holland and Barrett) and a wide range of independent retailers, both convenience and comparison outlets, mostly occupying the town's smaller stores. The town also has range of other uses such as banks, estate agents, public houses and restaurants.
- 8.34 The Joint Retail Study<sup>235</sup> identified a need for additional convenience goods floorspace in Blandford, but recognised that this need could be met in full if the store now occupied by Morrison's supermarket were to re-open. Since the study was undertaken this store has re-opened and Iceland and the Co-op have also opened new stores in the town, providing adequate additional floor space to meet the town's convenience shopping needs up to 2026.

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<sup>234</sup> The Royal School of Signals, Blandford was identified as a Core Site in Annex B of the Defence Estates Development Plan 2008 – Defence Estates (June 2008). Paragraph 13 stated 'The Core Estate consists of Core Locations that are either: large bases or groups of sites that have an indefinite operational future; or individual Core Sites, which are expected to support Defence outputs for at least 15 years'. The Estates Development Plan 2009 updates the previous Plan and states that 'Once vacated by Defence Training Rationalisation in around 2013 there is the potential to backfill the site and create a Signals centre of gravity through co-locating 10 and 14 Sig Regts at Blandford.'

<sup>235</sup> Joint Retail Assessment: Christchurch Borough Council and East, North and Purbeck District Councils, Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (March 2008)

- 8.35 The amount of additional convenience goods floorspace in Blandford will increase further with the extension of the Tesco supermarket at Stour Park<sup>236</sup> and the new Asda supermarket off Shaftesbury Lane on the northern edge of the town<sup>237</sup>.
- 8.36 The Joint Retail Study identified a need for additional comparison goods floorspace in Blandford. It also identified 18 shop units that were vacant at the time and could provide a further 1,000m<sup>2</sup> gross of additional floor space for either convenience or comparison goods, if brought back into use. In addition, the consent for the Asda supermarket allows one third of the floorspace to be used for selling comparison goods<sup>238</sup>.
- 8.37 Land just beyond the eastern edge of Blandford Town Centre, including the Co-op store off Langton Road, has some potential for providing further additional convenience or comparison goods floorspace. Although much of this area is already protected by a flood defence scheme, any future scheme would need to take full account of flood risk, both from the River Stour and the Pimperne Brook.
- 8.38 South of Market Place and East Street long 'burgage plots'<sup>239</sup> extend down to the River Stour. There may be some limited potential to extend existing retail outlets in this location, but in addition to the flooding issues, any scheme here would also have to have regard to the potential impact on the historic character and visual context of the town centre.
- 8.39 While the primary and secondary shopping frontages (as defined in the 2003 Local Plan) will continue to be used for development management purposes they will be reviewed in the Local Plan Part 2. This will also define a town centre boundary, which is important in relation to national policy and the sequential approach to the location of town centre uses. Alternatively, the neighbourhood plan group may choose to review shopping frontages and / or delineate a town centre boundary.
- 8.40 There is a growing recognition of the importance of tourism to North Dorset's economy and in Blandford specifically. The Council will consider positively applications for development that support tourism and are compatible with the town's historic character.

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<sup>236</sup> The extension to Tesco gained permission in 2012 and will increase the stores floorspace from 2,273m<sup>2</sup> to 3,941m<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>237</sup> Planning permission was granted in March 2013 for a 2,300m<sup>2</sup> Asda supermarket and petrol filling station on land off Salisbury Lane.

<sup>238</sup> This equates to potential additional comparison goods floorspace of about 770m<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>239</sup> 'Burgage plots' are tracts of land within the medieval town which were allocated to the burgesses, who were freemen of the town, with narrow frontage development and long rear gardens. The plots are based directly on the ploughland strips of the pre-existing agrarian settlement.

## Infrastructure

- 8.41 Within Blandford, the emphasis in terms of grey infrastructure will be on providing better facilities for walking and cycling between residential areas and key destinations, such as the town centre, employment sites, schools and other community facilities. At present, the brewery is a private site which acts as a barrier between Blandford Forum and Blandford St Mary. The mixed use regeneration of the site will enable pedestrian and cycle links between the two parts of the settlement to be improved.
- 8.42 Public transport, cycling and walking links with the surrounding villages (and Blandford Camp) also need to be improved in order for Blandford to maintain its function as a service centre for the surrounding area. Parts of the former Somerset and Dorset Railway line have been transformed into the North Dorset Trailway, which now extends northwards from Blandford to Sturminster Newton. Better linkage is required to the part of the Trailway south of Blandford, which is likely to include a crossing of the A354 and improved signage through the town.
- 8.43 It is intended that the Corn Exchange in the town centre be refurbished so that it can function as the main community venue for the whole town; a key social infrastructure component. In addition, neighbourhood facilities are required in the northern part of the town and at Blandford St Mary. At Blandford St Mary a facility will be provided as part of the regeneration of the Brewery site.
- 8.44 Blandford Leisure Centre offers a wide range of indoor and some outdoor sport activities to the local community in the south of the District. These facilities will be retained and upgraded during the Plan period.
- 8.45 Residents have stressed that the growth of Blandford will require improvements to school provision. Dorset County Council has indicated that there is a need for a further two forms of entry (2FE) for primary education in Blandford. Feasibility work shows that this can be achieved through careful use of the existing capacity within the school pyramid and by extending the existing primary schools in the town. In addition the existing primary school in Pimperne, which also serves the Blandford school pyramid, will be replaced.
- 8.46 Following direct consultation with all surgeries in 2012, the Whitecliff Surgery in Blandford responded that healthcare provision is already under pressure and that a new or improved / extended surgery is required. Blandford Community Hospital also provides many services to people in the local area. The Council supports the retention of the community hospital and the enhancement of the range of healthcare services offered.
- 8.47 The main areas for informal recreation at Blandford are the Milldown to the north-west of the town, the North Dorset Trailway through the town and Stour Meadows between Blandford Forum and Blandford St Mary. Additional open space will be provided in the Crown Meadows in association with development to the west of

Blandford Forum to providing foraging areas for the Greater Horseshoe Bat colony at Bryanston SSSI and informal recreation space to reduce pressure on other high value wildlife sites. These main sites, other smaller greenspaces and green links, together with other new green infrastructure items provided with new development will provide the basis for developing a green infrastructure strategy for the town.

- 8.48 There is a need In Blandford for further sports pitches, particularly football pitches<sup>240</sup>. Land to the north of the by-pass was allocated for this purpose in the 2003 Local Plan and a feasibility study<sup>241</sup> was produced with a view to taking this scheme forward. The Council has attempted to pursue the implementation of this project but without success. Consequently, Blandford Football Club, Blandford Rugby Club and the Town Council are developing an alternative approach that re-arranges the use by clubs of Larksmead Playing Field, Park Road Recreation Ground and land at Blandford School. Dorset County Council is intending to provide a new Astroturf sports pitch and floodlit netball court at Blandford School which will be available for community use, including by local football and rugby teams.
- 8.49 The Council will seek to conserve and manage existing green spaces and aims to improve the connectivity, quality and functionality of such sites and links at Blandford in line with Policy 15 – Green Infrastructure. The Council will work with the neighbourhood plan group in developing a green infrastructure strategy for the town and, if required, additional land will be allocated either through the Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations document or through the neighbourhood planning process.

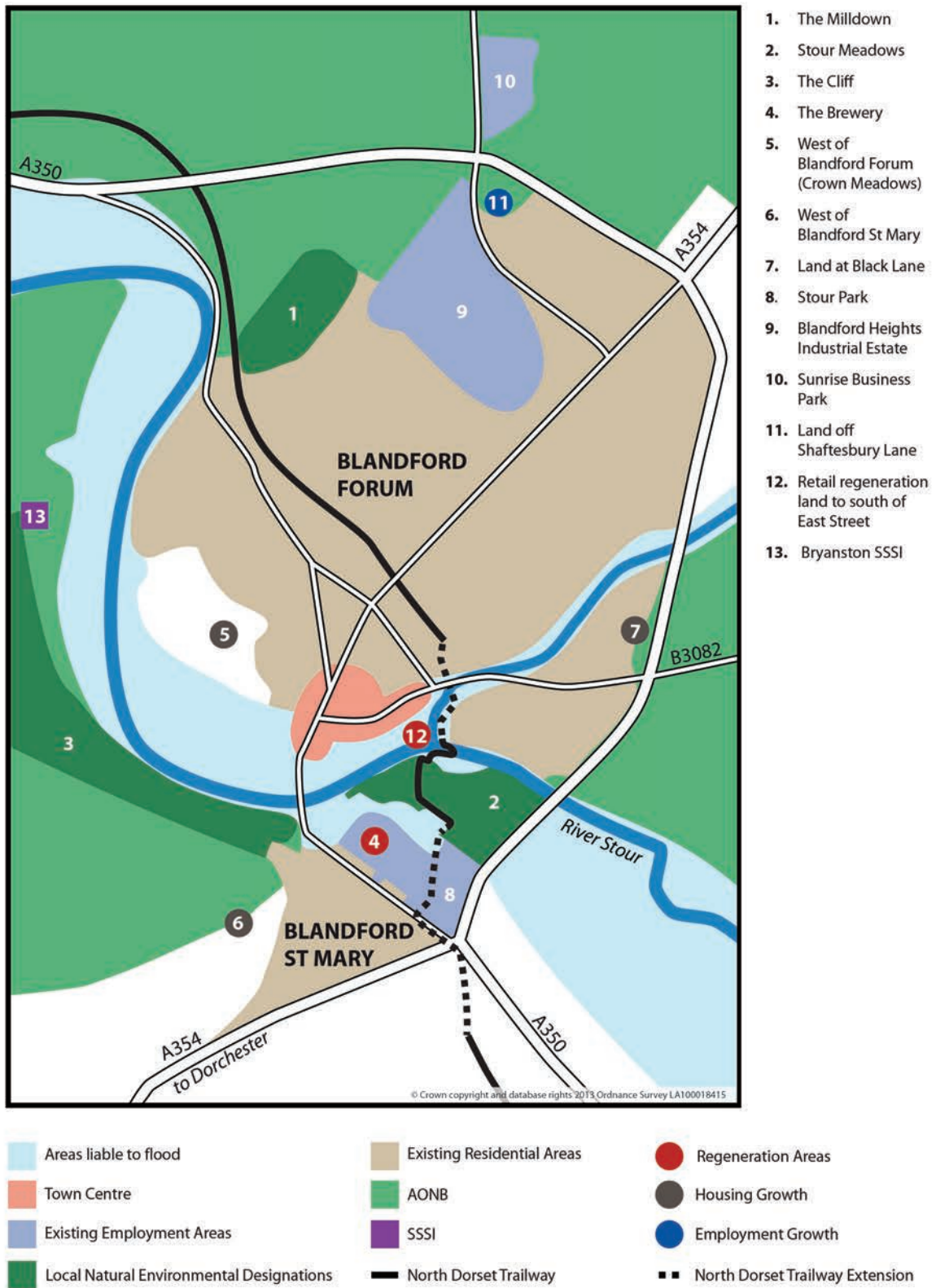
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<sup>240</sup> As identified in Open Space Audit & Assessment of Local Need - Strategic Leisure (February 2006)

<sup>241</sup> Blandford United Football Club, Facility Development (January 2009)



Figure 8.1 - Blandford Inset Diagram



## **POLICY 16: BLANDFORD**

### **Sustainable Development Strategy**

Blandford will maintain its role as the main service centre in the south of the district through:

- a development and redevelopment within the existing built-up area; and
- b extensions, primarily of housing to the west of Blandford Forum and to the west of Blandford St Mary; and
- c employment uses on land within the bypass on the northern edge of the town and the mixed use regeneration of the Brewery site close to the town centre.

Growth will be taken forward in ways which respect the town's environmental constraints, support its role, function and identity, and contribute to making it more self-contained. Blandford's distinctive natural and historic character will be retained and enhanced.

### **Environment and Climate Change**

The impact of climate change on the town will be addressed by:

- d taking account of the risks of fluvial, groundwater and surface water flooding in new development; and
- e incorporating sustainable drainage systems into new developments; and
- f the protection and management of valuable groundwater resources.

The town's natural and historic built environment will be protected and enhanced.

### **Meeting Housing Needs**

About 960 homes will be provided at Blandford Forum and Blandford St Mary during the period 2011 - 2026. In addition to infilling and redevelopment within the settlement boundary, Blandford's housing needs will be met through:

- g mixed use regeneration of the Brewery site; and
- h the development of land to the west of Blandford Forum; and
- i the development of land to the west of Blandford St Mary.

### **Supporting Economic Development**

Employment needs in the town for the period up 2026 will be met through:

- j the mixed use regeneration of the Brewery site; and

**POLICY 16 (CONT'D): BLANDFORD**

- k the development of land off Shaftesbury Lane; and
- l the development of vacant sites on existing industrial estates; and
- m the retention of existing employment sites.

In the period up to 2026, additional retail floorspace will be provided through:

- n the extension of the existing Tesco supermarket at Stour Park; and
- o the provision of a new (Asda) supermarket off Shaftesbury Lane.

The main focus for town centre regeneration, which may include additional retail floorspace, will be land to the south of East Street, including land around the existing Co-op store. The extension of existing retail units south of Market Place and East Street may also be permitted.

**Infrastructure**

In the period up to 2026, grey infrastructure to support growth will include:

- p the provision and enhancement of walking and cycling links within Blandford between residential areas and key destinations, such as the town centre, employment sites, schools and other community facilities; and
- q the provision and enhancement of public transport, cycling and walking links between Blandford and nearby villages (and Blandford Camp); and
- r the improvement and extension of the North Dorset Trailway along, or close to, the route of the former Somerset and Dorset railway line for cycling and walking.

In the period up to 2026, social infrastructure to support growth will include:

- s the refurbishment of the Corn Exchange to form the main community venue for the town and the provision of neighbourhood halls to serve new development in the northern part of the town and Blandford St Mary; and
- t the retention of Blandford Leisure Centre in community use and the upgrading of its facilities; and
- u the extension of the Archbishop Wake and Milldown primary schools; and
- v a new doctors' surgery or the expansion or relocation of existing doctors' surgeries.

**POLICY 16 (CONT'D): BLANDFORD**

A network of green infrastructure will be developed in and around Blandford, focussing on linking existing sites (such as the Milldown and Stour Meadows) and providing new sites and links to serve the residents of both the new and existing developments in the town. New or improved facilities will include:

- w informal open space at Crown Meadows associated with housing development to the west of Blandford Forum; and
- x new sports pitches and associated facilities on land within the built up area of Blandford.

## Policy 17 - Gillingham

### Introduction

- 8.50 Gillingham has been one of the fastest growing towns in the South West over the period from 1990 to 2010. Housing growth has been matched by economic growth as the town has managed to attract and retain a range of general industrial businesses. However, rapid growth has not been without its problems, such as the limited retail offer in the town centre, a lack of community facilities and infrastructure; and limited success in achieving regeneration.
- 8.51 A detailed assessment of the town's growth potential for the period up to 2026 and beyond<sup>242</sup> underpins much of Policy 17. The assessment draws on many of the evidence base studies already produced and identifies the potential for medium and longer term growth. The assessment recognises the potential for Gillingham to develop its economic and service centre functions in the medium term and the relative lack of environmental constraints adjoining the existing urban area. However, it also identifies a number of issues that may limit long term (post-2026) growth including economic potential, town centre capacity, transport and other infrastructure issues and environmental constraints.

### Sustainable Development Strategy

- 8.52 Gillingham's role as the main service centre in the north of the District will be enhanced through higher quality housing growth, the creation of a more diverse economy and the provision of a better range of services and community facilities. This growth will help to consolidate the town's role as a key service centre.
- 8.53 The parish of Gillingham intends to produce a neighbourhood plan, the ambition of which will be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider area as set out in the Local Plan Part 1. The agreed themes that will underpin the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan vision are very closely aligned with the components of sustainable communities as identified in the Egan Review<sup>243</sup>.
- 8.54 The complementary approach of the Local Plan and the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan will ensure the town benefits from growth to become a vibrant and thriving place to live and work.
- 8.55 The key spatial aspects of this strategy will be:
- a strategic site allocation (SSA) to the south of the town delivering the majority of the town's housing and employment growth along with supporting infrastructure. Proposals for the SSA are set out in more detail in Policy 21 – Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation;

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<sup>242</sup> Assessing the Growth Potential of Gillingham, Dorset, Atkins (December 2009)

<sup>243</sup> The Egan Review – Skills for Sustainable Communities (2004)

- a range and choice of employment sites in various locations around the town to support a more diverse economy;
  - an enhanced town centre supported by the mixed use regeneration of the Station Road area resulting in better integration of shopping, education, leisure, cultural and transport functions; and
  - an enhanced green infrastructure network focused primarily on the river corridors linking new development to key locations such as the town centre.
- 8.56 The strategy for the town will require the bringing forward of major new greenfield sites. New development should be supported by the necessary infrastructure and community facilities, both to meet the overall needs of the expanded town and the more local needs associated with each new development area.

### Environment and Climate Change

- 8.57 Gillingham sits within a basin at the confluence of three rivers, namely: the River Lodden; the Shreen Water; and the River Stour. Higher ground surrounds the town: at Bowridge Hill to the east; Hungerhill and Duncliffe to the south; Thorngrove in the west; and Huntingford and Milton-on-Stour to the north. As a result of the topography, fluvial flooding is a key climate change-related issue that affects the town. The Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment<sup>244</sup> shows that parts of Gillingham are at risk of flooding from the three rivers. Any proposal within the areas at risk of fluvial flooding in Gillingham would be subject to the sequential and exception tests in National Policy, as explained in more detail in Policy 3 - Climate Change.
- 8.58 The development proposed at Gillingham will need to take account of flood risk from all sources and will have implications for the capacity of the natural environment and the sewer network to absorb surface water, especially during periods of heavy rainfall. All development will be planned and built to minimise the impact on the capacity of the natural environment to absorb water, through the provision of flood mitigation measures, such as sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), in line with Policy 3 – Climate Change.
- 8.59 Gillingham has relatively few environmental constraints, but the Town Design Statement (TDS) recognises the value local people place on the town's landscape setting, river corridors and views to the countryside<sup>245</sup>. New development will need to: maintain a sensitive transition between the town and surrounding rural areas; retain and enhance the river corridors; and avoid adversely affecting views out to the countryside.

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<sup>244</sup> Bournemouth, Christchurch, East Dorset, North Dorset and Salisbury Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Halcrow Group Ltd (February 2008)

<sup>245</sup> See Design Guidelines 1, 3 and 4 in The Gillingham Town Design Statement, Gillingham Town Design Statement Steering Group (June 2012)

- 8.60 The 2003 Local Plan identifies the Gillingham Royal Forest Project Area to the east of the town. Within the Royal Forest Project Area, which is a former deer park, the 2003 Local Plan<sup>246</sup> aims to enhance the landscape through additional woodland planting and promote low-key countryside recreation and tourism activities.
- 8.61 The Gillingham Conservation Area, which covers part of the town centre, was designated in 1985. It is centred on a cluster of listed buildings around The Square and St Mary's Church, the site of which has been occupied by a church since Saxon times<sup>247</sup>. English Heritage is concerned about the effect of the economic downturn on Gillingham Conservation Area and is supportive of community efforts, which include the Gillingham Town Team and the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan Group, in tackling both the immediate issues and planning for longer term solutions. The Wyke Conservation Area, to the west of the town was designated in 2012.
- 8.62 Two Scheduled Monuments (including King's Court Hill Fort) and several Sites of Archaeological Importance are located in the Gillingham area. Excavations have shown archaeological artefacts that indicate there were possible settlements at Gillingham in Neolithic times.
- 8.63 The Council seeks to protect and improve the natural and historic environment of the town and all applications for development at Gillingham will need to consider the impact, and mitigation measures for the potential effects, on these features and designations.

### Meeting Housing Needs

- 8.64 Policy 2 - Core Spatial Strategy identifies Gillingham as one of the four main towns at which the vast majority of growth will be delivered. Policy 6 – Housing Distribution sets out that the four main towns will deliver housing to meet the district wide need, and that Gillingham will deliver about 1,490 dwellings over the plan period. It also identifies Gillingham SSA as a key strategic delivery mechanism to deliver housing up to 2026 and beyond.
- 8.65 In Gillingham the Council will seek 30% affordable housing across the town, but 35% will be sought on the SSA site subject to viability testing.
- 8.66 The Gillingham Study<sup>248</sup> assessed a number of future growth scenarios for the town. The scenario that concentrated development to the south of the town was identified as the most sustainable option. More detail on the selection of sites for growth at Gillingham is provided in the Market Towns: Site Selection Background Paper. The SSA will be released and developed in a co-ordinated and phased manner to ensure that the supporting infrastructure is provided in a timely manner

<sup>246</sup> Policy GRF 1, Page 114, North Dorset District-wide Local Plan (1<sup>st</sup> Revision), North Dorset District Council (January 2003)

<sup>247</sup> Gillingham: The Making of a Dorset Town, John Porter, Gillingham Local History Society (2011)

<sup>248</sup> Set out in Section 4 of Assessing the Growth Potential of Gillingham, Atkins (November 2009)

and that issues such as landscape impact, flood risk, traffic growth and the provision of access are fully taken into account.

- 8.67 The allocation of the strategic site requires an extension to the settlement boundary. This extension to Gillingham is detailed on the Proposals Map accompanying Policy 21 - Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation.
- 8.68 Infill and redevelopment within the settlement boundary will continue in the town during the plan period and other sites in Gillingham identified to meet housing needs include:
- land in the Station Road area, which will be regenerated with a mix of retail, employment and residential uses; and,
  - land to the south and south-west of Bay.
- 8.69 Land in the Station Road area was identified as an employment site that can be released for regeneration<sup>249</sup>. Employment, retail, offices, and other town centre uses will form the primary uses for the site to support economic led regeneration. Residential use (particularly homes above offices and shops) will be permitted to complement the town centre uses at this edge-of-centre location.
- 8.70 The land at Bay will accommodate about 50 dwellings. Development will need to respect the character of Bay and should also include good links to the adjacent leisure and education uses and the town centre.
- 8.71 Further housing sites may be allocated through the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan.
- 8.72 For sites other than the SSA, more work will be required to determine the precise extent of the areas to be allocated in the Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations or the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan. The allocation of any site will need to be supported by site-based studies including a Site Level Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, a Transport Assessment and a more detailed assessment of associated infrastructure requirements.

### Supporting Economic Development

- 8.73 An analysis of the economy of Gillingham in 2009 showed significant potential for further economic growth<sup>250</sup>. The past trends and future potential identified in the study indicated that the economy of the town had the capacity to be able to expand faster than the economy of the wider sub-region<sup>251</sup>. This is desirable in

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<sup>249</sup> Employment Land Review: Review of Existing Sites, North Dorset District Council (April 2007)

<sup>250</sup> As set out in Section 5 and Appendices A and B of Assessing the Growth Potential of Gillingham, Dorset, Atkins (December 2009)

<sup>251</sup> The economic prospects of the Dorset Sub-region as a whole are analysed in the Bournemouth Dorset Poole Workspace Strategy and Delivery Plan, GVA Grimley (2008)



order to support the town's enhanced role as the main service centre in the north of the District and to encourage greater self-containment.

- 8.74 The economy of Gillingham has grown rapidly from a small base with a strong focus on general industrial businesses, including manufacturing and distribution, and this type of business has generated lower-value employment with lower incomes, requiring lower levels of skills. In order to improve its performance in the future, the town needs to diversify its economy and encourage the creation and retention of knowledge-based industries. The introduction of high speed broadband to Gillingham in 2013 should assist with this.

### Employment Land

- 8.75 Policy 11 – The Economy outlines the District-wide employment land situation and indicates that in order for job growth to match housing growth at Gillingham, there is a need for a minimum of 9.2 hectares of employment land to be provided by 2026. It is estimated that about 17.5 hectares of employment land is already available at Gillingham on sites already identified for employment use. The provision of a range and choice of employment sites will help to stimulate demand and these sites should be brought forward in step with housing development to: provide a range of employment opportunities for residents and those migrating into the area; reduce the need for commuting; create a more balanced community; and increase the self-containment of the settlement.
- 8.76 Mixed-use regeneration in the Station Road area (about 4.3 hectares, as identified in the Council's Employment Land Review) will provide a focus for office development among other town centre uses in a location close to the existing town centre. General industrial uses will be accommodated by the continuing development of the existing employment sites<sup>252</sup> at Kingsmead Business Park and Park Farm (about 3 hectares remaining) and the southern end of Brickfields Business Park (about 11.7 hectares).
- 8.77 Part of the Kingsmead Business Park to the east of Shaftesbury Road, and the adjacent employment site to the west of Shaftesbury Road, is the preferred location for a local centre for the SSA. Wherever the local centre for the SSA is located, it will generate employment in services provided at the local level, including local shops, a medical centre and a primary school.
- 8.78 Sigma Aldrich, who own and occupy a large portion of Brickfields Business Park have secured planning permission to build a new head office building on the southern end of the site. Any development nearby, should respect the high quality design and landmark nature of the proposed new building. Higher value businesses will also be encouraged to locate to vacant land (at least 1 hectare) on the existing

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<sup>252</sup> As allocated in the North Dorset District-wide Local Plan (1<sup>st</sup> Revision), North Dorset District Council (January 2003)

Neal's Yard Remedies site at Peacemarsh, where any new development should complement the existing landmark building.

- 8.79 Diversification of the economy will need to be supported by other measures in order to make the town an attractive location for employers. Such measures will include: high quality education; workforce training; business support; and infrastructure improvements, such as the enhancement of the town centre and transport links.

### Retail, Other Town Centre Uses and Mixed-Use Regeneration

- 8.80 Gillingham's town centre is 'polycentric' in nature with several 'hubs' that accommodate different functions. These include:
- the main town centre shopping area on the High Street;
  - larger retail units at Station Road crossroads;
  - the 'anchor' supermarket (Waitrose) off Le Neubourg Way;
  - the historic core at the western end of the High Street;
  - education and leisure uses on Harding's Lane; and
  - the transport hub at Gillingham Station.
- 8.81 As the town grows it will be important to maintain and enhance these elements and to improve the linkages between them to create an expanded, more integrated and vibrant town centre capable of offering a better range of shops, services and facilities to the local population. Critical to this success will be the mixed-use regeneration of the Station Road area for employment and retail, along with leisure and other main town centre uses, residential uses and the revitalisation of the town centre itself.
- 8.82 The Joint Retail Study shows that the town centre does not provide an adequate range of shops and other services for local people. Although the need for convenience shopping can be largely met by the three existing supermarkets (Waitrose, ASDA and Lidl), the town centre lacks national comparison retailers, clothing, footwear, jewellery and hobby shops and a department store. The Gillingham Study suggests that there is potential for a significant increase in retail provision with a strong focus on comparison goods. An enlarged town centre would also benefit from the provision of other additional main town centre uses such as leisure and entertainment, offices, arts, culture and tourism.
- 8.83 Key themes for regeneration are:
- the revitalisation of the High Street, based on the potential for the upgrading and provision of new retail units towards the eastern end and the potential for a wider range of town centre uses based on the attractive range of listed buildings at the western end (in the Gillingham Conservation Area);

- the promotion of improved links between Waitrose and the town centre, and Station Road crossroads and the town centre, encouraging greater footfall particularly for the High Street and the new town centre public open space;
- the mixed use regeneration of the land between the town centre and the railway station to provide: employment opportunities (particularly office accommodation); an increased amount and improved range of mainly comparison shopping; improved leisure, cultural and community facilities to serve the town and surrounding area; and a limited amount of residential development (especially above shops and offices); and
- the improvement of links between the town centre and the leisure and education facilities off School Lane and Harding’s Lane.

8.84 By focussing regeneration and the provision of facilities, particularly ‘town centre uses’, on land close to the town centre and railway station, car dependence should be minimised and the use of other modes, including walking, cycling and public transport should be maximised.

### Grey Infrastructure

8.85 Gillingham is located in the Exeter to London strategic transport corridor, which includes both the A303 and a mainline railway. There are capacity issues with both of these routes, however recent infrastructure improvements on the mainline railway have improved service links and times and the Government has committed to a feasibility study for improvements to the A303. The Gillingham Study<sup>253</sup> recognises that some growth can be accommodated within the transport constraints, provided that measures are put in place to make the best use of existing infrastructure and manage demand. The study also recognises that significant improvements to the strategic road network (in particular the A303) would be required if the town is to grow further beyond 2026.

8.86 The proposed southern focus for growth means that most additional development will be relatively close to the town centre, employment opportunities and the railway station, which will both reduce the need for trips on the A303 and encourage journeys by train. Growth to the south of the town will give rise to capacity issues on both the New Road / Shaftesbury Road junction in the town and on the B3081 as it approaches Shaftesbury, but these problems can be overcome by a new road through the development linking the B3081 and B3092 to the south of the town and a link at Enmore Green from the B3081 to the A30, which would encourage its use as an alternative to the A303 for trips to Yeovil and Salisbury. More detail about transport improvements at Gillingham to support the SSA are set

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<sup>253</sup> Transport issues are discussed in Section 7: Infrastructure and Gillingham’s long term growth potential is discussed in Chapter 3 of Assessing the Growth Potential of Gillingham, Dorset, Atkins (December 2009)

out in Policy 21 - Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation. The Enmore Green Link is proposed under Policy 18 – Shaftesbury<sup>254</sup>.

- 8.87 In addition to this strategic approach to demand management in the Exeter to London strategic transport corridor, a series of more local transport improvements will be required to integrate new areas of development with the existing built-up area including:
- enhancements to the transport hub at the Railway Station to improve interconnectivity between different transport modes and car parking;
  - improvements to the route between the Railway Station and the High Street to make it more attractive to pedestrians and cycle friendly;
  - better pedestrian and cycle links between Waitrose, the High Street and new areas of retail and other employment and town centre development in the Station Road area;
  - local road improvements around the town, including upgrades to signalised junctions, necessary to accommodate the increased traffic associated with growth; and
  - provision of, and improvements to, cycleways and footpaths linking other towns and villages and new development to the town centre, employment sites and other key locations.
- 8.88 The Gillingham Study examined the issues of utilities provision<sup>255</sup> and indicated a need to upgrade foul sewers in a number of locations. Upgrading of pumping stations and the town’s sewage treatment works are also likely to be required.

### Social Infrastructure

- 8.89 RiversMeet is Gillingham’s community, culture, fitness and sport centre and also has the capacity to be extended to provide a new community hall. The existing building meets the town’s current community and leisure needs; however, it is unlikely to be adequate to meet the needs of the growing population. Developers will be expected to contribute to the further improvement or expansion of the existing facilities at RiversMeet and the provision of a new community hall.
- 8.90 The scale of development to the south of the town will require a new local centre to be provided. This should include a new 2 forms of entry primary school and a doctor’s surgery for about 2.5 full time equivalent General Practitioners. The local centre should also include other essential local facilities such as a community hall, local shops and a pre-school nursery.

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<sup>254</sup> Policy SB 17 of the North Dorset District-wide Local Plan (1<sup>st</sup> Revision) proposes a link at Enmore Green and an alignment is shown on Inset Map 37. The location and alignment of the proposed link may change as the proposal is worked up in more detail. Any revised scheme for the link will be shown in the Local Plan Part 2.

<sup>255</sup> Set out in Chapter 10 of Assessing the Growth Potential of Gillingham, Dorset, Atkins (December 2009)

- 8.91 The proposed growth of the town will also require the expansion of St Mary the Virgin Primary School and enhancement of the existing secondary school.

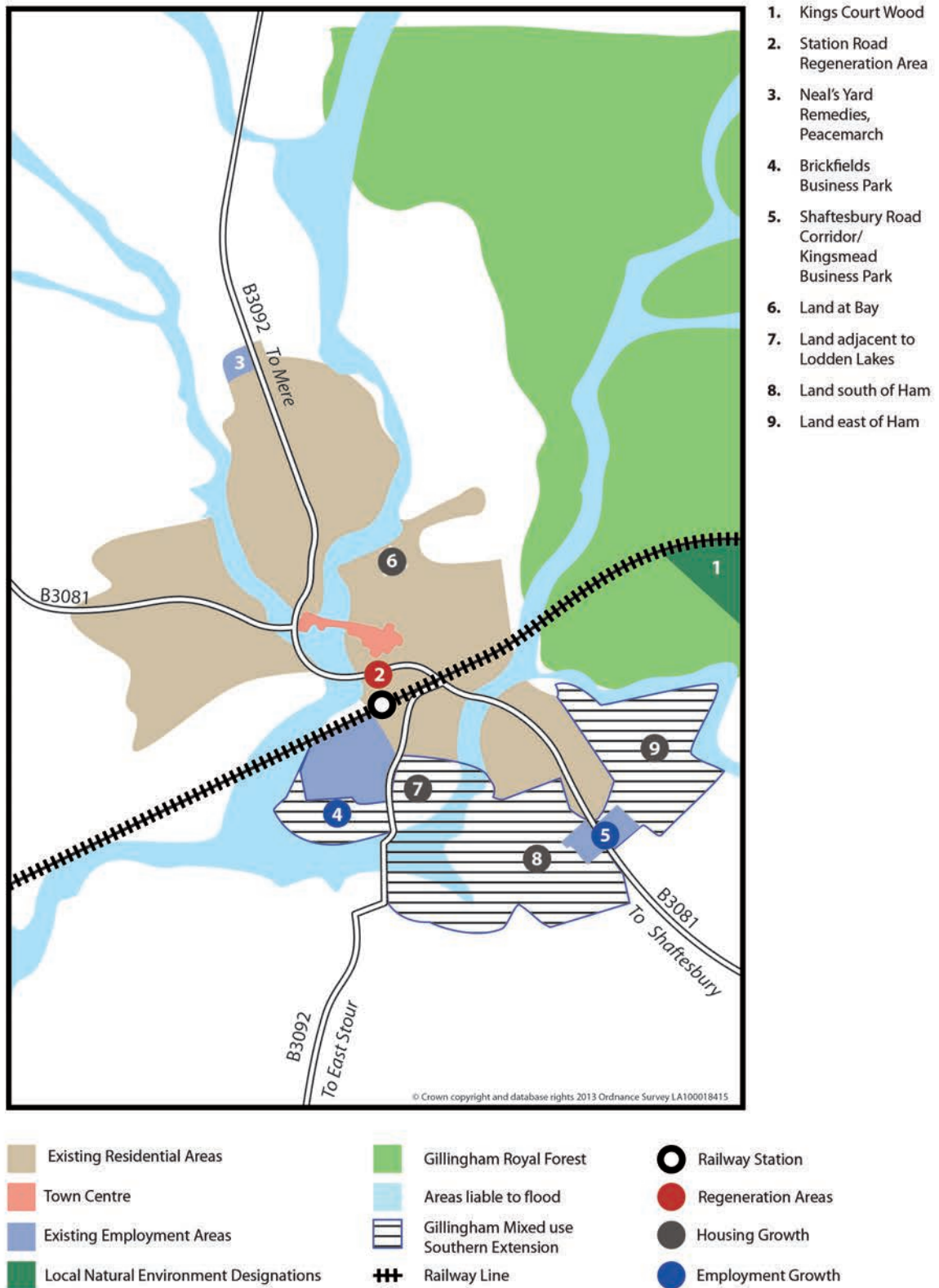
### Green Infrastructure

- 8.92 In 2005 the Three Rivers Partnership produced the Open Spaces Group Report for Gillingham<sup>256</sup>, which recognised the major contribution the corridors of the three rivers (the River Stour, the River Lodden and the Shreen Water) make to the character of the town. This is also recognised in the Gillingham TDS. A green infrastructure strategy will be prepared, based primarily on these corridors, setting out how a more integrated network of informal green spaces and rights of way around the town can be provided.
- 8.93 The provision and enhancement of green infrastructure in association with planned growth will contribute to this overall strategy, in particular: in areas within and close to the town centre; along the corridor of the River Lodden; and within proposed new development areas.
- 8.94 Land to the south of the High Street and to the rear of the Red Lion is subject to flooding and therefore not suitable for built development. However, it has recently been enhanced to become a ‘town park’, which both provides the opportunity for informal recreation in the town centre and a more attractive link between Waitrose and the High Street. RiversMeet and a range of associated outdoor leisure facilities are located just to the north of the High Street. These facilities will be retained and the outdoor facilities will be enhanced through an increased level of pitch provision to meet the town’s longer term needs.
- 8.95 The corridor of the River Lodden runs through, or adjacent to, much of the new development proposed at Gillingham and this provides the opportunity to adopt a comprehensive approach to its future use and management all the way from Brickfields Business Park in the south to the sport’s pitches to the north of the railway. The green corridor should be designed to provide a landscape setting for new and existing development, a corridor for wildlife and an alternative route for pedestrians and cyclists to various locations to the south and east of the town.
- 8.96 Adequate formal open space, both in terms of sports pitches and play areas will need to be provided in association with the proposed new housing developments. These spaces should be linked into the overall green infrastructure network, where possible.

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<sup>256</sup> Open Spaces Group Report for Gillingham, Dorset, The Three Rivers Partnership (2005)

Figure 8.2 – Gillingham Inset Diagram



**POLICY 17: GILLINGHAM****Sustainable Development Strategy**

Gillingham's role as the main service centre in the north of the District will be maintained and enhanced through:

- a development and redevelopment within the existing built up area, including the enhancement of the town centre and the mixed-use regeneration of the Station Road area; and
- b the development of a Strategic Site Allocation (SSA) to the south of the town; and
- c the development of a range and choice of employment sites, including the southern extension of Brickfields Business Park; and
- d an enhanced green infrastructure network focused primarily on the three river corridors through the town.

Growth will be taken forward in ways which respect the town's environmental constraints, support its role, function and identity and contribute to making it more self-contained. The complementary approach of the Local Plan and the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan will ensure the town benefits from growth to become a more vibrant and thriving place to live and work.

**Environment and Climate Change**

The impact of climate change on the town will be addressed by:

- e taking account of the risks of fluvial, groundwater and surface water flooding in new development; and
- f the incorporation of sustainable drainage systems into new developments.

The town's natural and historic built environment will be protected and enhanced.

**Meeting Housing Needs**

About 1,490 homes will be provided at Gillingham during the period 2011 – 2026. In addition to infilling and regeneration within the settlement boundary, Gillingham's housing needs will be met through:

- g the development of a SSA to the south of the town, including on land adjacent to Lodden Lakes; land east of Ham, and land south of Ham; and

**POLICY 17 (CONT'D): GILLINGHAM**

- h new homes, particularly flats above shops and offices, to support the mixed-use regeneration of land at Station Road to the south of the town centre; and
- i the development of the land to the south and south-west of Bay.

**Supporting Economic Development**

Employment needs in the town for the period up to 2026 will be met through:

- j the mixed-use regeneration of the Station Road area, to the south of the town centre, for a range of employment uses, particularly offices; and
- k the development of land to the south of Brickfields Business Park for a range of employment uses; and
- l the development of land on Kingsmead Business Park for a local centre and / or for a range of employment uses; and
- m the development of land at Neal's Yard Remedies, Peacemarsh for high value businesses; and
- n the retention of existing employment sites.

In the period up to 2026, additional retail floorspace will be brought forward:

- o with a focus on comparison retailing as part of the mixed-use regeneration of the Station Road Area; and
- p as local shops forming an integral part of the local centre to serve the SSA to the south of the town, in accordance with Policy 21.

The main focus for additional retail provision and other town centre uses will be land within the existing Town Centre and land proposed for mixed-use regeneration at Station Road.

**Infrastructure**

In the period up to 2026, grey infrastructure to support growth will include:

- q a new link road between the B3081 and B3092 through the SSA to the south of the town; and
- r the enhancement of the Railway Station as a public transport hub and the improvement of the Town Centre's pedestrian and cycle links with the railway station and Waitrose; and



**POLICY 17 (CONT'D): GILLINGHAM**

- s the integration of new areas of housing development into the existing transport network through the provision of new routes / upgrading of existing routes, including pedestrian and cycle links to key destinations, such as the town centre, employment areas, schools, and other community facilities; and
- t upgrading of foul sewers and the town's sewage treatment works.

In the period up to 2026, social infrastructure to support growth will include:

- u further improvement or expansion of the existing facilities at RiversMeet and the provision of a new community hall on the site; and
- v a new local centre to be provided as part of the SSA to the south of the town, which will include a new community hall, a new 2 form entry primary school and a new doctor's surgery; and
- w the expansion of St Mary's The Virgin Primary School and the expansion of Gillingham High School.

A network of green infrastructure will be developed in and around Gillingham focussing primarily on the corridors of the River Stour, River Lodden and the Shreen Water.

In the period up to 2026, green infrastructure to support proposed growth will include:

- x the retention, enhancement and extension of the sports pitches at and around the secondary school; and
- y the provision of a green corridor along the valley of the River Lodden extending from Brickfields Business Park through new and existing housing developments at Ham to the sports pitches north of the railway line; and,
- z the provision of formal and informal open spaces, sports pitches, play spaces and allotments in new areas of housing development, including the SSA.

## Policy 18 - Shaftesbury

### Introduction

- 8.97 Shaftesbury supports Gillingham in serving the needs of the northern part of the District and the parts of Wiltshire immediately east of the town. The historic core occupies a hilltop location and its attractive town centre supports a good range of shops and is a popular tourist destination. In recent years growth at Shaftesbury has primarily been on land to the east of the town that was allocated in the 2003 Local Plan. Most of the land here has been granted planning permission (679 dwellings in total) and its design and layout has been guided by the Development Brief<sup>257</sup> that was adopted in 2003 following extensive public consultation.
- 8.98 It has long been recognised that the potential for expansion at Shaftesbury is limited by environmental (mainly landscape and biodiversity) constraints and the limited number of potentially developable sites where the town could expand further<sup>258</sup>. It is important that the remaining development opportunities are taken forward in ways which support the role, function and identity of the town, particularly in the light of the proposed expansion of nearby Gillingham.

### Sustainable Development Strategy

- 8.99 Shaftesbury's role in supporting Gillingham is to serve the needs of the northern part of the District and neighbouring parts of Wiltshire and this will be maintained. Its distinctive character will be retained and enhanced in order to build on its growing reputation as a centre for arts, culture and tourism. The expansion of the town, particularly on land to the east, should enhance its scope for self-containment by bringing forward both housing and employment development.
- 8.100 The key spatial aspects of this strategy will be:
- focusing housing largely on the flat plateau land to the east of the town and north of the A30 with and on two smaller sites to the north of the town on either side of the A350;
  - locating B-class employment uses (including offices) on land to the south of the A30;
  - ensuring that improved public transport, walking and cycling links integrate the new development to the east of the town with the existing built-up area;
  - making the land to the east of the town centre and the west of Christy's Lane the focus for regeneration that includes the provision of housing, retail and community facilities;

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<sup>257</sup> Development Brief 2003: land to the Eastern Side of Shaftesbury, Supplementary Planning Guidance Note, North Dorset District Council (January 2003)

<sup>258</sup> More detail is provided in the Market Towns Site Selection Background Paper.

- ensuring that all development, including infilling, is accommodated within landscape and biodiversity constraints; and
  - ensuring that all development enhances the towns historic character.
- 8.101 The strategy for the town will see the building out of sites already allocated or with planning permission for housing in the early years and a more limited amount of additional greenfield land later in the plan period. Growth at Shaftesbury will be supported by the necessary infrastructure and community facilities, both to meet the needs of the expanded town and to ensure that its role and function are not adversely affected by larger-scale growth at nearby Gillingham.
- 8.102 In September 2013 the parished area of Shaftesbury together with the neighbouring parished areas of Melbury Abbas and Cann were designated as a neighbourhood area. The local community are now preparing a neighbourhood plan to address the local issues affecting the town and two parishes immediately to the south.

### Environment and Climate Change

- 8.103 The main issues for Shaftesbury resulting from climate change are likely to include: surface water flooding; and the implications of development on groundwater resources.
- 8.104 During periods of rainfall, the location and topography of the town mean that water running from the roads and other hard surfaces impacts on the drainage system. New development in the town will need to recognise this and flood mitigation measures such as sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) (in line with Policy 3 – Climate Change) will need to be included in any development.
- 8.105 Much of Shaftesbury lies within a Groundwater Source Protection Area, which needs to be protected from any threats of pollution and demands for water from groundwater sources will need to be managed. All development in the town will need to comply with the principles of the Environment Agency’s Groundwater Protection: Policy and Practice (GP3) publication<sup>259</sup> and water efficiency will be encouraged (in line with Policy 3 – Climate Change).
- 8.106 At over 718 feet (219m) above sea level, Shaftesbury is one of the highest towns in England. The elevated location has been a determining factor in the evolution of the town. Highly visible from the surrounding countryside, the steep wooded slopes of the escarpment and the surrounding countryside are protected by a number of national and local designations. These include numerous Sites of Special Scientific Interest, identified areas of fragmented ancient woodlands, Sites of Nature Conservation Importance and a Local Nature Reserve at Castle Hill. Nearby there is also the internationally protected Fontmell and Melbury Down SAC.

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<sup>259</sup> <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/library/publications/144346.aspx>

- 8.107 With evidence of a settlement in Shaftesbury as far back as Saxons times it is no surprise that the town contains a number of Scheduled Monuments and a large range of listed buildings. To protect and enhance its historic character the town centre was designated a Conservation Area in 1970 and this was subsequently extended and specific character areas were identified<sup>260</sup>.
- 8.108 The Council seeks to protect and improve the natural and historic environment of the town and all applications for growth will need to consider the impact on these features and designations.
- 8.109 Although Shaftesbury is not located within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) any development in will need to consider the potential impacts on the nearby designation and in particular the views to and from the AONB. A landscape impact assessment of potential housing sites at Blandford and Shaftesbury was undertaken in 2010, which considered potential impacts on the setting of the nearby AONB.

### **Meeting Housing Needs**

- 8.110 It is anticipated that about 1,140 dwellings will be built in Shaftesbury between 2011 and 2026. At the beginning of the plan period housing needs will be met largely through the development of land to the east of the town where planning permission has already been granted. However, increased densities on parts of the site have resulted in the dwellings agreed in the original outline permission and allocation being accommodated without the whole of the site being developed which has led to an increase in the overall capacity of the site.
- 8.111 This increased capacity, which is generally to the north of the site, together with the land immediately south of Wincombe Lane (known locally as the ‘Hopkins Land’) will result in additional development on land to the east of Shaftesbury later in the plan period. Two further small scale extensions have also been identified to the north of the town. These greenfield sites are:
- land to the south east of Wincombe Business Park; and
  - land to the west of the A350 opposite Wincombe Business Park.
- 8.112 Further housing will be delivered through the mixed use regeneration of land to the east of the town centre together with general infilling and redevelopment within the settlement boundary during the plan period.

### **Supporting Economic Development**

- 8.113 Policy 11 – The Economy outlines the District-wide employment land situation and indicates that in order for job growth to match housing growth at Shaftesbury, there is a need for a minimum of 7.1 hectares of employment land to be provided by 2026. This level of provision will support the town’s employment base and will

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<sup>260</sup> These Character Areas are identified and described the Shaftesbury section of the 2003 Local Plan.

also help to maintain its low level of out-commuting and give existing and new residents the opportunity to live and work locally.

- 8.114 A key strategic site for employment is the 7 hectares of land to the south of the A30 that is allocated in the 2003 District-wide Local Plan. This site remains ‘fit for purpose’ as it meets the needs of the market and is in a sustainable location, as demonstrated in the Council’s Employment Land Review (ELR)<sup>261</sup>, but the Council now support a more flexible approach to non B-Class uses on this and other employment sites in the District, as set out in Policy 11 - Economy.
- 8.115 In addition to new employment sites the Council will continue to support and will seek to retain the existing industrial estates (which are fully occupied) to provide job opportunities for local people. The Local Plan Part 2 will take forward the allocation of the land to the south of the A30 as a strategic employment site. Additional sites could also be allocated through the neighbourhood planning process.
- 8.116 In addition to allocated employment land, Shaftesbury has a vibrant town centre that provides a range of shops and services for local people. The historic built environment, including the famous Gold Hill, also makes the town centre a tourist and cultural destination. In the town centre there are a good range of both convenience and comparison shops together with a high proportion of gift related shops. There is one main convenience outlet on the edge of the town centre (Tesco) just off Coppice Street and a smaller supermarket (the Co-op) in the centre of town on Bell Street.
- 8.117 A Retail Study<sup>262</sup> identified needs for limited additional convenience goods floor space but a greater need for comparison goods shops in the town. Due to the compact historic layout and topographical constraints of the town there is limited scope for further retail expansion within the town centre itself, however, the retail study indicates that the mixed-use regeneration of the livestock market to the east of the town centre (beyond Tescos) and possibly also the postal sorting office on Angel Square could provide sufficient additional retail floor space to meet the town’s longer term needs<sup>263</sup>.
- 8.118 The primary and secondary shopping frontages, as defined in the 2003 Local Plan will continue to be used for development management purposes, but will be reviewed in the Local Plan Part 2. A town centre boundary, which is important in relation to national policy and the sequential approach to the location of town centre uses, will be defined as part of the Local Plan Part 2. Alternatively the review

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<sup>261</sup> Employment Land Review: Review of Existing Sites, North Dorset District Council (April 2007)

<sup>262</sup> Joint Retail Assessment: Christchurch Borough Council and East, North and Purbeck District Councils, Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (March 2008)

<sup>263</sup> These sites are shown in Appendix A of Volume 2: North Dorset Joint Retail Assessment: Christchurch Borough Council and East, North and Purbeck District Councils, Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners (March 2008)

of shopping frontages and the definition of a town centre boundary may be issues that the neighbourhood plan group choose to deal with.

- 8.119 The Council recognises the role of tourism in Shaftesbury and will consider positively opportunities for development that will complement the historic character of the town and will ensure that it remains competitive in the tourist market.

### Infrastructure

- 8.120 Two key elements of the strategy for the town are the greenfield expansion to the east and north and the mixed-use regeneration of land to the east of the town centre. To ensure these elements are integrated improved pedestrian and cycle links between the new housing and the expanded town centre are required and measures to make the existing A350 (Christy's Lane) less of a barrier to pedestrian and cycle movements need to be introduced. Making Christy's Lane less of a 'road' and more of a 'street' is identified as an opportunity in the Development Brief for land to the Eastern Side of Shaftesbury.
- 8.121 The proposed level of development at Shaftesbury for the period up to 2026 can be accommodated without the need for an outer eastern by-pass, which would relieve traffic on the existing A350. However, the line of the road (as shown in the 2003 Local Plan) remains protected from development as there is no other realistic option for traffic relief if it is required in the longer term.
- 8.122 Proposed growth at Gillingham will increase traffic flows on the B3081 between the town and Shaftesbury. The Gillingham Study<sup>264</sup> indicates that the tight bend at the junction with the Motcombe Road limits the overall capacity of the whole route between the two towns. The study recommends the provision of a new link between the B3081 and the A30 at Enmore Green<sup>265</sup>. This will both make it easier for traffic from Gillingham to gain access to the A30 and improve road safety and amenity at the Shaftesbury end of the B3081.
- 8.123 Parking has been identified as an issue by local residents and this will be examined either through the Local Plan Part 2 or in the neighbourhood plan being produced for Shaftesbury, Melbury Abbas and Cann.
- 8.124 In terms of social infrastructure for the town the need for a new community hall has been identified to serve the whole of Shaftesbury, but predominately to meet the needs of an incoming population. Land to the east of the town centre has the potential for regeneration which could accommodate a community hall. Any regeneration project may wish to rationalise the existing provision of halls in the

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<sup>264</sup> Transport issues are discussed in Section 6 of Assessing the Growth Potential of Gillingham, Dorset, Atkins (December 2009)

<sup>265</sup> This link is currently proposed under Policy SB17 of the North Dorset District Wide Local Plan, (First Revision) North Dorset District Council (January 2003)

town that are owned or used by different organisations. The site to the east of the town centre, that includes the livestock market, Shaftesbury Football Club and the Youth Centre, not only benefits from being centrally located but if coupled with enhanced pedestrian and cycle links would help to promote social integration between the new development to the east of the town and the existing community. However other locations for a community hall may be considered if the above approach cannot be taken forward where there is support from the local community.

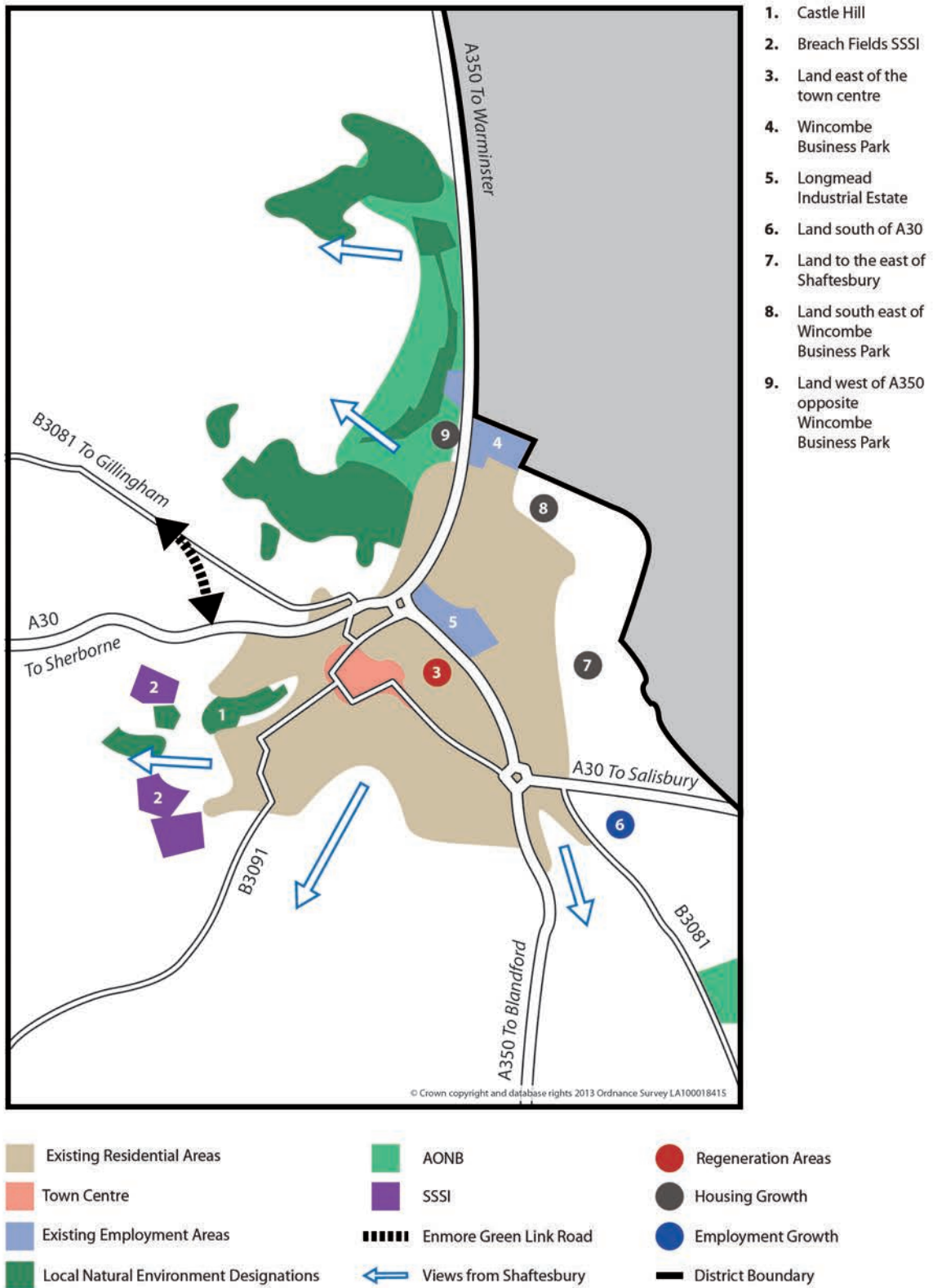
- 8.125 The need for improved further education and training facilities, especially for young people, to develop local skills and to reduce the need to travel for such purposes was also identified by the community. Yeovil College currently have a campus in the town at Wincombe Business Park that offers courses in plumbing, security, electrical installation, construction, hairdressing, beauty therapy, health and social care and transition to work (Foundation Learning). The site caters for 14-16 year olds, full-time students, apprentices and adults. Although in recent years the campus has expanded and redeveloped the Council continue to support the expansion of further education facilities in the town as this would not only serve the local population but would improve further education provision in the District as a whole. The preferred approach for any new facilities is for them to be centrally located, and ideally part of a larger regeneration scheme, but the provision of facilities on separate or in different locations would be considered.
- 8.126 With the proposed growth of Shaftesbury the extension of existing primary and secondary schools will be required. At the time of preparing this plan the preferred approach of Dorset County Council, the education provider, is for a new two form of entry primary school in the town together with an expansion of facilities at the secondary school. A site for the new primary school has yet to be confirmed but additional capacity at a primary school level will be required by 2016. The site for the new primary school site will be allocated in the Local Plan Part 2.
- 8.127 The growth in Shaftesbury will also require additional medical provision in the town. This can either be provided through expansion of the existing medical centre or with the development of a new surgery. Any final decision on medical provision will be a matter for the LCCG to decide and if necessary land can be allocated through the Local Plan Part 2 or the neighbourhood planning process. The Westminster Memorial Hospital in Abbey Walk will be retained on its current site.
- 8.128 The multiple benefits of green infrastructure and green spaces in delivering quality of life and quality of place have long been recognised and are explored in more detail in Policy 15. In Shaftesbury there are a number of attractive and accessible recreational spaces ranging from the centrally located Barton Hill recreation ground to the recreation ground at Wincombe Lane that serves the new development to the east of the town. However, due to the environmental constraints of the town opportunities for new formal recreation are limited, especially for teenagers. The

retention and improvement of existing areas for formal recreation will be supported.

- 8.129 The setting of the town is enhanced by its informal open spaces, with the open and wooded areas around the Slopes being of particular importance to its historic, hill top character. New areas of open space will be created in association with the development to the east of the town.
- 8.130 The Council will seek to conserve and manage existing green spaces and aims to improve the connectivity, quality and functionality of such sites particularly in relation to relieving pressure on nearby high value wildlife sites at Shaftesbury in line with Policy 15 – Green Infrastructure. The Council will work with the neighbourhood plan group in developing a green infrastructure strategy for the town and, if required, additional land will be allocated either through the Local Plan Part 2 document or through the neighbourhood planning process.



Figure 8.3 – Shaftesbury Inset Diagram



**POLICY 18: SHAFTESBURY****Sustainable Development Strategy**

Shaftesbury will maintain its role in supporting Gillingham to serve the needs of the northern part of the District through:

- a development and regeneration within the existing built up area;
- b extensions, primarily of housing, to the east and north; and
- c an extension to meet employment needs to the south east.

Growth will be taken forward in ways which respect the town's environmental constraints, support its role, function and identity, and contribute to making it more self-contained. Shaftesbury's distinctive natural and historic character will be retained and enhanced and the town's reputation as a centre for arts, culture and tourism will be reinforced.

**Environment and Climate Change**

The impact of climate change on the town will be addressed with measures put in place to reduce risk through:

- d the provision of sustainable drainage systems in all developments; and
- e the protection and management of valuable groundwater resources; and

The town's natural and historic built environments will be protected and enhanced.

**Meeting Housing Needs**

About 1,140 homes will be provided at Shaftesbury during the period 2011 – 2026. In addition to infilling and regeneration within the settlement boundary, Shaftesbury's housing needs will be met through the development of land:

- f to the east of the town (including the Hopkins land); and
- g to the south east of Wincombe Business Park; and
- h to the west of the A350 opposite Wincombe Business Park.

**Supporting Economic Development**

Employment needs of the town for the period up to 2026 will be met through:

- i the development of land to the south of the A30; and
- j the development of vacant sites on existing industrial estates; and
- k the retention of existing employment sites.

**POLICY 18 (CONT'D): SHAFTESBURY**

Mixed use regeneration will be encouraged on land within and to the east of the existing town centre. Within the town's settlement boundary, opportunities for tourist-related development that is sensitive to the landscape and historic setting of the town will be considered favourably.

**Infrastructure**

In the period up to 2026, grey infrastructure to support growth will include:

- l the provision of a new road link from the B3081 to the A30 at Enmore Green, north of Shaftesbury; and
- m improved walking and cycling links between the town centre and residential development to the east of the town.

The route of the Shaftesbury Outer Eastern By-pass will continue to be protected from development that would prejudice its implementation in the longer term.

In the period up to 2026 social infrastructure to support growth will include:

- n the provision of a new community hall for the town; and
- o a new two form of entry primary school, an extension to the secondary school and expanded further and adult education provision in the town; and
- p a new doctor's surgery, or the expansion or relocation of the existing doctor's surgery.

A network of green infrastructure will be developed in and around Shaftesbury focussing on linking existing sites, such as the Slopes, and providing new sites and links to serve the residents of both the new and existing development in the town. This will include:

- q informal recreation space associated with the development of sites to the east of the town to reduce recreational pressure on nearby high value wildlife sites.

## Policy 19 - Sturminster Newton

### Introduction

- 8.131 Sturminster Newton comprises the main town of 'Sturminster' on the northern side of the River Stour and the smaller village of 'Newton' to the south. The settlement, together with Stalbridge and Marnhull, provide services to the rural west of the District.
- 8.132 In the recent past, Sturminster Newton has experienced moderate levels of growth including housing on greenfield land on the northern edge of Sturminster and the allocation of a large new employment site (Rolls Mill, now known as North Dorset Business Park) on the western edge of Newton. The housing has largely been completed but much of the business park remains undeveloped.
- 8.133 Historically, Sturminster Newton played an important role in serving the surrounding agricultural hinterland and once was the home of the largest livestock market in Britain. This closed and was demolished in 1998 and was joined shortly thereafter by the closure of the town's prize-winning creamery. The local community, recognising the impact this would have, decided to create a new heart for the town and in 2008 the Exchange, a multi-purpose community building, was opened with its associated medical centre, supermarket and small-scale office and retail development.

### Sustainable Development Strategy

- 8.134 The role of Sturminster Newton in serving the communities in the west of the District will be maintained through limited growth. Housing development will be of a smaller scale than at the three other main towns reflecting Sturminster Newton's size and role as a local service centre.
- 8.135 The key spatial aspects of this strategy will be:
- focusing housing development within the existing built-up area and in locations close to the town centre, with some more limited peripheral greenfield expansion to meet longer term needs;
  - continuing the regeneration of the town centre to include an improved range of services and employment opportunities alongside new housing development;
  - developing North Dorset Business Park to meet the employment needs of communities in the western part of the District; and
  - extending the North Dorset Trailway to Stalbridge.
- 8.136 All development will be supported by the necessary grey, social and green infrastructure and will be guided by the Sturminster Newton Town Design

Statement (TDS), which has been adopted by the Council as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)<sup>266</sup>.

- 8.137 In addition, there is also the Station Road Area Design and Development Brief<sup>267</sup>. This document helped to shape the proposals for the re-development of the former Creamery site and remains a key document in guiding the mixed-use regeneration of the Station Road area.
- 8.138 To stimulate and guide development at North Dorset Business Park, SturQuest (the local community partnership) commissioned a design and development brief<sup>268</sup>. Endorsed by the Council in 2012, the brief outlines the range of employment uses that are appropriate for the site. It is hoped that the brief will provide a basis for the community to work with landowners and developers to ensure that a high quality development that respects the character of Newton and Sturminster Newton is delivered on the site.

### Environment and Climate Change

- 8.139 Some of the effects of climate change on Sturminster Newton are likely to be: an increased frequency and severity of flooding from the River Stour; and increased flooding from surface water, particularly after severe rainfall events. New development in the town will need to recognise these issues and flood mitigation measures, such as sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) (in line with Policy 3) will need to be included in any development.
- 8.140 Leading the way with alternative means of energy generation, in 2013 the town became the first on the River Stour to have an operational hydro-powered electricity generator at nearby Fiddleford Mill.
- 8.141 The town is situated on a low limestone ridge in a meander of the River Stour with the flat and pastoral riverside meadows forming a key feature of historic and cultural importance to the town. From the town there are fine views both east and west out towards the distinctive rolling clay vales of the Blackmore Vale. To the south of the town is Piddles Wood; an ancient woodland that is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). In the undulating farmland of the Blackmore Vale there are numerous Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) and in the town itself is Butts Pond Local Natural Reserve (LNR).
- 8.142 Through the centuries the landscape has helped shape the town from its origin as a historic fording point on the Stour to the use of locally distinctive building materials such as stone and brick in the construction of its buildings. Sturminster Newton

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<sup>266</sup> Sturminster Newton Town Design Statement Supplementary Planning Document, prepared for SturQuest by Matrix Partnership (July 2008)

<sup>267</sup> Station Road Area Design & Development Brief, prepared for SturQuest by Matrix Partnership (April 2008)

<sup>268</sup> North Dorset Business Park Design and Development Brief, prepared for SturQuest by Matrix Partnership (April 2012)

was recorded as a town in Saxon times, but it was not until the 16<sup>th</sup> Century that the distinctive six-arch bridge and embankment crossed the flood plain. Widened in 1820, the bridge is one of a number of Scheduled Monuments that can be found in and around the town.

- 8.143 The historic core of the town, with its many 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century thatched cottages, stone buildings and brick structures, lies within Sturminster Newton Conservation Area. Designated in 1976, the Conservation Area seeks to not only protect the character of the town's historic core, but to also preserve the town's setting and its relationship with the River Stour.
- 8.144 From 1863 the Somerset and Dorset Railway ran through the town until 1966 when it was dismantled as part of the Beeching Axe. The station and goods yard were demolished in the mid-1970s and the area was transformed into the Station Road car park and Railway Gardens. Some of the goods sheds (one of which is now occupied by the home furnishings retailer Streeters) remain.
- 8.145 The Council will seek to protect and enhance the natural and historic environment of the town and all applications for growth will need to consider the impact on these features and designations.

### Meeting Housing Needs

- 8.146 It is anticipated that about 380 dwellings will be built in Sturminster Newton between 2011 and 2026. Infilling and redevelopment within the settlement boundary will continue during the plan period, especially within the 'Central Regeneration Area' identified in the TDS. This lies between the historic 'old town', south of the former railway line and the 'new town' that lies to the north. Within this area various development opportunities were identified, a number of which have since been developed. Brownfield opportunities remaining include:
- the Station Road area including the Station Road Car Park, Streeters, Hansons and the Factory Shop;
  - the vacant plot at the junction of B3091 and Station Road; and
  - the builders yard at the junction of the B3091 and B3092.
- 8.147 Three greenfield sites have also been identified for housing development, which are:
- the fields on Market Hill, immediately north of the former Livestock Market site, that are allocated for housing in the 2003 Local Plan;
  - land to the north of Northfields, off Honeymead Lane on the northern edge of the town; and
  - land to the east of the former Creamery site (now known Stourcastle) on the eastern edge of the town.
- 8.148 Development on all of these sites will need to include pedestrian and cycle links to key destinations in the town centre and with the schools.

- 8.149 The changing appearance and function of Sturminster Newton and its relationship with the surrounding countryside are major challenges for the future. The principles, policies and concepts produced by the local community through various initiatives (such as the TDS, design briefs and potentially a neighbourhood plan) will be fundamental to managing change, along with the policies in this Local Plan.

### Supporting Economic Development

- 8.150 Policy 11 – Economy outlines the District-wide employment land situation and indicates that there is a need for about 2.4 hectares of employment land to support growth at Sturminster Newton in the period up to 2026. The small town of Stalbridge and the large village of Marnhull are located nearby, so any employment land at Sturminster Newton would also serve these settlements.
- 8.151 In 2012 study<sup>269</sup> showed that 6.3 hectares of employment land was available at North Dorset Business Park (formerly Roll's Mill) on the western edge of Newton. This combined with the re-use and regeneration of other employment sites in Sturminster, is more than sufficient to meet local economic development needs in the period up to 2026.
- 8.152 North Dorset Business Park has been an allocated employment site for a number of years, but has remained largely undeveloped. SturQuest (the local community partnership) produced a design and development brief in 2012<sup>270</sup>, which included proposals such as a 'food-based' cluster on the frontage of this site. The planning permission, which has since been granted includes a masterplan for the site and in 2013 the Homes and Community Agency, together with the owners (North Dorset District Council and Dorset County Council), secured funding to support the installation of key infrastructure. Any proposals that come forward on North Dorset Business Park should reflect both the design and development brief and the masterplan for the site.
- 8.153 In addition to the new employment site, the Council will continue to support and will seek to retain existing industrial estates to provide job opportunities for local people and space for local businesses. The Local Plan Part 2 will take forward the allocation of the land at North Dorset Business Park as a strategic employment site. Additional sites could also be allocated through the neighbourhood planning process.
- 8.154 Sturminster Newton is a thriving market town with a shopping area concentrated in the Market Place and Market Cross area of the historic town. The shopping area also extends along Station Road and beyond, with retailers such as Streeters,

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<sup>269</sup> Bournemouth Dorset Poole Workspace Study: Employment Land Projections 2012 Update, Dorset County Council (March 2012)

<sup>270</sup> North Dorset Business Park Design and Development Brief, prepared for SturQuest by Matrix Partnership (April 2012)

Hansons, The Original Factory Shop and Harts. The retailing presence in this area has been consolidated with the development of the Exchange, Co-op store and smaller retail units.

- 8.155 The Retail Study<sup>271</sup> identified needs for additional comparison and convenience goods floorspace at Sturminster Newton, but the levels of provision will not require new retail allocations. It is envisaged that the need for additional floorspace could be met by: making better use of vacant premises; the conversion of other properties within the primary shopping area to shops; and through the mixed use regeneration of the Station Road area.
- 8.156 There are a number of existing small-scale retail warehouse units in the Station Road Area and an equivalent level of retail floorspace will need be provided as part of any regeneration scheme. The development brief envisages the relocation of the retail warehouse units to land at the junction of Station Road and Barnes Close, which will effectively extend the town centre eastwards along Station Road. This will enable the creation of a new square opposite The Exchange building, providing an attractive area for weekly markets and other community events.
- 8.157 The primary and secondary shopping frontages, as defined in the 2003 Local Plan will continue to be used for development management purposes, but will be reviewed in the Local Plan Part 2. A town centre boundary, which is important in relation to national policy and the sequential approach to the location of town centre uses, will be defined as part of the Local Plan Part 2. Alternatively the review of shopping frontages and the definition of a town centre boundary may be issues that the community decide to deal with, in the event that they prepare a neighbourhood plan.

### Infrastructure

- 8.158 Improved pedestrian and cycle links between new areas of housing, the town centre, mixed-use regeneration in the Station Road area, schools and employment sites, including North Dorset Business Park, will need to be provided.
- 8.159 The North Dorset Trailway extends south from Sturminster Newton to Blandford Forum on the route of the former Somerset and Dorset Railway. At present there is no link towards Stalbridge to the north-west. The Trailway currently ends in the Station Road Car Park, but the redevelopment of this area in accordance with the development brief would require an extension of the Trailway as part of any regeneration scheme. Beyond Railway Gardens, the redevelopment of the builders' yard at the junction of the B3091 and B3092 for housing will enable the first part of the route north from Sturminster Newton to be put in place. A bridge over the River Stour will also be required to join up with existing public rights of way, which

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<sup>271</sup> Joint Retail Assessment: Christchurch Borough Council and East, North and Purbeck District Councils, Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (March 2008)



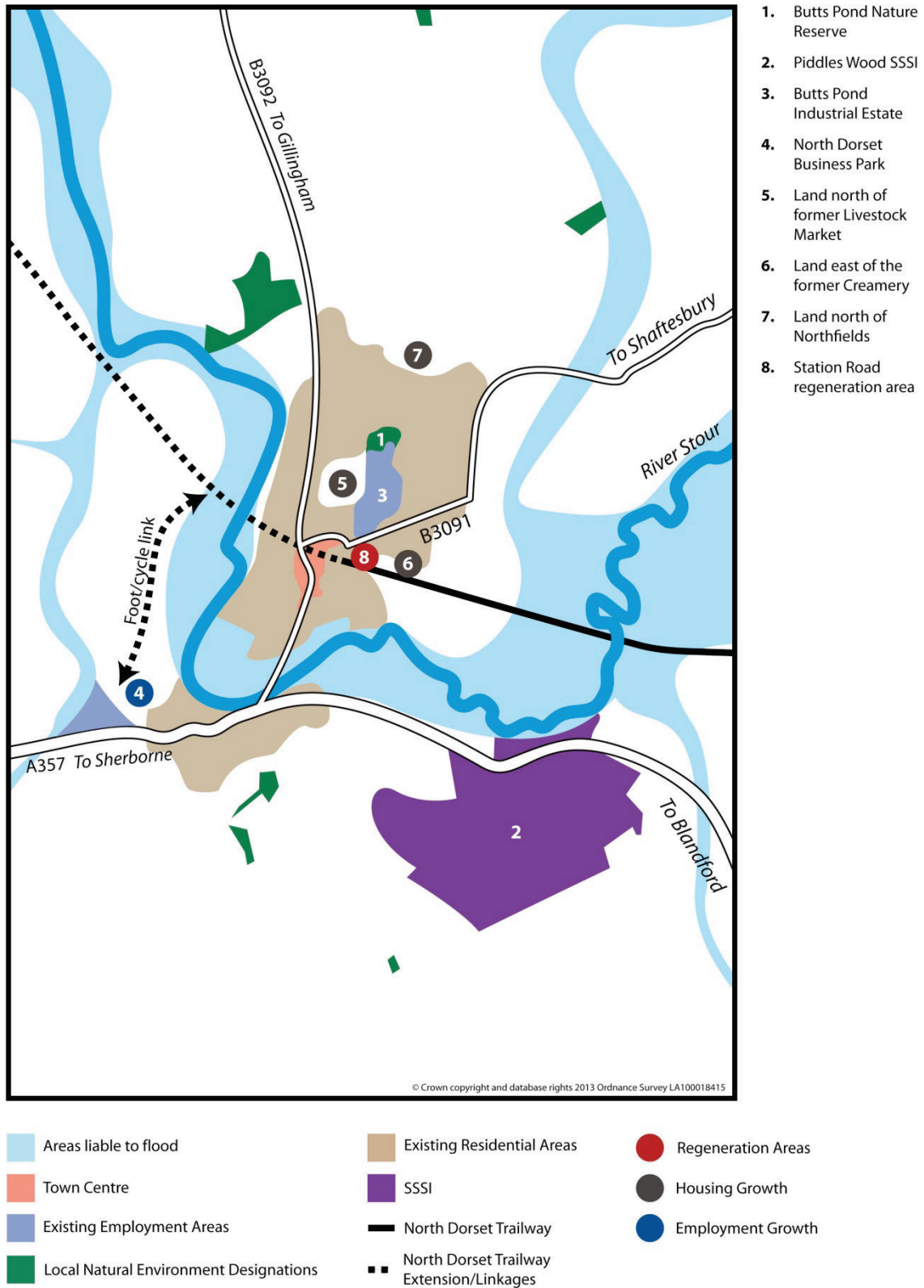
can be used to form pedestrian and cycle links between Sturminster and North Dorset Business Park.

- 8.160 The Exchange building with its meeting facilities, cinema/theatre and space for community events acts as a hub for the community both in the town and the wider area. The building also incorporates some of the history associated with the livestock market, reminding the town of its heritage and links with rural life. The Exchange has established the town as an important centre with a new cultural and community role.
- 8.161 With the Exchange, improvements to the Trailway, the proposed food hub at North Dorset Business Park and the annual Cheese Festival, there is potential to increase the tourist trade in the town to benefit of the local economy.
- 8.162 The proposed growth of Sturminster will require an extension of the existing primary and secondary schools. For Sturminster Newton High School growth will be managed on the existing site. However to accommodate the additional half form of entry required at primary level, Dorset County Council may consider a new site for the William Barnes School.
- 8.163 The town is proud of its community managed leisure centre, located off Honeymead Lane, as it offers a range of opportunities for sports and recreation for local residents. Its retention and, where necessary, upgrading and expansion will be sought as the town grows.
- 8.164 However, the growth of the town will not require any additional medical provision as the new purpose built medical centre at the Exchange with its outreach surgery in Marnhull have sufficient capacity to accommodate further growth.
- 8.165 The multiple benefits of green infrastructure and green spaces in delivering quality of life and quality of place have long been recognised and are explored in more detail in Policy 15 – Green Infrastructure. In Sturminster Newton, the principal open spaces within the town are identified in the TDS. They are:
- the principal recreation ground at the end of Ricketts Lane;
  - Railway Gardens with its fine view of Hambleton Hill;
  - the Local Nature Reserve and fields at Butts Pond; and
  - the open space in the Rixon development that includes a children play area.
- 8.166 Further open space will be sought on the Market Hill allocated housing site to provide a ‘buffer’ between Butt’s Pond Industrial Estate and the proposed new residential development.
- 8.167 Together these open spaces, the Trailway and existing and proposed footpaths and cycleway routes will form the basis of the green infrastructure strategy for the town. They will help to connect Sturminster to the wider countryside and to important historic sites such as Sturminster Mill, the protected environments at

Piddles Wood and Butt's Pond and surrounding Scheduled Monuments such as Fiddleford Manor.

- 8.168 Allotments are also an important element of a green infrastructure strategy and offer recreational and health benefits to local residents. In Sturminster Newton there are currently two allotment sites. The main site is off Filbridge Rise and there is a smaller site to the rear of Chinnocks. As part of the greenfield housing allocation on land to the east of the former creamery site new allotments will be provided on the edge of the site at the end of Elm Close.
- 8.169 The Council will seek to conserve and manage existing green spaces and aims to improve the connectivity, quality and functionality of such sites and links at Sturminster Newton in line with Policy 15 – Green Infrastructure. The Council will work with the local community in developing a green infrastructure strategy for the town and, if required, additional land will be allocated either through the Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations document or through the neighbourhood planning process.

Figure 8.4 – Sturminster Newton Inset Diagram



**POLICY 19: STURMINSTER NEWTON****Sustainable Development Strategy**

Sturminster Newton will continue to function as the main service centre in the rural west of the district through:

- a development and redevelopment within the existing built up area; and
- b development of the greenfield land at Market Hill to the north of the former livestock market; and
- c small greenfield extensions to the north and east of Sturminster; and
- d development of North Dorset Business Park at Newton.

All developments will need to reflect the policies, principles and design concepts identified through the Town Design Statement and design and development briefs produced by the local community.

**Environment and Climate Change**

The impact of climate change on the town will be addressed with measures put in place to reduce the risk of flooding from the River Stour and from surface water within the town through the provision of sustainable drainage systems in all development.

The town's natural and historic built environments will be protected and enhanced.

**Meeting Housing Needs**

About 380 dwellings will be provided at Sturminster Newton during the period 2011 – 2026. Housing needs will be met through:

- e infilling and redevelopment within the settlement boundary, including the redevelopment of land in and around the Station Road area;

together with the development of the following greenfield sites:

- f land to the north of the former livestock market at Market Hill; and
- g land to the to the north of Northfields; and
- h land to the east of the former Creamery site.

**POLICY 19 (CONT'D): STURMINSTER NEWTON****Supporting Economic Development**

Employment needs in the town for the period up to 2026 will be met through:

- i the development of North Dorset Business Park; and
- j the retention of Butts Pond Industrial Estate.

Any development on North Dorset Business Park should be designed to reflect both the design and development brief and the masterplan for the site.

The main focus for additional retail provision and other town centre uses will be the existing town centre and the redevelopment of the Station Road area. Any scheme for the Station Road area should be designed in accordance with the design and development brief for the area.

**Infrastructure**

In the period up to 2026, grey infrastructure to support growth will include:

- k improved walking and cycling links between the town centre and new developments; and
- l the extension of the North Dorset Trailway to the north west of the town, including the provision of a pedestrian / cycle bridge over the River Stour; and
- m the improvement of pedestrian / cycle links between Sturminster and North Dorset Business Park.

In the period up to 2026, social infrastructure to support growth will include:

- n the promotion of The Exchange building as a community and cultural hub; and
- o the retention and expansion of the leisure centre; and
- p an extension to the secondary school and expansion and possible relocation of the primary school.

A network of green infrastructure will be developed in and around Sturminster town and Newton village based on existing sites, such as Butts Pond Local Nature Reserve, and strategic links such as the North Dorset Trailway.

In the period up to 2026, green infrastructure to support growth will include:

- q a green buffer between Butt's Pond Industrial Estate and new housing development on land north of the former livestock market; and
- r additional allotments on land between Elm Close and the Trailway.

## Policy 20 - The Countryside

### National Policy

- 8.170 National core planning principles<sup>272</sup> recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the need to support thriving rural communities within it.
- 8.171 The Government considers that planning policies should take a positive approach to sustainable new development to support economic growth in rural areas.<sup>273</sup> New dwellings should be located where they will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities and new isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided unless there are special circumstances.<sup>274</sup>
- 8.172 National policy also gives local people a powerful set of tools through Community Rights to get the right types of development for their community, although the ambition of the neighbourhood should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the Local Plan.<sup>275</sup>

### Definition of the Countryside

- 8.173 For the purposes of the Local Plan, the countryside is defined as all land outside the settlement boundaries of the District's four main towns. The settlement boundaries defined around Stalbridge and the District's villages (in the North Dorset District Wide Local Plan 2003) will no longer be used for development management purposes. Countryside policies will apply to these settlements unless new settlement boundaries are defined in neighbourhood plans or the North Dorset Local Plan – Part 2.

### Sustainable Development Strategy

- 8.174 Policy 2 – Core Spatial Strategy Core Spatial Strategy establishes that in the countryside (including Stalbridge and all the villages) the focus is on meeting local, rather than strategic, needs. The Council considers that this 'light touch' approach in the rural areas is appropriate, given that the growth to meet local needs will be largely 'additional' to the strategic growth in the District's four main towns. This approach enables a 'fine grained' assessment of the needs of Stalbridge and the villages to be made by local communities, which can then be addressed primarily through neighbourhood planning.

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<sup>272</sup> Paragraph 17, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

<sup>273</sup> Paragraph 28, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

<sup>274</sup> Paragraph 55, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

<sup>275</sup> Paragraph 184, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

- 8.175 Although the emphasis of policy in the countryside is on restraint, the Council will permit some forms of development to support the rural economy and meet essential rural needs in line with the strategic policies for the District as a whole.
- 8.176 This will be achieved by:
- identifying, as far as possible, those types of development that may be appropriate in the countryside and where necessary developing more detailed policies to ensure that certain types of development are carefully managed; and
  - establishing a test of ‘overriding need’ which any other form of development would need to meet in order to be acceptable in principle in the countryside.

### Policies Guiding Development in the Countryside

- 8.177 Any development in the countryside needs to be sensitively handled so as not to undermine the general policy of restraint and to ensure no impact on areas of high wildlife value as set out in Policy 4 - Natural Environment and Policy 15 - Green Infrastructure. A breakdown of the types of development that may be appropriate in the countryside is given below and the policies in the Local Plan that guide development in the countryside are summarised in Figure 8.5.

### Environment and Climate Change

- 8.178 To mitigate climate change the Council supports the production of energy from renewable and low carbon sources as set out in Policy 3 – Climate Change. Due to their nature some renewable or low carbon energy developments may be large scale and require a countryside location. Development Management Policy 22 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy sets out the Council’s approach to development proposals for, or that incorporate, renewable or low carbon energy.

### Meeting Housing Needs

- 8.179 In Stalbridge and the villages the focus is on housing to support local communities, which will be delivered primarily through neighbourhood planning or, where a community has chosen to ‘opt in’, through the Local Plan Part 2. However, countryside policies also permit housing in rural areas to meet local needs in certain circumstances.
- 8.180 Where a local need for rural exception affordable housing can be demonstrated, new affordable housing may be allowed by Policy 9: Rural Exception Schemes. This policy also includes criteria setting out when ‘small numbers’ of market housing may be permitted in such schemes.
- 8.181 ‘Special circumstances’ when new isolated homes may be permitted in the countryside are defined in national policy. In line with national policy, the Council may permit isolated:
- occupational dwellings, where functional and financial tests demonstrate an essential need;

- dwellings that would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of a heritage asset; and
- dwellings that re-use redundant or disused buildings, where an economic development or community use would not be feasible, and that would lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting.

8.182 National policy requires the Council to plan for the accommodation needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople, recognising that for such development, a countryside location may be appropriate. Provision is being made for sites and pitches through the Dorset-wide Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD), as discussed in Policy 10 – Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Policy 26 - Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople sets out the criteria that will be used to determine planning applications for such developments.

### Supporting Economic Development

8.183 In Stalbridge and the villages new employment sites will be delivered primarily through neighbourhood planning or, where a community has chosen to 'opt in', through the Local Plan Part 2. However, countryside policies also support economic development in rural areas in other ways.

8.184 In the countryside the Council encourages:

- the re-use of existing buildings for employment purposes, including commercial community facilities, such as village shops;
- the redevelopment or limited expansion of existing employment sites for employment purposes;
- equine related developments; and
- rural tourist accommodation in sustainable locations, or which supports an existing farm business.

### Infrastructure

8.185 In Stalbridge and the villages the provision of new or upgraded non-commercial community facilities (such as village halls, places of worship and cemeteries) would help to address the issue of poor access to services in the countryside and help to meet the needs of the District's rural communities. Policy 14 – Social Infrastructure encourages such facilities in, or adjacent to, the built-up areas of Stalbridge and the villages. Policy 27 – Retention of Community Facilities also encourages the retention of both commercial and non-commercial community facilities.



Figure 8.5 – Policies Guiding Development in the Countryside

Local Plan Section	Type of Development	Main Policy	Development Management Policy
Environment and Climate Change	Renewable energy schemes	3	22
Meeting Housing Needs	Rural exception schemes	9	-
	Occupational dwellings	6	33
	Re-use of heritage assets	5/6	29
	Re-use of redundant or disused buildings	11	29
	Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	12	26
Supporting Economic Development	The reuse of existing rural buildings	11	29
	Redevelopment or expansion of existing employment sites	11	30
	Equine-related developments	11	32
	Rural tourist accommodation	11	31
Infrastructure	Retention of community facilities (commercial and non-commercial)	14	27
	New community facilities (non-commercial)	14	-

### Overriding Need

- 8.186 For any other type of development to be acceptable in principle in the countryside, the Council will need to be convinced that there is an overriding need for a countryside location. For some types of development, for example isolated dwellings of exceptional quality or innovative design<sup>276</sup>, the case for overriding need is supported by national policy, but for others the Council will assess the acceptability of the principle on its merits.
- 8.187 The Council may consider there to be an overriding need for a countryside location for certain types of agriculture<sup>277</sup>, forestry or horticulture developments, especially if they are part of a wider farm diversification project.

<sup>276</sup> As set out in Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

<sup>277</sup> Agriculture is defined in the Glossary

- 8.188 Grey, social or green infrastructure projects, which may be considered to have an overriding need for a countryside location include:
- grey infrastructure projects such as electricity pylons, gas or water pipelines and telecommunications installations;
  - certain social infrastructure projects such as essential additional facilities or accommodation for existing institutions, such as independent schools; and
  - formal and informal outdoor facilities for sport and recreation and other uses, such as allotments, that are important elements of a green infrastructure strategy especially where they are important to facilitate access to the countryside for the residents of towns and villages.
- 8.189 The acceptability of any scheme put forward in the countryside on the basis of ‘overriding need’ would also be considered against all other relevant planning policies in the development plan, including those relating to sustainability, design, amenity and the protection of the environment.

### Neighbourhood Plans

- 8.190 Countryside policies apply to Stalbridge and all of the District’s villages but the production of neighbourhood plans will also enable communities to take forward proposals to meet local needs and influence the planning of the area in which they live and work. Neighbourhood plans can help local communities:
- to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood;
  - choose where new homes, shops, offices and other development should be built (in addition to development that is permitted under countryside policies, as discussed above);
  - identify and protect Local Green Spaces<sup>278</sup> or include policies to protect local character; and
  - influence what new buildings should look like.
- 8.191 Neighbourhood plans are about meeting local needs, which could be achieved in different ways. Some communities may seek to meet local needs by re-instating or reviewing settlement boundaries to encourage infilling. Others may prefer to meet local needs by allocating a specific site for housing or employment.

### Opting In

- 8.192 Communities in Stalbridge and all the District’s villages will be able to ‘opt in’ to the Local Plan Part 2, as an alternative to meeting local needs for housing, employment or other forms of development through countryside policies and neighbourhood planning.

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<sup>278</sup> Paragraphs 76 and 77, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

- 8.193 This option is available to local communities who may recognise that they have development needs but do not have the resources to take forward growth or have encountered difficulties in getting a neighbourhood plan adopted.
- 8.194 In the event that a local community chose this course of action, the Council will work closely with local people to develop proposals that enable them to meet their needs.

## **POLICY 20: THE COUNTRYSIDE**

Development in the countryside (including Stalbridge and the villages) outside the defined settlement boundaries of Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton will only be permitted if:

- a it is of a type appropriate in the countryside, as set out in the relevant policies of the Local Plan, summarised in **Figure 8.5**; or
- b for any other type of development, it can be demonstrated that there is an ‘overriding need’ for it to be located in the countryside.

## 9. Gillingham Southern Extension

### Introduction

- 9.1 The Council has worked closely with landowners, developers, key stakeholders and the local community over a number of years to develop the proposals for the southern extension of Gillingham. This approach reflects national policy, which seeks to encourage early and meaningful engagement in plan making, stating that “a wide section of the community should be proactively engaged, so that Local Plans, as far as possible, reflect a collective vision and a set of agreed priorities for the sustainable development of the area...”<sup>279</sup>.
- 9.2 The community was engaged in the production of the report “Assessing the Growth Potential of Gillingham”<sup>280</sup>, which identified that the town had the economic potential, the capacity (in terms of suitable and available sites) and a relative lack of constraints to enable it to accommodate significant growth. The study examined a range of potential spatial options and the scenario for growth which was considered most sustainable was the ‘southern focus’<sup>281</sup>.
- 9.3 The Council used that report to draw up proposals for development to the south of the town in its draft Core Strategy<sup>282</sup>. Following public consultation, the Council decided to develop a more detailed policy to take forward growth in the form of a Strategic Site Allocation (SSA)<sup>283</sup>, which required further consultation.
- 9.4 The Council consulted on the options for the southern extension in autumn 2012<sup>284</sup> and held a subsequent ‘concept plan workshop’ with landowners, developers, key stakeholders and representatives of the local community in March 2013<sup>285</sup>.
- 9.5 The consultation undertaken to date has helped to establish a ‘collective vision and a set of agreed priorities’ for the sustainable development of the southern extension, which are set out in Policy 21 – Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation.

<sup>279</sup> Paragraph 155, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

<sup>280</sup> Assessing the Growth Potential of Gillingham, Dorset, Atkins (December 2009)

<sup>281</sup> Assessing the Growth Potential of Gillingham, Dorset, Atkins (December 2009), page 46, Figure 4.5.

<sup>282</sup> Draft Core Policy 16, The New Plan for North Dorset – The Draft Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD, North Dorset District Council (March 2010)

<sup>283</sup> The decision to take forward growth to the south of Gillingham in the form of a Strategic Site Allocation was made by the Council’s Cabinet on 13 June 2011.

<sup>284</sup> Public Consultation on Options for the Southern Extension of Gillingham, North Dorset District Council (October 2012)

<sup>285</sup> The ‘concept plan workshop’ was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2013 and facilitated by the Homes and Communities Agency’s Advisory Team for Large Applications (ATLAS). The results of the workshop are presented in - Gillingham Southern Extension Concept Plan Workshop March 2013: ATLAS Report on the Workshop, ATLAS (July 2013)

- 9.6 The wider policy context is provided by:
- Policy 2 – Core Spatial Strategy, which concentrates growth at the District’s four main towns;
  - Policy 6 – Housing Distribution, which establishes that 35% of the District’s housing growth should take place at Gillingham, largely in the form of a SSA; and
  - Policy 17 – Gillingham, which provides the overall strategic policy framework for the town.
- 9.7 A neighbourhood plan is being produced for the town and the Neighbourhood Area covers the entire parished area of Gillingham, including the SSA site. The Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan will need to be in general conformity with Policy 21 and all other policies in the Local Plan Part 1.
- 9.8 The local community has also produced a town design statement (TDS)<sup>286</sup>, which describes the distinctive local features in Gillingham and includes a set of development guidelines. The TDS has both informed the proposals for the southern extension and will provide an invaluable ‘evidence base’ study for the preparation of the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan.

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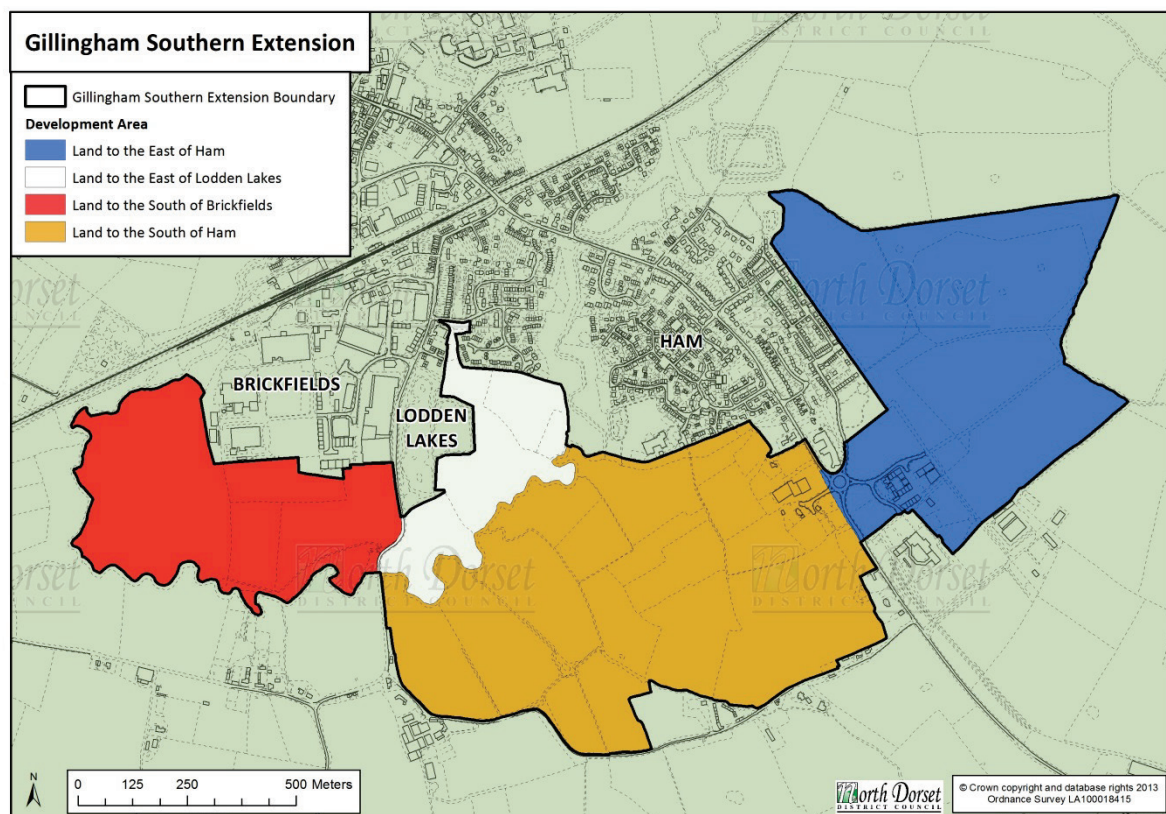
<sup>286</sup> Gillingham Town Design Statement, Gillingham Town Design Statement Steering Group (June 2012)

## Policy 21 - Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation

### Introduction

- 9.9 The southern extension of Gillingham will take the form of a sustainable mixed-use development that will expand the built-up area of the town to the south and east. The eastern edge of the southern extension follows the floodplains of the River Lodden and the Fern Brook. Cole Street Lane forms the southern edge of the proposed development and the floodplain of the River Stour, south of the railway line, forms the western edge.
- 9.10 Within these boundaries are four main areas proposed for development, which are:
- Land to the east of Ham, including part of Park Farm;
  - Land to the south of Ham, including part of Newhouse Farm;
  - Land to the east of Lodden Lakes; and
  - Land to the south of Brickfields Business Park.

Figure 9.1 - Four Main Areas Proposed for Development



- 9.11 The southern extension will be accommodated within these boundaries and areas and will be linked to the existing town by improved transport links and an enhanced green infrastructure network. The southern extension will be developed mainly with housing, with employment development to the south of Brickfields Business Park and on Kingsmead Business Park. It will be developed with the infrastructure necessary to support growth including major items, such as a

‘principal street’ linking New Road (B3092) and Shaftesbury Road (B3081) and a local centre including small local convenience shops, health facilities, a primary school, a community hall and other local facilities and services.

- 9.12 Policy 21 – Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation sets out the Council’s views, and reflects local community opinions, on how the southern extension of Gillingham should be taken forward to create attractive new neighbourhoods for the town in the period up to 2026 and beyond.

### **The Council’s Approach to the Development of the Southern Extension**

- 9.13 The southern extension is the largest and most significant development proposed for North Dorset in the Local Plan Part 1 and will result in a significant increase in the size of Gillingham. Its development will be the primary opportunity to progress the enhancement of Gillingham as the main service centre in North Dorset and as an attractive place to live and work. Proposals for the existing town will be taken forward both through Policy 17 – Gillingham and the neighbourhood plan being prepared by the local community.
- 9.14 Concentrating growth to the south of the town is considered to offer the greatest potential for:
- housing development to be sustainably located;
  - economic development to create employment opportunities for the southern extension and the town as a whole; and
  - the provision of supporting infrastructure, including sustainable transport measures, to increase self-containment by integrating the new development into the existing town.
- 9.15 To assist in securing the effective delivery of this key proposal, the Council has worked with land owners, potential developers, key stakeholders and the local community to develop a ‘conceptual framework’ to guide the future development of the southern extension. The conceptual framework, which is set out in more detail later in this policy, is made up of the following elements:
- the ‘concept statement’, which brings together the design ideas that have emerged through consultation to give a description of the kind of place the southern extension should be;
  - the ‘concept plan’, which illustrates (on a map) the main design concepts and ideas that have emerged through consultation; and
  - a set of site-specific ‘design principles’, derived from the Town Design Statement and later consultation.
- 9.16 Policy 21 – Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation also allocates the main land uses and identifies the main infrastructure (and other) requirements to support development across the site and integrate it with the existing town. The main land



uses together with an extended settlement boundary to accommodate growth, are shown on the Proposals Map for the SSA. Policy 21 – Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation provides the main policy basis for the determination of any subsequent planning applications on, or affecting, the SSA site.

### Achieving Comprehensive Development

- 9.17 It is critical that the southern extension delivers on its potential to create a sustainable mixed-use community and to achieve this there is a need for comprehensive planning and development. The need for a comprehensive approach has been a recurring theme throughout the Council's engagement with the community.
- 9.18 The Council considers that the most effective way of achieving comprehensive development is for the various landowners and developers to collaborate in the preparation of a Master Plan Framework for the southern extension. The conceptual framework, land use allocations and identified infrastructure (and other) requirements set out in this policy, provide the 'brief' for the preparation of such a Master Plan Framework.

### Master Plan Framework

- 9.19 The Council expects the Master Plan Framework (alongside Policy 21– Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation) to provide a comprehensive basis for informed decision-making on subsequent planning applications for development within the SSA. The Master Plan Framework should respond positively to the 'brief' that Policy 21– Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation as a whole provides by: reflecting the 'conceptual framework' (or clearly justifying any areas of departure from the concept statement or concept plan); and according with the land allocations and main infrastructure (and other) requirements set out in the policy and shown on the Proposals Map.
- 9.20 The Council will expect the Master Plan Framework to be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment and to include, as a minimum, the following components:
- the developers' collective vision for the proposed development, which the Council will expect to respond positively to the 'concept statement';
  - a comprehensive land use master plan for the SSA in its entirety, incorporating a budget of land uses;
  - a schedule of master plan components (e.g. local centre, public open space, and other supporting infrastructure and facilities);
  - a development framework plan illustrating the proposed layout of the development (in other words, providing an explanation of the intended structure and grain for the land use master plan);
  - an urban design strategy covering the whole of the southern extension, building on the concept statement, concept plan and design principles set out in this policy;

- a climate change plan setting out how the southern extension will seek to address issues arising as a result of climate change, such as energy efficiency in buildings and flood risk;
  - a sustainable transport plan providing details relating to both on- and off-site proposals for all highway provision and improvements together with other transportation measures including the provision of pedestrian and cycleway networks and bus routes;
  - a green infrastructure plan setting out the approach to the provision, design and future management of an integrated network of green spaces, green links and other green elements within and adjoining the southern extension. It should also set out how this green infrastructure network will: integrate the development into the local landscape; conserve and enhance the ecological and heritage interests on site, close to the site and international sites within the wider area identified through the supporting Habitats Regulations Assessment; and deliver sustainable drainage systems; and
  - a phasing plan and associated implementation strategy. The Council will expect the implementation strategy to set out the developers' proposals regarding the funding and delivery of the master plan components (e.g. via planning obligations, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) etc.). It should also set out: proposals for securing appropriate financial contributions from all the southern extension development towards all relevant infrastructure; the points at which facilities and infrastructure will need to be delivered to support housing and employment development; how uninterrupted linkages between different phases of development will be secured, whether or not involving land in different ownership; and details of proposals to secure the adoption and appropriate future maintenance of infrastructure and facilities.
- 9.21 The Council will not support the submission of planning applications for development within the SSA until a Master Plan Framework has been produced by the developers, published for public consultation, and agreed by the Council.
- 9.22 The preparation of a Master Plan Framework is critical to the successful delivery of the proposals for the southern extension and the Council considers that the developers are best placed to respond to the 'brief' set out in this policy. The Council's preferred approach is for developers to work collaboratively to prepare comprehensive development proposals. However, in the event that a Master Plan Framework is not forthcoming from developers, the Council reserves the option of producing a Master Plan Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) or other planning document (or documents) to guide the future development of the southern extension.
- 9.23 In so far as it is relevant, the Council will look to secure financial contributions through its charging schedule produced for the purposes of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

### Pre-application Consultation

- 9.24 Pre-application consultation is encouraged in national policy and could become a legal requirement for larger developments in the future<sup>287</sup>. The Government recognises that “early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.”<sup>288</sup>
- 9.25 The Council considers that the landowners and prospective developers of the southern extension should use the preparation of the Master Plan Framework to demonstrate to the community in Gillingham how they intend to respond to the brief this policy provides. The process of preparing and consulting upon the Master Plan Framework would form part of the developers’ pre-application consultation for the southern extension. The Council anticipates that this process will be recorded in a Statement of Community Engagement, which will then be submitted in support of subsequent planning applications.
- 9.26 When the Master Plan Framework is submitted the Council will consider whether it represents a sound comprehensive basis for decision-making on subsequent planning applications, and whether the process of preparing it incorporated appropriate engagement with the community.

### Conceptual Framework, Land Use Allocations, Infrastructure and Other Requirements

- 9.27 The remainder of the policy sets out the conceptual framework, allocates the main land uses and identifies the main infrastructure (and other) requirements for the development of the southern extension. It explains how they should be used in the preparation of the Master Plan Framework and any subsequent planning application (or applications) for the site.

### Conceptual Framework

- 9.28 The three elements of the conceptual framework are: the concept statement (including an overarching vision); the concept plan; and a set of design principles. Based on the best information currently available, the conceptual framework describes and illustrates, in broad terms, how it is considered that the southern extension would best be developed to reflect local constraints and community aspirations. The Master Plan Framework for the southern extension should be prepared to reflect all three elements of the conceptual framework, unless a

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<sup>287</sup> Section 61Y of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, sets out powers for the Secretary of State to produce secondary legislation dealing with the issue of pre-application consultation. In the event that secondary legislation is produced, pre-application consultation could become a legal requirement for developments of the scale of the Gillingham southern extension.

<sup>288</sup> Paragraph 188, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

departure from the concept statement or the concept plan can be clearly justified as proposals are worked up in more detail.

### Concept Statement

- 9.29 The concept statement<sup>289</sup> (in Figure 9.2 below) sets out an indicative potential development concept for the southern extension. It aims to provide an initial overview of the kind of place that the southern extension should be, reflecting the results of community participation undertaken so far. The concept statement, together with the concept plan and the design principles that follow, should be used to inform the urban design strategy, which will form part of the Master Plan Framework for the site.

Figure 9.2 – Concept Statement for Gillingham Southern Extension

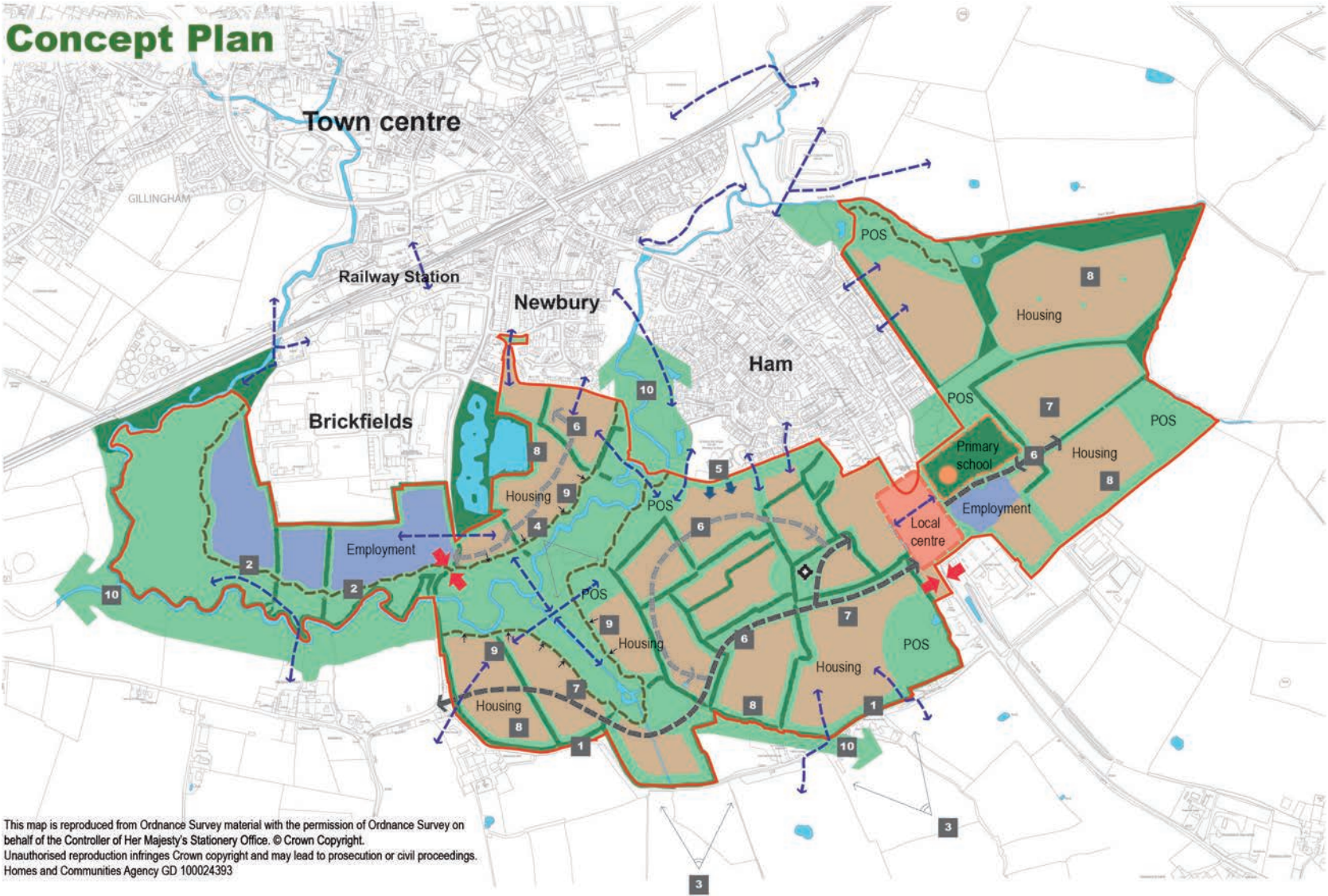
Concept Statement
Overarching Vision for the Southern Extension:
Gillingham’s southern extension will be a new, sustainable mixed-use community, primarily of housing, that is fully integrated with the existing town to increase self-containment. It will be able to meet its own local needs whilst also having highly accessible links to the existing town and employment opportunities. The new community will be designed to a high standard, reflecting agreed design principles, and provided with supporting infrastructure to create a high quality environment in which to live and work.
‘Place Making’ Overview:
<p>The southern extension will be designed to reflect the best Dorset traditions and local character, as articulated in the Gillingham Town Design Statement (TDS)<sup>290</sup>. Overall the built environment will strike a successful balance between variety and harmony and smaller, recognizable neighbourhoods within the development will be set within a network of green infrastructure.</p> <p>The southern extension will be designed to create new townscape, where intrinsic variations in development form (e.g. layout, density, scale and massing) create an easily understood pattern of streets and other spaces. Within the layout focal points, landmarks and gateways will be highlighted with distinctive buildings and spaces.</p> <p>Public spaces will be well designed, with suitable management and maintenance arrangements in place to ensure their continued upkeep. All public spaces and routes will be overlooked to ensure they feel safe.</p> <p>All buildings will exhibit architectural quality. The external appearance will avoid rootless or amorphous design whilst preserving contact with the best local building traditions, not least in the use of high quality materials.</p> <p>The development will promote innovation in residential, commercial and infrastructure</p>

<sup>289</sup> The concept statement has been adapted from Figure 4 – Potential Development Concept for the SSA on page 14 of Gillingham Southern Extension Concept Plan Workshop – March 2013: ATLAS Report on the Workshop, ATLAS (July 2013)

<sup>290</sup> Gillingham Town Design Statement, Gillingham Town Design Statement Steering Group (June 2012)

Concept Statement
design with a view to achieving more sustainable ways of living and a place that is future-proof.
Tackling Climate Change:
This new part of Gillingham shall incorporate a range of site-wide features to reduce its environmental impact, including sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and recycling facilities. The Council will also promote design solutions that incorporate low carbon energy generation and building performance that exceeds statutory minima (e.g. Building Regulations) adhering to relevant policies in the Local Plan.
Integrating the Southern Extension into the Landscape:
The development will sit comfortably within the gently undulating landform south of Gillingham and retain and enhance the river corridors that run through the site. Particular care will be taken along its southern edges to ensure a sensitive transition between the extended town and the surrounding countryside.
Providing a Range and Choice of Homes:
The development as a whole shall include a range of house sizes, offering choice in the amount of indoor and outdoor space provided. The mix of homes and tenure types will reflect evidenced needs and where practicable the design of housing shall provide opportunities for home working. Building designs shall be as robust as practicable, with careful consideration given to the adaptability of internal spaces and opportunities for future conversion or extension. In all cases sufficient space will be provided for the discreet storage of recyclables bins etc.
Creating Job Opportunities:
Sufficient employment land and buildings will be provided to ensure a wide range of job opportunities, and these will be closely integrated with residential uses where practicable.
Providing and Delivering Infrastructure:
<p>Essential infrastructure and services will be fully integrated in the design of the place from the outset and delivered in phase with the building work.</p> <p>All properties will have convenient access to public transport and to a finely branched network of safe and direct walking and cycling routes, linking people to schools, work places and services, both within the development and beyond. Integration with existing streets and paths in the vicinity will ensure this new part of Gillingham is well connected to the rest of the town and the countryside beyond.</p> <p>Residents will have convenient access to community facilities such as schools, local shops, healthcare and play areas.</p> <p>A network of green infrastructure will successfully incorporate the retention of significant trees and hedgerows within the development. A variety of formal and informal public open spaces will also help to 'green' the place. Allotments and gardens will provide opportunities for residents to grow their own food.</p>

Figure 9.3 – Concept Plan for Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation



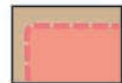
## Concept Plan Legend



Main street through the development (and potential bus route). Other key streets shown in lighter grey.



Potential location for a new primary school, adjacent the local centre. Possible expansion of St Mary the Virgin was also discussed as an option.



Mixed-use local centre, with shops and services to meet the day-to-day needs of residents and employees.



Important edges around the flood zone. Some provide opportunities for development to front onto green space.



Species rich hedgerows and existing trees incorporated within a network of Green Infrastructure (includes allotments and community orchards).



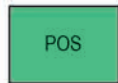
Areas that could accommodate carefully designed housing development. Density to vary accordingly.



Existing employment within the SSA, and areas that could accommodate carefully designed new employment development.



Key linkages to be established and/or retained. These primarily involve links for pedestrians and cyclists.



Potential locations for Public Open Space, integrated within the wider network of Green Infrastructure (play areas dispersed around the SSA).



Key gateways, which require special attention in terms of urban design.



High point is a key landmark.

1 Cole Street Lane becomes a 'green' route.

2 New tree planting to provide visual screen.

3 Note views into the site from the south.

4 Note views out of the site to the south.

5 Potential to expand St Mary the Virgin Primary School. Primary school provision needs to be resolved.

6 Streets not roads.

7 Higher density along main street/bus route.

8 Very sensitive approach to density/massing required along these edges.

9 Opportunities for housing to front onto green space.

10 Green Infrastructure network extends into the town centre and connects with the surrounding countryside.

## Notes

This plan seeks to illustrate, in broad terms, the ideas that emerged from the consultation workshop. It could provide the basis for an agreed concept plan for the SSA; i.e. agreed between the local planning authority and the prospective developers. The agreed concept plan could then provide the basis for more detailed site-wide master planning work.

The potential locations for formal Public Open Space (POS) provision are indicative. The appropriate quantum of formal POS and informal open space (together with the appropriate distribution of sports pitches etc.) will be resolved through subsequent master planning work.

## Concept Plan

- 9.30 The concept plan<sup>291</sup> (set out in Figure 9.3) is indicative and whilst sound reasons to depart from some aspects of it may become apparent as proposals are worked up in more detail, the characteristics of the site and the nature of adjoining uses may make it difficult to justify the re-location of certain elements of the concept plan, such as public open spaces in river floodplains or new employment uses adjoining the existing employment uses at Brickfields Business Park.
- 1.3. For other uses, such as the local centre, the ‘principal street’ through the development and the position of formal open space, their precise location is less firmly fixed and there is more likelihood that it may be appropriate to seek to justify a different design solution.

## Design Principles

- 9.31 Any proposals for the development of the southern extension will be assessed against Policy 24 – Design, which sets out the Council’s approach to design. Policy 24 – Design requires that different aspects of development form (namely, layout, density, mix, scale and appearance) respond positively to a set of design principles relating to issues such as character, ease of movement and the quality of the public realm.
- 9.32 A more site-specific set of design principles has been developed for the southern extension, reflecting important local and / or site-specific issues, identified through community participation<sup>292</sup>. In summary, these issues are:
- The successful integration of the southern extension into the Blackmore Vale landscape;
  - The retention and enhancement of the river corridors within the site;
  - The provision of a ‘principal street’, public transport and adequate parking to assist the ease of movement around the southern extension;
  - The provision of adequate storage for new homes;
  - The achievement of a high level of environmental performance, including the energy efficiency of buildings; and
  - The provision of allotments and community orchards to enable people to grow their own food.
- 9.33 The design principles set out in Figure 9.4 below, should be used to inform the urban design strategy, which will form part of the Master Plan Framework for the site. These design principles will also be used as the basis for assessing the design

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<sup>291</sup> The concept plan is taken from page 7 of Gillingham Southern Extension Concept Plan Workshop – March 2013: ATLAS Report on the Workshop, ATLAS (July 2013)

<sup>292</sup> The design principles have been adapted from Figure 3 – Revised Design Principles on page 14 of Gillingham Southern Extension Concept Plan Workshop – March 2013: ATLAS Report on the Workshop, ATLAS (July 2013)



merits of proposals that come forward in planning applications for the development of the southern extension.

Figure 9.4 - Design Principles for Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation

Design Principles
<b>Character - Landscape Setting:</b>
The proposed development shall be successfully integrated into its wider landscape setting through careful design of layout, scale (height and massing), density, materials and structural planting. Particular care will be taken along its southern and eastern edges to ensure a sensitive transition between the extended town and the surrounding countryside, and retain important views into and out of the whole site.
<b>Character - Landscape Assets:</b>
Significant existing landscape and ecological assets, including river corridors and watercourses, important trees, hedgerows, ponds and other natural habitats, shall be successfully integrated within the public realm of the development. These assets will be retained and enhanced within a network of Green Infrastructure.
<b>Character - Mix of Uses:</b>
At the macro scale this will be a mixed-use development comprising employment, housing and community uses etc. In particular it shall include a fine grain, mixed-use local centre, to meet the day-to-day needs of residents and employees. Whilst concentrations of certain uses will be directed towards appropriate parts of the site (e.g. employment land, or the local centre) rigid allocation of uses that would not prejudice residential amenity, or have other detrimental impacts, will be avoided.
<b>Continuity and Enclosure – Definition of Public and Private Spaces:</b>
The distinction between public and private space shall be clearly defined throughout the development. In order to achieve this distinction in a way that is legible, buildings shall be arranged within a coherent layout that successfully defines public and private spaces.
<b>Ease of Movement – Permeable Networks:</b>
The building layout shall take priority over the streets and car parking, so that the highways do not dominate. The building layout will help to create a permeable network of well-defined streets and spaces, which are pedestrian, cycle and vehicle friendly. In addition to an interconnected network of streets, a finely branched network of footpaths and cycleways, linked to existing routes, will form a highly permeable grid of movement for pedestrians and cyclists, connecting the development to destinations within the town and in the surrounding countryside.
<b>Ease of Movement – ‘Principal Street’ and Public Transport::</b>
The layout shall incorporate a through route ensuring good connectivity with the existing main routes into the town. This route shall be designed to enable a bus service through the development to be conveniently established.

Design Principles
<b>Ease of Movement – Parking:</b>
The development shall incorporate a range of car parking solutions that form part of the urban design strategy. These shall be designed to ensure that car parking is well integrated, accessible and situated so as to support rather than dominate the street scene.
<b>Quality of the Public Realm – Usable Public Spaces:</b>
The streets, squares and parks within this development will be the focus for community activity and social interaction. Streets and junctions will be designed as public spaces, accessible for all, rather than merely as functional routes for vehicular traffic.
<b>Quality of the Public Realm – Public Spaces Designed to a High Standard:</b>
All outdoor areas shall display the highest standards in terms of design, including careful consideration of materials, planting, street furniture, boundary treatment, lighting and accessibility.
<b>Legibility – Townscape:</b>
The development shall be designed to create new townscape, where intrinsic variations in development form (e.g. layout, density, scale and massing) create an easily understood pattern of streets and other spaces. Coherent street scenes will be created by striking an appropriate balance between variety and harmony in terms of external appearance.
<b>Legibility – Buildings and Landscaping:</b>
Specially designed buildings and groups of buildings, together with landscaping, will help to define important gateways, landmarks and spaces.
<b>Adaptability – Flexibility for Future Uses:</b>
Building designs shall be as robust as practicable, with careful consideration given to the adaptability of internal spaces and opportunities for future conversion or extension. In all cases sufficient space will be provided for the discreet storage of recyclables bins etc.
<b>Diversity – Range of House Sizes:</b>
The development as a whole shall include a range of house sizes, offering choice in the amount of indoor and outdoor space provided. Where practicable the design of housing shall provide opportunities for home working.
<b>Energy Efficiency and Environmental Performance:</b>
The Council will promote design solutions that incorporate low carbon energy generation and building performance that exceeds statutory minima (e.g. Building Regulations) adhering to relevant policies in the Local Plan. The development shall incorporate a wide range of site-wide features to reduce its environmental impact, including SuDS and convenient access to allotments and recycling facilities.
<b>Safety and Security – Natural Surveillance:</b>
A permeable network of streets faced by homes, businesses and community facilities will provide natural surveillance and reduce people's perception of their vulnerability to crime. Through successful enclosure and natural surveillance, public spaces will impart a feeling of security for all users.

## Land Use Allocations, Infrastructure and Other Requirements

- 9.34 Based on the best information currently available and the results of community participation to date, the conceptual framework provides a broad, indicative overview of the kind of place that the southern extension should be.
- 9.35 Within this framework, this policy also sets out land use allocations, infrastructure and other requirements for the development of the site. These allocations are made, and requirements are set out, for the site as a whole and one of the key roles of the Master Plan Framework will be to demonstrate how the allocations and requirements (which are described in more detail below) can be delivered in a co-ordinated and phased manner, as different parts of the site are built out.

## Climate Change

- 9.36 The Master Plan Framework for the southern extension (and any subsequent planning application, or applications, for the site) should show how the proposed development would:
- incorporate measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and
  - take full account of flood risk.
- 9.37 Proposals for new homes on the southern extension will need to meet the requirements of the Government’s Zero Carbon Buildings Policy. Developers will need to maximise energy efficiency in the design of the new development by incorporating measures within the building fabric, such as high levels of insulation, and by making the best use of passive solar design principles through the orientation of buildings and landscaping. The incorporation of renewable and low carbon technologies appropriate to the site, such as solar panels and ground sources heat pumps are also likely to be needed to meet the requirements.
- 9.38 If the requirements cannot be met on site, developers would need to show how such requirements could be met through off-site ‘allowable solutions’, which could include:
- Retro-fitting energy efficiency measures to off-site public buildings;
  - Contributing to increasing the efficiency of other energy-using systems, such as street lighting; and
  - Fitting renewable or low carbon energy generating systems to off-site public buildings.
- 9.39 The Master Plan Framework should consider the potential for a district heating scheme to serve, or to be incorporated into, the southern extension. District heating allows for the distribution of heat generated in a centralized location for commercial and / or residential heating requirements, such as space or water heating. Given the size of the southern extension and the range of neighbouring uses, there may be the potential for such a scheme, but the Council recognises that it is only likely to be feasible if the opportunity arises for a heat source to be

provided in association with a new or existing employer on, or close to, the southern extension site.

- 9.40 The Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent planning applications) will need to show how flood risk, from all sources (including surface water) will be taken into account in the development of the SSA. Also the development of the southern extension should not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere within the town or the surrounding areas.
- 9.41 The Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment<sup>293</sup> shows that parts of the southern extension site are at risk of flooding from the River Lodden, the River Stour and the Fern Brook. Any proposal within the areas at risk of fluvial flooding within the southern extension would be subject to the sequential and exception tests in National Policy, as explained in more detail in Policy 3 - Climate Change.
- 9.42 The Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent planning applications) would need to show how sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) would be provided to help manage the risks of fluvial and surface water flooding. The southern extension should be designed to avoid development becoming a barrier to the natural drainage of the site and should make use of natural drainage pathways, such as existing watercourses and ditches, wherever possible.

### Environment

- 9.43 The Master Plan Framework for the southern extension (and any subsequent planning applications) should show how the proposed development would conserve and enhance the locally distinctive natural and historic environment of the area, including the landscape, ecological and archaeological interests on, and close to, the site.
- 9.44 The southern extension will lie largely within the Blackmore Vale Landscape Character Area<sup>294</sup> and will form part of the landscape setting of the existing town<sup>295</sup>. The Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent planning applications) would need to show how the southern extension would be integrated into the wider landscape. To achieve this, proposals for development should:
- Maintain a sensitive transition between the edge of the southern extension and the surrounding Blackmore Vale landscape;

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<sup>293</sup> Bournemouth, Christchurch, East Dorset, North Dorset and Salisbury Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Halcrow Group Ltd (February 2008)

<sup>294</sup> Landscape Character Areas are defined in the Landscape Character Areas Assessment, North Dorset District Council (March 2008). Nearly all the site lies within the Blackmore Vale Landscape Character Area (LCA) although the extreme western edge adjoining Brickfields Business Park lies within the Upper Stour Valley LCA.

<sup>295</sup> As described in the Gillingham Town Design Statement, Gillingham Town Design Statement Steering Group (June 2012)

- Retain and enhance the river corridors and key landscape features within the site; and
  - Retain a selection of views out towards the open countryside, especially to key landmarks, such as Duncliffe Hill.
- 9.45 The Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent planning applications) would need to show how the habitat and species interests currently on the site would be retained, enhanced and incorporated into the green infrastructure network. There are no designated or non-designated wildlife sites within the site although more detailed survey work has identified some ecological interest associated with the watercourses, ponds, trees and hedgerows. Species present on and /or close to the site include: otters; water voles; great crested newts; bats and badgers.
- 9.46 The Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent planning applications) would need to show how the archaeological heritage assets that have been identified within and close to the southern extension (and any other as yet unidentified archaeological heritage assets) would be retained and enhanced when the site is developed.
- 9.47 Kings Court Palace is a Scheduled Monument located at the confluence of the River Lodden and the Fern Brook. It will be important to protect the setting of this site in the design of the southern extension, for example by the provision of open space and landscape planting. Gillingham Park is an ancient deer park, which was formerly surrounded by a 'park pale'. Sections of the park pale to the south east of the southern extension form a Scheduled Monument, but the sections within the SSA, close to Kingsmead Business Park, are not subject to any designation.

### Meeting Housing Needs

- 9.48 The Master Plan Framework should set out how the southern extension will be developed to accommodate about 1,800 homes in total. It should show how the site will be developed in phases, both spatially and over time. In broad terms, the spatial approach should be for development to commence adjacent to the existing built-up area of the town and to spread out towards the boundaries of the site.
- 9.49 The Council recognises that the development of the southern extension is likely to continue beyond the plan period (that is, post-2026) and estimates that about 1,240 homes will be provided on the site by 2026. The Master Plan Framework may suggest a different figure for the provision of housing within the plan period if this can be justified (for example on the basis of a reappraisal of likely market conditions during the plan period). The phasing of development will require 'trigger points' to be identified for the delivery of certain infrastructure items. Developers will be expected to demonstrate that the necessary infrastructure could still be delivered with a revised figure for the provision of housing within the plan period.
- 9.50 Policy 7 – Delivering Homes sets out the mix of house sizes (in terms of number of bedrooms) that should be provided on development sites, both for market and

affordable homes. The Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent planning applications) should seek to deliver a mix of housing reflecting the proportions in Policy 7, unless a different mix can be justified on the basis of local circumstances.

- 9.51 Policy 8 – Affordable Housing establishes that 35% of the total number of dwellings on the southern extension will be affordable, subject to any site-based assessments of viability. It also sets out the Council’s approach to assessing viability and resolving viability disputes. The Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent planning applications) should seek to deliver 35% affordable housing, unless a lower proportion of affordable housing can be justified on the basis of a site-based assessment of viability.
- 9.52 The affordability of housing and an ageing population are key issues for the District, as outlined in Section 2 of the Local Plan Part 1. As the largest development in North Dorset, it is important that the southern extension contributes towards addressing these issues. Dorset County Council has identified a need for the provision of at least 50 units of extra care housing on the southern extension, which should form part of the overall provision of affordable housing. The Master Plan Framework should make provision for these units of extra care housing and show where on the southern extension they will be located.

### Supporting Economic Development

- 9.53 The provision of additional employment land within the SSA will provide the opportunity for the creation of jobs to serve both its new residents and the residents of Gillingham as a whole. Land to the south of Brickfields Business Park and at Kingsmead Business Park are already allocated as employment sites in the North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan 2003<sup>296</sup> and these allocations are taken forward in this plan.
- 9.54 Much of Brickfields Business Park is developed with a range of employers including Sigma Aldrich, a leading global life science and high technology company. Planning permission has been given for a landmark office building to house their UK headquarters just beyond the southern edge of the existing business park, which if developed will provide an additional 250 jobs.
- 9.55 The Master Plan Framework for the southern extension (and any subsequent planning applications for the remaining land to the south of the existing business park) should make provision for a new access from New Road (B3092) and set out how the land will be developed to provide opportunities for a range of employers. The Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent planning applications for this part of the southern extension) should seek high quality job provision and high quality built design along the southern and eastern edges of this area and more

<sup>296</sup> Brickfield Business Park is identified as a committed site (E/15/2) under Policy 3.2. Land at Park Farm (now Kingsmead Business Park) is identified as a proposed new employment allocation (Site L) under Policy 3.2 and is allocated as Site L (E/15/6) for industrial/ business / storage uses by Policy GH8.

general employment uses towards the western end, further away from the main views into the site.

- 9.56 Some of the existing buildings on Brickfields Business Park are intrusive in the wider landscape and the Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent planning applications for this part of the southern extension) should include proposals for strategic landscape planting to: create a new, more attractive edge to the business park; and better screen the site in views from the south and west.
- 9.57 Parts of Kingsmead Business Park are already developed for employment uses and further employment development may be permitted on the remaining undeveloped parts of this site in accordance with the saved policies of the 2003 Local Plan. The Master Plan Framework should show the mixed-use local centre concentrated in the Shaftesbury Road corridor (as illustrated on the concept plan) with this site forming part of the same. The Council's requirements for the mixed-use local centre are described in more detail in paragraphs 9.77 to 9.79. In the event that this site does not come forward as part of the mixed-use local centre, the Master Plan Framework should show it as protected employment land where development will be permitted in accordance with Policy 11 – The Economy.

### Infrastructure

- 9.58 Grey, social and green infrastructure need to be delivered in a timely manner both on- and off-site to achieve the vision of the southern extension becoming a sustainable mixed-use community. The provision of adequate infrastructure to serve the development also has strong community support.

### Grey Infrastructure

- 9.59 The provision of adequate transport-related grey infrastructure is critical to the sustainable development of the southern extension, both to accommodate the traffic generated from the development and to reflect the design principles developed for the site. The main on-site transport-related proposals that should be shown in the Master Plan Framework are set out below. The Master Plan Framework should also show how any off-site proposals, including those set out below, will be secured, improved and funded. The main on-site transport-related proposals should be included in any subsequent planning applications (where relevant) and planning obligations should secure the delivery of any off-site proposals, including those set out below.
- 9.60 The Master Plan Framework for the southern extension (and any relevant subsequent planning applications) should make provision for a 'principal street' through the development, linking Shaftesbury Road (B3081) in the east with New Road (B3092) in the west. The principal street should be designed to enable traffic accessing Brickfields Business Park and other existing developments off New Road to do so without having to use the busy New Road (B3092) / Shaftesbury Road (B3081) junction. It should be designed to provide the main means of vehicular

access to the land south of Ham and also facilitate traffic movements south and east from the southern extension to Shaftesbury and the A30.

- 9.61 The Master Plan Framework (and any relevant subsequent planning applications) should show how the principal street will be designed as a key urban design feature within the southern extension. To achieve this, it should form part of, and be at the top of, the hierarchy of the network of permeable and legible streets within the development and should be designed to enable a high frequency bus service to be conveniently established.
- 9.62 The Master Plan Framework (and any relevant subsequent planning applications) should show how the principal street would be routed to avoid the main constraints on the site, namely the 'high point' south of Ham and the floodplain of a small tributary of the River Lodden close to Newhouse Farm, as shown indicatively on the concept plan. There is some flexibility regarding where the principal street joins the Shaftesbury Road (B3081) and the nature of the junction to be provided, but the Master Plan Framework should show how any arrangement: would contribute positively to this 'gateway' into Gillingham; and be integrated into the local centre for the southern extension (in the event that it is located on the B3081).
- 9.63 At the western end, the Master Plan Framework (and any relevant subsequent planning applications) should show the principal street avoiding any part of Cole Street Lane (as shown indicatively on the concept plan) unless a suitable alternative approach can be identified and agreed with the Council. The junction at the western end of the principal street should be designed to encourage traffic from Brickfields Business Park and other areas of development off New Road to use it.
- 9.64 The Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent planning applications) should make provision for a permeable and legible network of streets within the development that are also pedestrian and cycle friendly. They should show how key gateways into the town and key access points to the different areas of development within the SSA would form public spaces, accessible for all, rather than form merely functional junctions for vehicular traffic.
- 9.65 The Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent planning applications for the relevant part of the site) should show how a 'gateway' to the town will be created at the southern edge of the southern extension on the Shaftesbury Road (B3081). This is the main approach to the town from Shaftesbury and also the location of the main accesses to housing developments to the south and east of Ham. The 'gateway' should be integrated into the design of the local centre, in the event that it is located on the B3081.
- 9.66 The Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent planning applications for the relevant part of the site) should also show how a 'gateway' to the town will be created on the southern edge of the southern extension around the junction of New Road (B3092) with the proposed new access roads into both Brickfields



Business Park and the residential land to the east of Lodden Lakes. The ‘gateway’ should be designed to reflect: the need to secure high quality built design at the southern and eastern end of Brickfields Business Park; and the need to create an attractive edge to the housing development at Lodden Lakes, overlooking the floodplain of the River Lodden.

- 9.67 The Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent planning applications) should show accesses linking existing residential areas of the town to the southern extension primarily as being for pedestrian and cycle use only, because they are not generally suitable to be upgraded to accommodate significant amounts of vehicular traffic. It would only be appropriate for the Master Plan Framework (or any subsequent planning applications) to show a vehicular access through an existing residential area if it would be acceptable in transport, urban design and residential amenity terms.
- 9.68 The Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent planning applications) should show how the various green infrastructure elements within the southern extension will accommodate pedestrian and cycle routes and links between different areas of development to complement the network of pedestrian and cycle friendly streets. They should also show how pedestrian and cycle routes within the southern extension would link into off-site routes to facilitate non-car borne trips to locations such as the town centre, the railway station, schools and leisure facilities. The Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent relevant planning applications) should also make provision for pedestrian and cycle routes across the river corridors associated with the site.
- 9.69 The provision of the ‘principal street’ will provide the opportunity for vehicular access to Cole Street Lane to be restricted to only allow access to existing properties and to prevent it being used as a vehicular through route. The principal street through the development should avoid any part of Cole Street Lane (as shown indicatively on the concept plan) unless a suitable alternative approach can be identified and agreed with the Council.
- 9.70 Subject to the above, the Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent relevant planning applications): should show how Cole Street Lane would become a “green lane” being used primarily as a route for pedestrians and cyclists with non-vehicular links into the southern extension and; should not show any new vehicular accesses from the southern extension onto Cole Street Lane.
- 9.71 There are capacity issues on the road network in Gillingham particularly at key junctions in the Shaftesbury Road / Le Neubourg Way corridor, many of which are controlled by a system of linked traffic signals. There is a particular issue with the capacity of the New Road (B3092) / Shaftesbury Road (B3081) junction and the interaction between this junction and the Le Neubourg Way / Newbury mini-roundabout. These junctions lie very close to the bridge that provides the only vehicular crossing point over the railway. The upgrading of the New Road (B3092) /

Shaftesbury Road (B3081) junction and the Le Neubourg Way / Newbury mini-roundabout to increase capacity should be secured through the Master Plan Framework and subsequent planning applications. Improvements to other junctions in the Shaftesbury Road / Le Neubourg Way corridor to increase the capacity of the main north / south route through the town will be secured in the same way.

- 9.72 Developers of the southern extension will be expected to contribute towards the enhancement of Gillingham Railway Station as a public transport hub, as set out in Policy 17 - Gillingham. There are a number of gaps in existing cycle and pedestrian routes that could be completed to link the southern extension to the town centre, railway station and other facilities, for example by the provision of a footbridge over the Fern Brook at Kings Court Palace. Developers will be expected to contribute towards and work with the Council, the local community and landowners to seek the completion of these routes, where practicable.
- 9.73 A proportion of the traffic generated by the southern extension will travel south towards Shaftesbury and use the A30 for trips to locations such as Yeovil and Salisbury. At present traffic heading south from Gillingham on the B3081 has to ascend a steep hill, negotiate tight bends and pass through a residential area of Shaftesbury to gain access to the A30. Later in the plan period there are likely to be capacity issues on the B3081 as it approaches Shaftesbury and the provision of a link road between the B3081 and the A30 at Enmore Green is proposed in Policy 18 – Shaftesbury. Developers of the southern extension will be expected to contribute towards the provision of the link road at Enmore Green.
- 9.74 In addition to the highway and other transportation improvements outlined above, the Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent planning applications) will need to show how other items of grey infrastructure will be upgraded to support the growth of the southern extension, including utilities (such as gas, electricity and water), sewage pumping stations and the town’s sewage treatment works.

### Social Infrastructure

- 9.75 The provision of social infrastructure on-site will help to establish a sustainable and vibrant community on the southern extension. However, the additional population will also require the improvement of facilities elsewhere in the town. The main on-site social infrastructure items that should be shown in the Master Plan Framework are set out below. The Master Plan Framework should also show how off-site social infrastructure will be secured, improved and funded. Proposals for necessary on-site social infrastructure items should be included in any subsequent planning applications (where relevant) and planning obligations should ensure the provision, improvement and funding of any off-site social infrastructure items, including those set out below.
- 9.76 A mixed-use local centre will be provided within the southern extension, to meet the day-to-day needs of residents and employees. The Master Plan Framework

should show how it will be designed: as a focus for community activity and social interaction; and to include:

- a new 2 form entry primary school and provision for a pre-school nursery;
- a doctor's surgery for about 2.5 full time equivalent General Practitioners, a dentist and a dispensing pharmacy;
- a multi-purpose community hall; and
- small local convenience shops with a mixture of A1, A3 and A4 uses of about 500 square metres floorspace in total, with the largest A1 use class unit not exceeding 250 square metres.

- 9.77 The Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent planning application that includes the local centre) may show some elements of residential development (including flats over shops) and commercial developments (including A2 or B1(a) Use Class offices) in the local centre. They should also show how the local centre will be designed to be served by buses and community transport (with a covered waiting area) and linked into the network of pedestrian and cycle routes.
- 9.78 The Master Plan Framework should show land in the Shaftesbury Road corridor (as indicated on the concept plan), including land on Kingsmead Business Park, as the preferred location for the local centre, unless a suitable alternative location can be identified and agreed with the Council.
- 9.79 The Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent planning application for the relevant part of the site) should make provision for the expansion of St. Mary the Virgin Primary School from 1 to 2 forms of entry. Contributions will also be required towards the expansion of Gillingham High School.
- 9.80 Development within the southern extension will require contributions to be made towards the provision or improvement of facilities elsewhere within Gillingham. These include: the further improvement or expansion of the existing facilities at RiversMeet and the provision of a new community hall; the expansion of the Gillingham Town Library; and the expansion of Gillingham Fire Station.

### Green Infrastructure

- 9.81 The development of the southern extension gives rise to a need for:
- significant areas of formal public open space;
  - extensive areas of informal public open space, particularly in the river corridors;
  - the retention of important trees and hedgerows;
  - the establishment of a sustainable drainage system;
  - the provision of strategic landscape planting; and
  - financial contributions to the provision or enhancement of other green infrastructure off-site.
- 9.82 The Master Plan Framework for the site (and any subsequent planning applications) should make provision for these elements (which are discussed in more detail

below) to deliver an enhanced, multifunctional green infrastructure network. They should also show how the green infrastructure network will integrate the southern extension into the wider landscape, conserve and enhance wildlife interests and provide sustainable drainage.

- 9.83 The Master Plan Framework for the site (and any subsequent planning applications) should make provision for at least 7 hectares of sports pitches within the southern extension including: football pitches; cricket pitches; all weather pitches for five-a-side football and other sports; and tennis courts. The preferred option is for these facilities to be provided in 'clusters' on the land to the south and the east of Ham to provide easy access for residents in different parts of the site. The location and design of any area of sports pitches should take full account of the operational impacts on adjoining land uses.
- 9.84 The Master Plan Framework for the site (and any subsequent planning applications) should make provision for at least 1 hectare of children's equipped play space in various locations across the southern extension. Children's play spaces should be overlooked from nearby homes to provide natural surveillance and should be designed to provide children with an interesting, enjoyable and challenging environment in which to play<sup>297</sup>.
- 9.85 The Master Plan Framework for the site (and any subsequent planning applications) should make provision for about 75 allotments within the southern extension to help provide opportunities for residents to grow their own food. Ideally these should be spread evenly across the site in small groups (of about 15 plots) to enable people to access them on foot or by cycle. Community orchards should also be provided in easily accessible locations.
- 9.86 The Master Plan Framework for the site (and any subsequent planning applications) should make provision for at least 26 hectares of informal public open space<sup>298</sup> within the southern extension. This will be primarily focused along the river corridors within the site, which have the potential to provide an attractive landscape setting for development. The Master Plan Framework (and any relevant subsequent planning applications) should show how new housing adjoining them will be designed to have a positive relationship with the open spaces.
- 9.87 Much of the wildlife interest on the site is associated with the river corridors and the Master Plan Framework (and any relevant subsequent planning applications) should show how they will be managed to conserve and enhance this interest. Within these corridors provision should also be made for alternative routes for pedestrians and cyclists to various locations within and connected to the southern extension. A non-vehicular crossing of the River Lodden should be provided to

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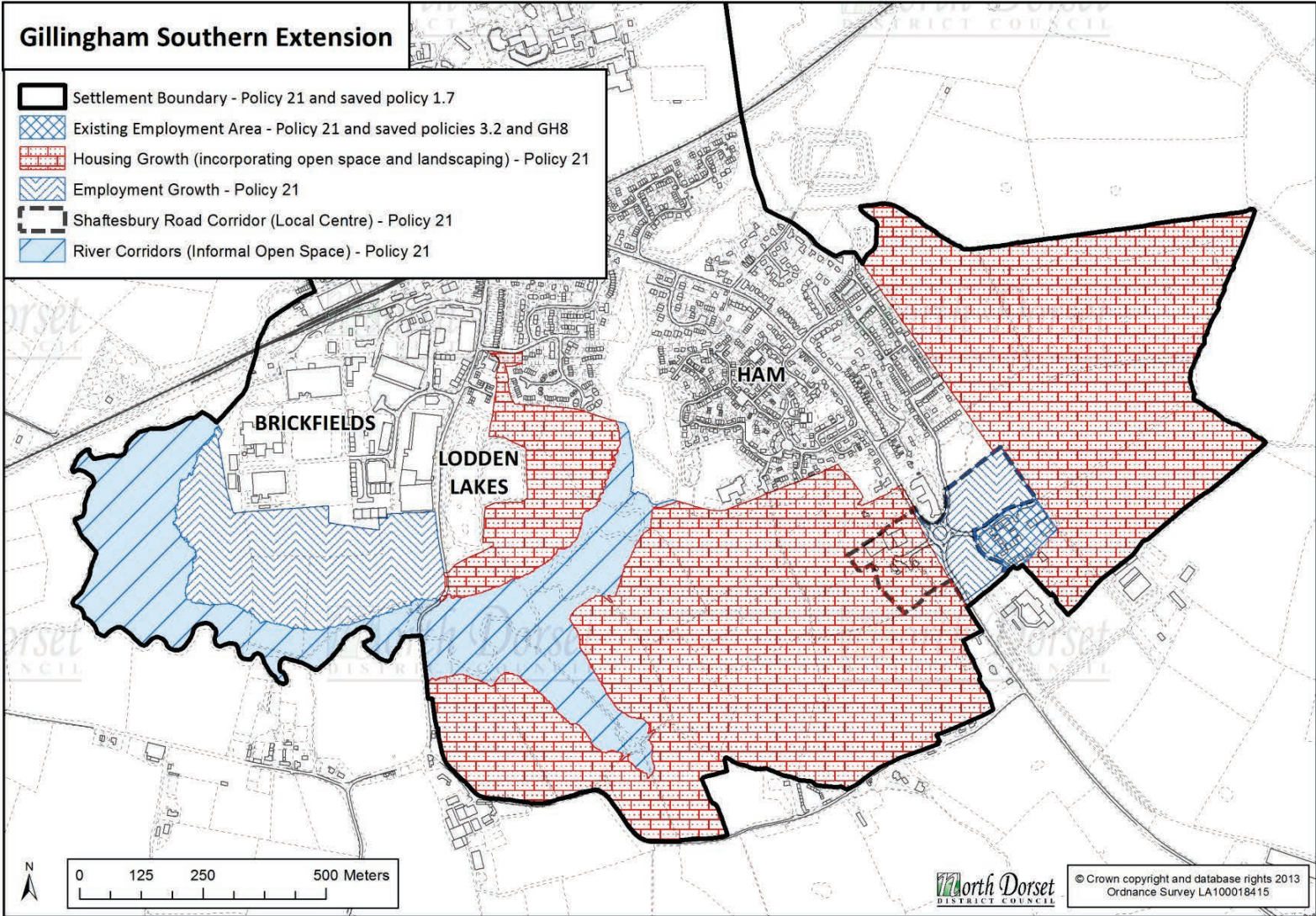
<sup>297</sup> As sought in the Dorset Play Strategy 2012-2016, Dorset County Council.

<sup>298</sup> The figure of 26 hectares excludes incidental areas of informal open space, such as highway verges.

enhance the permeability of the southern extension by linking the developments to the east of Lodden Lakes and south of Ham.

- 9.88 The Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent planning applications) should show how important trees, groups of trees and hedgerows would be retained within the southern extension. They should set out why the removal of any important tree (or trees) or section of hedgerow is necessary to achieve transport, urban design or drainage objectives. Where it is not possible to retain important trees and hedgerows within larger public open spaces, the Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent planning applications) should make provision for 5-metre wide publically accessible 'greenways' along their length and should avoid locating important trees and hedgerows within, or on the boundaries of, private gardens.
- 9.89 The Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent planning applications) should make provision for SuDS to manage the risks of fluvial and surface water flooding. The established network of watercourses and other drainage features on the site, including ditches associated with retained hedgerows, should be used as the basis of the SuDS network wherever possible, although it is likely that some new drainage features will need to be built into the development.
- 9.90 The Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent planning applications) should seek to retain the strategic landscape planting that already exists on the site, particularly along the northern edge of the land east of Ham (Park Farm) area. Provision should be made for new areas of strategic landscape planting, particularly on the edges of the southern extension. The landscape planting should be designed to soften the edge of development by largely screening it in views from the countryside, but it should also allow some views in and out of the site.
- 9.91 The Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent planning applications) should make provision for areas of new strategic landscape planting in key locations, as shown on the concept plan. These should include: on all edges of the land east of Ham (Park Farm) area adjoining the Gillingham Royal Forest Project Area; along the southern edge of the land south of the Ham Farm area, especially where it abuts Cole Street Lane; and along the river corridors south and west of the extension to Brickfields Business Park.
- 9.92 Green infrastructure on the southern extension has the potential to be linked with other green spaces and features adjoining or in close proximity to the site, including Lodden Lakes, the corridor of the River Lodden between the exiting developments at Ham and Newbury, Kings Court Palace and areas of ancient woodland within the Gillingham Royal Forest Project Area. Developers will be expected to contribute towards and work with the Council, the local community and landowners to create a more comprehensive green infrastructure network for the whole town.

Figure 9.5 – Gillingham Southern Extension Proposals Map



**POLICY 21: GILLINGHAM STRATEGIC SITE ALLOCATION**

A Master Plan Framework will be prepared for the whole of the southern extension of Gillingham to ensure that: the site will be developed in a comprehensive and co-ordinated manner; and facilities and infrastructure are provided and delivered in step with housing and employment development.

The Council will use the Master Plan Framework for the southern extension (together with the Local Plan) as the main policy basis for determining any subsequent planning applications for development on the site. The Council will not support proposals for development within the southern extension prior to the production of (and consultation on) the Master Plan Framework and prior to its contents being agreed by the Council.

The Master Plan Framework (and any subsequent planning applications on or affecting the southern extension) should:

- a reflect the conceptual framework for the site (including concept plan, concept statement and design principles), unless a departure from the concept plan or concept statement can be clearly justified; and
- b demonstrate how the land use allocations, infrastructure and other requirements set out: in this policy; on the Proposals Map for the Strategic Site Allocation; and in the other policies of the Local Plan, will be provided and delivered.

The Council's preferred approach is for developers to work together (and with the Council, key stakeholders and the community) to prepare the Master Plan Framework, which the Council would then agree. If necessary, the Council would consider producing a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) or other planning document (or documents) to guide the future development of the southern extension.

**Climate Change**

The Master Plan Framework for the southern extension (and any subsequent planning application, or applications, for the site) should show how the causes and effects of climate change will be tackled by:

- c incorporating energy efficiency and renewable energy measures in buildings, including measures to produce energy from renewables and low carbon sources to meet the requirements of the Government's Zero Carbon Buildings policy; and
- d off-site 'allowable solutions', in the event that the requirements of the Government's Zero Carbon Buildings policy cannot be met on site; and

**POLICY 21 (CONT'D): GILLINGHAM STRATEGIC SITE ALLOCATION**

- e consideration being given to the potential for a district heating scheme to serve, or to be incorporated into, the southern extension, should a suitable opportunity arise; and
- f measures to address the risks of fluvial and surface water flooding; and
- g incorporating sustainable drainage systems into the development.

**Environment**

The Master Plan Framework for the southern extension (and any subsequent planning application, or applications, for the site) should show how the natural and historic environment will be conserved and enhanced by:

- h measures to integrate the southern extension into the wider landscape, particularly where the edge of development adjoins open countryside; and
- i measures to conserve and enhance wildlife interests, including both habitats and species within and close to the southern extension; and
- j the retention (in situ) and enhancement of significant archaeological features and their settings, including Kings Court Palace Scheduled Monument and Gillingham Park boundary bank.

**Meeting Housing Needs**

The Master Plan Framework for the southern extension should:

- k show how the site will be developed with about 1,800 homes in total; and
- l show how the delivery of housing will be phased over time making provision for about 1,240 homes to be delivered on the SSA in the period up to 2026, unless a different figure for the provision of housing within the plan period can be justified and agreed with the Council; and
- m show how the delivery of housing will be phased spatially based on the approach that development will commence adjacent to the existing built-up area of the town and spread out towards the boundaries of the site; and
- n set out the mix of market and affordable homes, in terms of number of bedrooms, that should be delivered on the site, reflecting the proportions in Policy 7 – Delivering Homes, unless a different mix can be justified on the basis of local circumstances and agreed with the Council;



**POLICY 21 (CONT'D): GILLINGHAM STRATEGIC SITE ALLOCATION**

- o set out that a minimum of 35% of the total number of dwellings will be affordable, unless a different percentage can be justified on the basis of a site-based assessment of viability and agreed with the Council; and
- p make provision for at least 50 affordable extra care units for the elderly, as part of the overall provision of affordable housing.

Any subsequent planning application, or applications, for the site should reflect the requirements for the provision of housing development set out above, or as amended in the Master Plan Framework.

**Supporting Economic Development**

The Master Plan Framework for the southern extension (and any relevant subsequent planning application, or applications, for the site) should:

- q set out how the land to the south of Brickfields Business Park should be developed: with a range of employment uses; with a new access from the B3092; to be well screened in views from the south and west; and to respect the high quality design and landmark nature of the proposed new headquarters building for Sigma Aldrich; and
- r set out how the remaining undeveloped land at Kingsmead Business Park should be developed as part of a local centre in the Shaftesbury Road corridor to support the southern extension. In the event that the local centre does not include the remaining undeveloped land at Kingsmead Business Park, the Master Plan Framework (and any relevant subsequent planning applications), should show how the site will be developed with a range of employment uses.

**Grey Infrastructure**

The Master Plan Framework for the southern extension (and any relevant subsequent planning application, or applications, for the site) should make provision for:

- s a 'principal street' linking New Road (B3092) and Shaftesbury Road (B3081), which will be designed as a bus route; and
- t a permeable and legible network of well-defined streets and spaces within the southern extension, which are cycle and pedestrian friendly, including well-designed 'gateways' to the town and accesses to different areas of development at key points. Links from the southern extension into the existing built-up area of the town should be primarily for pedestrians and cycles; and

**POLICY 21 (CONT'D): GILLINGHAM STRATEGIC SITE ALLOCATION**

- u a permeable network of 'off-road' footpaths and cycleways within the southern extension; and
- u the closure of Cole Street Lane to vehicular through traffic, other than for access; and
- v off-site highway improvements, particularly improvements to increase the capacity of the New Road (B3092) and Shaftesbury Road (B3081) junction; and improvements in the Shaftesbury Road / Le Neubourg Way corridor; and
- w off-site measures, and contributions towards off-site measures, to support the use of public transport, cycling and walking. Such improvements will include the enhancement of Gillingham Railway Station and the completion, where practicable of gaps in existing cycle and pedestrian route networks between the town and the southern extension; and
- x contributions towards the provision of a link road between the B3081 and the A30 at Enmore Green; and
- y other grey infrastructure requirements to support the development of the southern extension including the upgrading of: foul sewers; the town's sewage treatment works; utilities; and telecommunications networks, including broadband.

**Social Infrastructure**

The Master Plan Framework for the southern extension (and any relevant subsequent planning application, or applications, for the site) should make provision for:

- z a local centre in the Shaftesbury Road corridor to serve the southern extension, which will include: small local convenience shops; a 2 form entry primary school; a pre-school nursery; a community hall; health facilities (including a doctors' surgery, a dentist and a dispensing pharmacy); and other essential local facilities; and
- aa the expansion of St Mary the Virgin Primary School (from 1 form of entry to 2) including the provision of land if required; and contributions towards the expansion of Gillingham High School; and
- bb contributions towards improvements to, or the expansion of: Riversmeet (including a community hall); Gillingham Town Library; and Gillingham Fire Station.

**POLICY 21 (CONT'D): GILLINGHAM STRATEGIC SITE ALLOCATION****Green Infrastructure**

The Master Plan Framework for the southern extension (and any relevant subsequent planning application, or applications, for the site) should make provision for:

- cc at least 8.5 hectares of formal public open space, including sport's pitches, children's play spaces, allotments and community orchards. At least 7 hectares should be provided as sports pitches and associated facilities. The preferred option is for sports pitches to be grouped in two clusters either side of the B3081; and
- dd at least 26 hectares of informal public open space primarily along the river corridors providing: a landscape setting for development; enhanced habitats for wildlife; and off-road routes for pedestrians and cyclists within the SSA linking to the town and countryside; and
- ee the retention, where practicable, of important trees, groups of trees and hedgerows on the southern extension site within public open spaces and publically accessible 'greenways'; and
- ff the establishment of a sustainable drainage system across the southern extension utilising, where practicable, existing watercourses, ponds, ditches and the 'greenways' associated with the retained hedgerows; and
- gg the retention of existing areas of strategic landscape planting and the establishment of new strategic landscape planting, particularly on the edges of the site to screen new development whilst also allowing views out of and into the site; and
- hh contributions towards the provision or enhancement of green infrastructure off-site.

# 10. Development Management Policies

## Introduction

- 10.1 The Local Plan Part 1 sets out of a number of topic based policies, place based policies and a strategic site allocation for a southern extension to Gillingham to guide future development in the District.
- 10.2 The development management policies also form part of the strategic policy framework, which aims to achieve the vision for North Dorset and the objectives of the Local Plan Part 1. They provide more detail for decision making in relation to particular issues and assessing the acceptability of certain types of development.
- 10.3 The development management policies do not cover all policy areas and where principles for development are addressed by national or topic based policies they are not repeated.
- 10.4 The development management policies deal with a range of issues, such as design, amenity and proposals for renewable and low carbon energy. A number of policies (28 to 33) relate to proposals for development in the countryside (in other words, development outside the four main towns) where a general policy of restraint applies.

## Policy 22 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

### National Policy

- 10.5 National policy sets out that the role of the planning system is to contribute to achieving sustainable development, including mitigating and adapting to climate change. One of its core planning principles is that planning should “support the transition to a low carbon future ...” by encouraging “... the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy)”<sup>299</sup>.
- 10.6 Greater use of renewable and low carbon technologies will contribute to meeting national and international targets, such as:
- a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions to 80% below 1990 baseline levels by 2050 (in The Climate Change Act 2008); and
  - the generation of at least 15% of the UK’s energy requirement from renewable sources by 2020 (which the Government has signed up to under The EU Renewable Energy Directive<sup>300</sup>).

### Local Context

- 10.7 A renewable energy strategy<sup>301</sup> has been produced for Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole along with a number of supporting documents that contain a great deal of background information on different technologies and the opportunities and potential local barriers to their use in the area. The Council has endorsed this strategy (except the parts which seek to set local targets) and has used it to inform its strategic approach to renewable and low carbon energy developments.
- 10.8 Policy 3 - Climate Change sets out the Council’s strategy for mitigating and adapting to climate change and promotes the development of renewable and low carbon energy. This is in accordance with the vision for North Dorset and helps to deliver Objective 1 of the Local Plan Part 1 – Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change.
- 10.9 This policy sets out in more detail how the Council will consider proposals for renewable and low carbon energy.

### The District Council’s Approach

#### Decision Making

- 10.10 When considering proposals for heat or electricity generation from renewable or low carbon sources, the Council will assess the likely benefits of the scheme against the likely impacts.

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<sup>299</sup> Paragraph 17, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

<sup>300</sup> The EU Renewable Energy Directive – 2009/28/EC

<sup>301</sup> The Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Renewable Energy Strategy to 2020, Dorset Energy Partnership (2005)

- 10.11 Applicants will not be required to demonstrate an overall need for renewable energy technologies, whatever the scale of the proposal. However, in order for the Council to be able to judge the acceptability of any proposals, applicants will be expected to produce evidence to demonstrate:
- any potential adverse impacts, and measures that will be put in place to mitigate the impacts; and
  - the potential benefits of the scheme, both nationally and locally.

### Evidence and Information to Support Decision Making

- 10.12 There may be different (and often strongly held) perceptions about the potential impacts and benefits of proposals for renewable and low carbon energy. In order for there to be transparency in relation to any renewable or low carbon energy development proposal in North Dorset, the Council will expect that all evidence submitted in connection with it should be on an open book and non-confidential basis.
- 10.13 Some larger renewable energy technologies, such as wind turbines and solar arrays, may also need to be accompanied by an environmental impact assessment<sup>302</sup>.

### Assessing Impacts

- 10.14 Developers should ensure that sufficient information is provided to enable all potential adverse impacts to be identified and fully assessed. As a minimum, developers should consider visual impact and impacts on the landscape, biodiversity, the historic environment and water resources.

### Landscape and Visual Impact

- 10.15 Renewable and low carbon energy developments can have impacts on the landscape and visually. Such impacts can arise for a variety of reasons including the potential scale or height of a proposed development. They can occur solely because of the proposal itself or due to cumulative effects with other developments.
- 10.16 Nearly 40% of North Dorset lies within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty<sup>303</sup>. These are landscapes of outstanding value that are designated and protected due to their national significance. Other landscapes are valued at a more local level and all are described in the Council's landscape character assessment<sup>304</sup>.
- 10.17 The Council intends to produce a sensitivity assessment of all the landscape character areas in North Dorset to provide a strategic overview of the potential for

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<sup>302</sup> As required, as at the date of adoption of this Local Plan, by the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011/1824.

<sup>303</sup> Parts of two AONBs lie within North Dorset, which are the Dorset AONB and the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB.

<sup>304</sup> North Dorset Landscape Character Areas Assessment, North Dorset District Council (March 2008)

different landscapes within the District to accommodate renewable energy developments (in particular wind turbines and solar arrays).

- 10.18 Every renewable and low carbon energy development proposal that has the potential to have adverse visual and landscape impacts should be supported by an assessment of the potential impacts, which should also set out any proposed mitigation measures. This site-based assessment should have regard to all relevant landscape and visual factors including:
- relevant national landscape designations;
  - the Council's landscape character assessment, any additional landscape sensitivity studies, and any more detailed landscape characterisation work, for example in local town or village design statements;
  - the value of the local landscape in which the proposal will be situated; and
  - the impact of any existing or proposed renewable or low carbon energy developments.
- 10.19 Structures associated with renewable or low carbon energy proposals should be designed to fit within the local landscape, having regard to existing significant views. Careful consideration should be given to the choice of building materials and the location of structures on site. Appropriate landscape screening should also be provided to minimise visual and landscape impacts.

### Impacts on Biodiversity

- 10.20 Proposals should seek to minimise the disturbance to ecology. This includes the potential impact on International, European, National or locally designated sites but also the impact on particular species (for example, bird or bat collisions with wind turbines or the impact on the aquatic environment due to hydropower schemes).
- 10.21 Proposals should be accompanied by a biodiversity assessment detailing the potential impact on the ecology of an area. A biodiversity mitigation plan should be put in place to enhance local biodiversity.

### Impacts on the Historic Environment

- 10.22 National policy seeks to conserve heritage assets (whether designated or not) in a manner appropriate to their significance. It recognises that such significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting.
- 10.23 Views from, or views of, a heritage asset (for example, from public rights of way) play an important role in the way it is experienced, its relationship with other heritage assets and its relationship with the surrounding landscape. This setting can be local in its extent (for example, a listed building set within a natural bowl in the landscape) or distant (for example, across significant areas of the landscape). Also,

the setting of a heritage asset can extend for a number of kilometres when considered against large prominent developments.

- 10.24 Proposals for renewable and low carbon energy that might impact on a heritage asset (or assets) should be accompanied by an assessment of how any such asset may be affected. Assessments will need to establish the importance of each heritage asset, its significance, the contribution made in relation to its setting and identify the impact on the asset resulting from the proposed development.

### Impacts on Water Resources

- 10.25 Certain types of renewable and low carbon energy developments can have an impact on water resources. For example, hydropower directly impacts on a watercourse and biomass or energy from waste can use water for cooling. The impacts can include reduced flow due to abstraction or pollution resulting from the discharge of cooling water into a watercourse. All these can have an impact on aquatic biodiversity and it is essential that impacts are minimised.
- 10.26 Applicants will be required to demonstrate that the potential impacts of a renewable or low carbon energy development on water resources are within acceptable limits and have been agreed by the appropriate body.

### Mitigating Impacts

- 10.27 As a minimum, developers should provide sufficient information on mitigation measures that seek to address (where appropriate):
- transport and access issues; the effects of shadow flicker (where wind turbines are proposed);
  - noise and vibration;
  - potential interference to radar and other telecommunications;
  - legitimate concerns raised by local communities; and
  - the restoration of a site when operations cease.

### Transport and Access

- 10.28 The impact of renewable and low carbon energy proposals on the transport network needs to be considered during the construction / decommissioning phases and during the operational phase. This includes not only access for bulky construction equipment and materials but also access for on-going maintenance.
- 10.29 For large scale wind proposals, careful consideration should be given to the route(s) along which the constituent parts of turbines will be transported to the development site especially as proposals are often in remote rural locations along narrow country roads.
- 10.30 For proposals such as biomass or energy from waste, the impact of transporting fuel to the site needs to be given careful consideration. Such plants should ideally be located near a sustainable fuel source thereby minimising the impact on the



local transport network. Transportation of the residue resulting from the energy generation process to an appropriate processing plant also needs to be given careful consideration.

### Shadow Flicker

- 10.31 Shadow flicker relates to onshore wind developments where the shadow of a rotor falls across a dwelling or place of work causing light levels to fluctuate. The impact of shadow flicker is dependent on a number of factors including the distance of a property from a turbine, the time of year and intervening topography or vegetation. This impact can be accurately modelled and mitigated through intermittent operation of turbines. The potential impact of shadow flicker on properties needs to be considered especially in the context of residential amenity.

### Noise and Vibration

- 10.32 The likely impact of noise and vibration on local residents and those working in the vicinity of a renewable or low carbon energy generation plant needs to be considered as part of the application process. Noise and vibration above the existing background levels can arise from a number of sources including:
- transport of fuel and materials during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases;
  - processing of fuel and residual material, for example from biomass or energy from waste plants; and
  - vibration and noise during operational periods, for example from wind turbines or from cooling equipment.
- 10.33 Any renewable or low carbon energy generation proposal that might give rise to noise or vibration issues should be accompanied by an assessment of the likely impact of the scheme using industry best practice and in accordance with an approach previously agreed with the Council.

### Interference to Radar and Telecommunications

- 10.34 Onshore wind farms have the potential to disrupt wireless services including domestic television reception. An assessment of the potential impact on wireless services will need to be undertaken where it is expected that disruption may occur with remedial action being taken if appropriate.
- 10.35 Similarly onshore wind proposals have the potential to disrupt radar. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that the impacts of their proposals on radar have been resolved through consultation with the appropriate body (for example, the Ministry of Defence and the Civil Aviation Authority).

### Impacts Identified by Local Communities

- 10.36 Developers will be expected to undertake and evidence early meaningful engagement with the local community when submitting development proposals

relating to renewable or low carbon energy schemes that may have an adverse impact on a local community. Consultation with local communities may raise new issues, or provide a better understanding of issues already identified. The Council will expect developers to have regard to the responses made by local communities to any consultation and to consider what additional mitigation measures may be necessary to address any legitimate concerns.

### Restoration of Sites

- 10.37 Renewable and low carbon energy schemes often have a limited life. For example, a wind farm typically operates for 20 to 25 years, after which it is decommissioned. In recognition of this, the Council will usually require proposals for renewable and low carbon energy schemes to be accompanied by a restoration scheme. Typically, this should show how the energy generating equipment (for example the wind turbines) would be removed and recycled. It should also require the breaking up of any foundations and the restoration of the site to its original condition.

### Benefits

- 10.38 Developers should provide sufficient information to enable the Council to fully assess the likely benefits of a scheme for renewable and low carbon energy generation, particularly in relation to the levels of heat or electricity likely to be generated on site and the benefits to local communities.

### The Generation of Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

- 10.39 Renewable and low carbon energy developments will help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contribute towards national and international targets. They will also help to increased energy security and give some protection from fossil fuel price fluctuations.
- 10.40 The extent to which any scheme in North Dorset contributes towards these benefits depends upon the likely levels of heat or electricity that will be generated. This will depend not only upon the technology used, but also on the local conditions within which the technology will operate. It will be important for developers to provide relevant information (for example data on wind speeds for wind turbines or water flows for hydropower schemes) so that realistic assessments of the site-based performance of any scheme can be made.

### Local Community Benefits

- 10.41 The benefits of renewable and low carbon energy schemes for local communities may include local job creation and investment in the local economy. However, there may be greater local benefits where a scheme is put forward by a community or involves a level of community ownership (or community shareholding). Such schemes could offer benefits in the form of income generation, lower energy bills, community cohesion and a wider acceptance of such developments. The Council

will expect developers to give careful consideration to such matters, including the potential to provide district heating networks when drawing up schemes.

**POLICY 22: RENEWABLE AND LOW CARBON ENERGY****Assessing Benefits against Impacts**

When considering proposals for heat or electricity generation from renewable or low carbon sources, the social, economic and environmental benefits of the scheme should be assessed against the likely impacts.

A proposal for generating heat or electricity from renewable or low carbon sources will be permitted provided it can be demonstrated that:

- a both individually and cumulatively, all adverse impacts arising from the proposal have been satisfactorily assessed; and
- b the proposal has maximised the potential to mitigate any adverse impacts that have been identified; and
- c the actual benefits that the scheme will deliver outweigh all adverse impacts that remain.

**Impacts**

Potential adverse impacts that will be assessed in relation to any proposal include: visual impact; and impacts on biodiversity, the landscape, the historic environment including designated and non-designated heritage assets, and water resources.

**Mitigation**

In assessing the adequacy of mitigation measures in relation to a proposal it will be expected that:

- d the proposal's location has been identified having regard to sites that can make best use of existing transport infrastructure and the minimisation of traffic movements whilst providing safe access; and
- e any issues of shadow flicker, noise and vibration or interference to radar or any communication systems including televisions can be fully overcome; and
- f early meaningful consultation has been undertaken with people in the locality that might be adversely affected by the proposal and clear regard has been had to the responses received; and
- g the proposal incorporates an agreed restoration scheme including measures to remove installations when operations cease.

## **POLICY 22 (CONT'D): RENEWABLE AND LOW CARBON ENERGY**

### **Benefits**

Potential benefits that will be assessed in relation to any proposal include:

- h the amount of heat or electricity that is likely to be generated from the proposed renewable or low carbon energy development; and
- i local community benefits, including jobs, investment in the local economy, community ownership or shareholding of a scheme and local provision of renewable and low carbon energy, for example, through a district heating network.

## Policy 23 - Parking

### Introduction

- 10.42 Appropriate parking provision in terms of location and level can contribute to achieving transport demand management objectives as well as encouraging more use of public transport and higher levels of walking and cycling. In addition, national policy indicates<sup>305</sup> that local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking in town centres, including appropriate provision for motorcycles, so that it is convenient, safe and secure. They should set appropriate parking charges that do not undermine the vitality of town centres and parking enforcement should be proportionate.
- 10.43 The NPPF states<sup>306</sup> that if setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, local planning authorities should take into account:
- the accessibility of the development;
  - the type, mix and use of development;
  - the availability of and opportunities for public transport;
  - local car ownership levels; and
  - an overall need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles.
- 10.44 The Council takes the view that the reasonable parking needs of occupants of new developments should be met and this policy sets out how the Council intends to deal with parking<sup>307</sup> in the context of the NPPF.

### Residential Parking

- 10.45 Councils in Dorset have jointly developed residential car parking standards in the Dorset Residential Car Parking Study (DRCPS)<sup>308</sup>, taking account of the NPPF and 'Manual for Streets'<sup>309</sup>. These standards generally need to be met if sustainable development is to be delivered. The DRCPS allows for differences in parking requirements between isolated rural dwellings and hamlets, villages and towns and urban fringes. This is particularly important in North Dorset where many rural households are dependent on the private car for transport, which is reflected in levels of car ownership. Some flexibility is needed, nevertheless, to allow a different level of provision on individual sites where there is sound justification based on local circumstances.

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<sup>305</sup> Paragraph 40, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

<sup>306</sup> Paragraph 39, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

<sup>307</sup> Details of standards and guidance are set out in Appendix C.

<sup>308</sup> The Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Residential Car Parking Study, Dorset County Council (May 2011)

<sup>309</sup> Manual for Streets, DCLG and Department for Transport (2007)

- 10.46 Many garages are used for storage, rather than for keeping a vehicle, and often this is because of their limited size. When considering levels of parking provision on housing developments, the Council will only count a garage as a parking space if it is larger than 6 metres x 3 metres, to allow for the parking of a vehicle and for some internal storage space.
- 10.47 Issues such as on-street parking levels, parking restrictions and other local factors specific to a development site are matters that should be discussed with Highways Development Control Engineers at Dorset County Council and with Planning Officers at the District Council if developers are seeking to justify levels of residential car parking provision that would not accord with the standards.

### Non-Residential Parking

- 10.48 The Council will use guidance published by Dorset County Council<sup>310</sup> as the basis for non-residential parking provision (see Appendix C). Developers will be expected to make provision for non-residential parking in accordance with this guidance unless there are specific site constraints or local factors necessitating increased or reduced provision.

### Motorcycle Parking

- 10.49 Motorcycles<sup>311</sup> are an increasingly popular means of transport - around 5% of all vehicles are motorcycles and over the last 15 years the growth in motorcycle ownership has been well in excess of growth in ownership of any other types of vehicle<sup>312</sup>. Appropriate facilities for parking motorcycles need to be provided to prevent indiscriminate parking and to provide safe and secure stationing of machines: in line with national advice and guidance on motorcycle parking<sup>313</sup>; and with regard to the Council's standards and guidelines (see Appendix C).

### Cycle Parking

- 10.50 The provision of cycle storage facilities for residential properties is increasingly important as cycle use grows. Cycling is likely to be an option, at least for some trips, within and between the District's towns, larger villages and many smaller villages. Cycling is also of rising popularity for leisure and recreation. Developers will be expected to make provision for cycle storage for residential properties in accordance with the Council's standards (see AppendixC).

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<sup>310</sup> Non-Residential Parking Guidance, Dorset County Council (2012)

<sup>311</sup> All powered two-wheelers including scooters and mopeds.

<sup>312</sup> Vehicle Licensing Statistics, Department for Transport (April 2013)

<sup>313</sup> Section 8.4 Op cit.; Traffic Advisory Leaflet 02/2002: Motorcycle Parking, Department for Transport (March 2002)

## Parking for People with Impaired Mobility

- 10.51 The Department for Transport has produced guidance<sup>314</sup> on parking for mobility impaired people and provision should be made by developers in accordance with this guidance (summarised at Appendix C) until it is reviewed or more locally-based standards are adopted. Levels of use of spaces provided should be regularly monitored and, if necessary, numbers adjusted in the light of any apparent over- or under-provision.

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<sup>314</sup> Traffic Advisory Leaflet 05/1995: Parking for Disabled People, Department for Transport (April 1995)



## **POLICY 23: PARKING**

Development will be permitted provided that:

- a provision for residential and non-residential vehicle and cycle parking is made in accordance with the Council's parking standards, unless a different level of provision can be justified by local or site-specific circumstances; and
- b provision for motorcycle parking is made to a level appropriate for the size and location of the development, having regard to the council's standards and guidance; and
- c provision for parking for people with impaired mobility is made in accordance with the Council's standards and guidance.

## Policy 24 - Design

### Introduction

10.52 The Council’s approach to design is to ensure that all developments improve the character and quality of the area within which they are located. This reflects national policy in that “good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people”<sup>315</sup>. To achieve this, aspects of development form will be required to reflect the design principles and standards having regard to the local context including on site and near site trees and hedgerows.

### Design Principles

10.53 The design principles in Figure 10.1 are based on the objectives in ‘By Design’<sup>316</sup>. They aim to break down the key elements of design into a systematic set of principles which can be applied to development sites establishing a clear mechanism for enabling good design that reflects the local area.

Figure 10.1 – Design Principles

Design Principle	Description
Character	<p>A place with character exhibits positive, special and unique qualities that people can easily appreciate, giving it its own identity. In places that already have a positive image or character, the design of new development should respond to and reinforce locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture. In places where positive elements are lacking, proposals should seek to create a distinctive and coherent sense of place through the use of intelligent and imaginative design solutions.</p> <p>Woodlands, trees, hedgerows and other landscape features contribute significantly to the character of the District’s towns and villages. These features should be retained in the public realm.</p>
Continuity and Enclosure	<p>The sensitive and creative treatment of public and private spaces within and around a development is important. Development should promote the continuity of street frontages, reinforce existing spatial patterns and create new and exciting spaces with public and private areas clearly distinguished.</p> <p>To reduce casual intrusion by potential offenders a development should avoid having unnecessary access by non-residents. Clearly distinguished private spaces should be designed to be defensible, engendering feelings of influence, control and ownership. Public</p>

<sup>315</sup> Paragraph 56, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

<sup>316</sup> By Design – Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment and the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (May 2000)

Design Principle	Description
	space should incorporate an element of natural surveillance.
Ease of Movement	The ease of movement around and through a development ( its permeability) is largely determined by its layout. Layouts should be designed to promote accessibility and local permeability making connections with neighbouring areas and reinforcing existing connections. Designs should put people before traffic and integrate land uses with transport uses in line with Policy 13 - Grey Infrastructure and Policy 23 - Parking. Layouts and roads should take account of local topography, the natural features on a site and the needs of the mobility or sensory impaired.
Quality of the Public Realm	The 'public realm' refers to those parts of a settlement available for use by everyone including streets, parks and squares. Where development creates a new, or affects, an existing public space, it should be safe, attractive, uncluttered and well related to the surrounding buildings. Public spaces should also work effectively for all sections of the community including the mobility impaired and the elderly.
Legibility	A legible development has a clear image that is easily understood and a layout that is easy for people to find their way around. Developments should be made legible by providing recognisable routes, interactions and landmark buildings at movement nodes. 'Gateway' sites at the entrances to towns and villages require particular attention in order to provide a sense of arrival and place.
Adaptability	Development should be adaptable so that it can respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions. The form of a building should allow for flexibility in order to adapt to changing lifestyles and circumstance. Residential developments should have regard to the 'Lifetime Homes' standards to facilitate adaptation to meet the changing needs of their occupants. Commercial and community buildings should be designed to allow for easy conversion to alternative uses or to allow for multiple uses within the building.
Diversity	A diversity of uses, building forms and layout in a development will provide visual interest and variety whilst avoiding conflict between neighbouring uses.
Energy Efficiency	Policy 3 - Climate Change and Policy 22 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy encourage energy efficiency, sustainable construction and on-site renewable energy generation. In addition to energy efficiency measures, proposals should consider the orientation and location of buildings on a site incorporating the principles of passive solar design. This can contribute to efficient use of buildings by making the best use of solar energy, the provision of access to daylight and the use of passive ventilation. Buildings should

Design Principle	Description
	be orientated to maximise solar gain, with landscaping and site topography being used to reduce the impact of wind in exposed locations and avoiding overshadowing of neighbouring properties.
Safety and Security	<p>A development should incorporate features to minimise opportunities for crime and reduce people's perception of their vulnerability to crime. Developments should have natural surveillance providing a layout which is 'permeable' and positioning the main living or working areas so they face main access routes.</p> <p>Private space to the rear of a building should be clearly defined and enclosed to provide better security and privacy, particularly where it backs onto a road or other public right of way. Footpaths and cycleways should be wide, clear of hiding places and well lit. These principles are established in Secured by Design<sup>317</sup>.</p>

### Aspects of Development Form

10.54 Any built development and its surrounding spaces are made up of a number of different 'aspects' of built and un-built form. Again these 'aspects', which are defined in Figure 10.2 are taken from 'By Design'. The development form influences how the space functions, its appearance and how people use it for their everyday activities.

Figure 10.2 – Aspects of Development Form

Aspect of Development Form	Description
Layout - Urban Structure and Grain	<p>The layout of a development provides a framework of routes and spaces that connect locally and more widely. Layout influences the way that buildings, routes and spaces relate to one other and provides the basic plan on which all other aspects of the form and uses of a development depend.</p> <p>The urban grain refers to the pattern of the arrangement of streets, block divisions, plots and their buildings in a settlement and varies from small and frequent (fine grain) to large and infrequent (coarse grain).</p>
Density and Mix	<p>Density and Mix is the amount of development on a given piece of land and the range of uses. Density influences the intensity of development and, in combination with the mix of uses, can affect a place's vitality and viability.</p> <p>Policy 9 – Delivering Homes provides broad guidance on density and the mix of housing required to meet District-wide needs.</p>

<sup>317</sup> Secured by Design – The UK Police initiative to design out crime in new developments.

Aspect of Development Form	Description
Scale - Height and Massing	<p>Scale is the size of a building in relation to its surroundings. It is also the size of parts of a building or its details, particularly in relation to the size of a person. Height determines the impact of development on views, vistas and skylines. Massing is the combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings in relation to other buildings and spaces.</p> <p>The scale, massing and height of a proposal should be related to any adjoining buildings, the general pattern of heights in the area, views, vistas and landmarks.</p>
Appearance - Details and Materials	<p>The details of a scheme refer to the craftsmanship, building techniques, decoration, styles and lighting of a building or structure. It includes all building elements such as openings and bays, entrances, roofscapes and façades.</p> <p>The richness of a building lies in its use of materials including their texture, colour, pattern and durability that contribute to the attractiveness of its appearance and the character of an area.</p>

### Space Standards

10.55 Developments should incorporate sufficient secure space to enable the efficient use of buildings. In residential developments, space will be required for cycle storage, laundry drying and for the storage of bins and recyclables above the following minimums.

- To encourage cycling to access local facilities, space should be provided for secure cycle storage in line with the standard set out in Policy 23 - Parking.
- To facilitate a reduced energy means of drying laundry, sufficient secure drying space should be provided in line with the standards set out in Figure 10.3<sup>318</sup>. This drying space can either be provided externally or internally with appropriate ventilation.
- Adequate space for the storage of recyclables and bins will be required in line with the latest guidelines produced by the Dorset Waste Partnership.<sup>319</sup>

Figure 10.3– Drying Space for New Residential Developments

Size of dwelling	Minimum standard
1 or 2 bed dwelling	At least 4m of drying line
3 or more bed dwelling	At least 6m of drying line

<sup>318</sup> As set out in the Code for Sustainable Homes: Technical Guidance (November 2010)

<sup>319</sup> The Dorset Waste Partnership runs waste services across the County of Dorset  
<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/recyclefordorset/bins>

- 10.56 Non-residential buildings will be required to provide secure cycle storage and space for the storage of recyclable and bins in line with Policy 23 - Parking and the latest guidelines produced by the Dorset Waste Partnership respectively.

### Understanding of the Local Context

- 10.57 An understanding of the local context is fundamental to establishing good design for any particular development site. It should concentrate on the sites existing features, characteristics and immediate surroundings but equally consider how the site sits within the wider landscape or townscape, the historic environment and how people will interact with the place being created. The appraisal of local context should take on board the contextual information prepared to help guide development. This includes:
- landscape appraisals and impact assessments such as the District-wide Landscape Character Assessment;
  - community led initiatives such as town and village design statements and neighbourhood plans. These often contain an appraisal of local character and outline a number of guidelines to influence development;
  - design and development briefs produced for specific sites. These are produced to highlight particular issues that need to be tackled through a site's development and can be produced by the Council or by the local community;
  - conservation area appraisals;
  - guidelines produced by the Council on specific types of development for example shop fronts; and
  - any site specific assessments produced as part of the site appraisal process such as habitats assessments.
- 10.58 The intention of this approach is to preserve the quality of the built environment of the area through sympathetic design which fits with its surroundings. However there will be circumstances where a well-designed 'modern' or 'contemporary' scheme may be appropriate. In this instance, the design should be innovative and achieve very high standards.

### Impact on Neighbouring Properties

- 10.59 Where development is proposed, the impact on the immediate neighbouring properties should be given careful consideration. Developments can often be overbearing in scale when considered against their immediate neighbours. In addition developments can be poorly designed overlooking adjacent properties or in close proximity to neighbouring properties. Where development of an overbearing nature is proposed or where the enjoyment of the existing properties is significantly diminished, planning permission will be refused.

## Community Engagement

- 10.60 National policy highlights the importance of community engagement in the design of development proposals<sup>320</sup>. Several Town or Village Design Statements have been prepared for settlements within the district. These have been prepared by local communities and contain principles to influence design in the area. Local communities are encouraged to develop local guidelines and local character assessments for incorporation into neighbourhood plans or other design statements.
- 10.61 Where a town or village design statement or neighbourhood plan has been produced, development proposals should reflect any design principles or guidelines that are relevant. In all instances, developers should effectively engage with local communities to enable local people to influence the design of a development in line with this policy.

## Trees, Hedgerows and Landscape Planting

- 10.62 Trees, hedgerows and other landscape features enhance new developments, help to retain a degree of local distinctiveness and are of wildlife value. For these reasons, existing trees and hedgerows should be retained on site and incorporated into the design through integration into the green infrastructure network in accordance with Policy 15 - Green Infrastructure. Developments should be designed to incorporate these features successfully into the public realm of the design layout<sup>321</sup> and ensure their future health is not compromised or that there is pressure to undertake works to a tree due to, for example safety concerns. Where there are significant trees on or adjacent to a proposed development site the Council will require an Arboricultural Impact Assessment to be submitted as part of a planning application.
- 10.63 In cases where the retention of existing vegetation on site is insufficient to ensure that the development integrates successfully into its local surroundings, new landscape planting should be incorporated. All new landscape features should be attractively and sensitively designed with regular shaped belts of landscape planting being avoided.
- 10.64 Landscape planting should incorporate native species, including those of local provenance and fruit trees as these integrate more successfully with local landscape character and will be of greater benefit to wildlife. Species and stock size should be appropriate to the location and any planting scheme should have regard to the likely size of trees and shrubs when mature.

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<sup>320</sup> Paragraph 66, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

<sup>321</sup> Trees should be incorporated into development proposals with the approach outlined in the Council's Trees and Development Guidelines (2006) being used.

- 10.65 Regard should be had to the effects of climate change when new landscaping is provided. Trees can help to reduce the effects of climate change by provide shading and cooling. Planting can also increase the scale and connectivity of green infrastructure in more urban environments. Some species may be less able to adapt to climate change and this should be taken into account in any planting scheme.
- 10.66 All landscape vegetation, whether new or existing retained vegetation, should be incorporated into the public domain rather than forming part of private gardens. Developers will be expected to make provision for aftercare until any new planting has become self-sustaining. Conditions will be imposed where necessary to ensure landscaping is sufficient and adequately maintained in the future.

### **Design Quality Assessment**

- 10.67 To enable an assessment of the appropriateness of any development proposal, the Council will expect developers to demonstrate how the relevant aspects of development form (outlined in Figure 10.2) have been designed to reflect the relevant design principles (outlined in Figure 10.1) having regard to the local context.
- 10.68 Not all the design principles will be applicable to all development schemes, particularly those of small-scale such as domestic extensions. Similarly, some aspects of development form, such as layout, are more relevant to larger-scale schemes. However, the design principles and aspects of development form which are relevant to a proposal should be applied in a way which reflects the nature and scale of the proposal, its location and the surrounding area.
- 10.69 It is necessary for the Council, developers and local residents to understand the design rationale behind any development proposals to enable informed judgements about what may be acceptable in design terms. To achieve this, developers will be required to submit detailed design information setting out how the local context, the design principles, standards and aspects of development set out above, have been addressed.
- 10.70 Where it is considered necessary, the Council may use assessment criteria such as the 'Building for Life'<sup>322</sup> standard as a template for assessing design quality. If an impartial assessment of design quality is required, development proposals should go through a design review process provided by either a local authority or independent design review panel. This review process will be at the developer's expense.

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<sup>322</sup> Building for Life is the industry standard, endorsed by Government, for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. It has been drawn up by a partnership between the Home Builders Federation, CABE and Design for Homes.



**POLICY 24: DESIGN**

Development should be designed to improve the character and quality of the area within which it is located. Proposals for development will be required to justify how the relevant aspects of development form address the relevant design principles and standards set out in this policy and how the design responds to the local context.

Developments will be permitted provided that the relevant aspects of development have been designed to reflect the relevant design principles and have satisfactorily addressed the relevant standards. A proposal that uses development forms which do not reflect the relevant design principles and standards, or which otherwise conflict with the design principles, will not be permitted.

In certain circumstances, an exceptionally well-designed 'contemporary' or 'modern' scheme may be acceptable.

Development proposals that are of an overbearing nature or where the enjoyment of the existing properties is significantly diminished will be refused.

Developers will be required to engage with the local community and offer realistic opportunities for local people to influence development proposals. Where existing local guidelines have been established, these should be reflected in development proposals.

Developments will be required to provide adequate space for cycle parking, storage for bins and recyclables and in addition in the case of residential developments, laundry drying.

Developments will be expected to incorporate existing mature trees and hedgerows and other landscape features into the public realm of the development layout and provide sufficient additional landscape planting to integrate the development into its surroundings.

## Policy 25 - Amenity

### Introduction

- 10.71 The potential impact of development on amenity is a key consideration in many planning decisions and, although the Government has produced a policy statement on noise<sup>323</sup>, there is limited national guidance on amenity issues<sup>324</sup>. However, one of the core principles<sup>325</sup> of the NPPF underpinning plan-making is 'always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings'.
- 10.72 The Council wishes to ensure that any new development will not have an adverse impact on the enjoyment of privately or publicly owned land and that the amenity of potential occupiers of new development is not likely to be compromised by their surroundings and general environment. Consequently, this policy deals with the following significant aspects of amenity:
- privacy and private open space;
  - sunlight and daylight;
  - artificial light intrusion;
  - noise and vibration; and
  - unpleasant emissions (such as odour and fumes).
- 10.73 Amenity also has an important visual component which relates not only to the location of development but also to its scale, massing and so on. This is more relevant to discussion of broader design issues, though, and so is dealt with in Policy 24 - Design.

### Privacy and Private Open Space

- 10.74 Private open space is needed both to meet basic operational requirements (such as refuse storage and clothes drying, as discussed in Policy 24 - Design) and for the private enjoyment of property.
- 10.75 To ensure adequate privacy in homes, new developments should be designed to minimise overlooking and in-looking, and to provide freedom from unwanted social contact. Overlooking, particularly into private garden areas, can be avoided through the erection of screen walls and fencing and in-looking into neighbouring properties can be avoided through the careful orientation of properties, by the sensitive arrangement of windows and by ensuring that there is adequate distance between properties. Poorly designed public spaces and routes can also lead to unwanted social contact. Communal facilities, such as shared parking areas, and

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<sup>323</sup> Noise Policy Statement for England, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (March 2010)

<sup>324</sup> References may be found in the National Planning Policy Framework.

<sup>325</sup> Paragraph 17, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

routes, such as footpaths and cycleways, should be designed with the privacy of the occupiers of nearby residential properties in mind.

- 10.76 Permanent residential developments should be provided with adequate private open space to meet the needs of the people likely to occupy the properties. The amount of private open space required will largely depend on the type of residential development being proposed. For a family house, an adequate garden is essential both to meet operational needs and for family activities, such as children playing. For small single bedroom or retirement units, a well-designed communal space may be more appropriate. Communal private spaces should include sufficient space for refuse storage and clothes drying as well as a garden area. Adequate private open space should be provided not only for new dwellings but also where existing residential properties are extended or subdivided and where existing buildings are converted to residential use.

### Sunlight and Daylight

- 10.77 New development should receive adequate daylight and sunlight to create satisfactory living and working environments and should not have an adverse impact on the levels of natural light received by adjacent and nearby existing properties. The amount of natural light reaching a property can be influenced by the layout of buildings, particularly in relation to other buildings and structures, and its orientation.
- 10.78 In permitting development, the Council will wish to ensure that both the proposed development and any existing adjacent properties will receive adequate natural light once the scheme has been implemented. Any associated open spaces, such as gardens, should not be overshadowed to the extent where daylight intensities are reduced to unacceptable levels<sup>326</sup>.

### Artificial Light Intrusion

- 10.79 Artificial light is present in many, if not most, developments in the form of internal and external illumination. Sources include dwellings, commercial properties, advertisements, factories, street lights and sporting facilities.
- 10.80 External artificial lighting schemes can add to the aesthetic value of buildings at night time but can also have a detrimental impact on amenity<sup>327</sup>. Light pollution can be defined as every form of artificial light which shines outside the areas it is

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<sup>326</sup> In cases where there is a dispute over sunlight and daylight levels, the Council will have regard to the standards for direct and indirect sunlight set out in 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice', Building Research Establishment (1991). Minimum daylight standards are also given under BS 8206 Part 2 (1992) Code of Practice for Daylighting.

<sup>327</sup> In extreme cases, light pollution can be subject to legal proceedings if it causes a nuisance. Section 102 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 amended Section 79 of the Environment Protection Act 1990 to embrace statutory nuisance from artificial lighting.

intended to illuminate, including light which is directed above the horizontal into the night sky.

- 10.81 There are specific forms of light pollution:
- light trespass, when unwanted light enters a property from a neighbouring property;
  - over illumination, where there is an excessive use of light;
  - glare, resulting in excessive contrast between bright and dark areas in the field of view, such as when directly viewing the filament of an unshielded or badly shielded light;
  - clutter, which refers to excessive groupings of lights which can cause confusion and distract from obstacles intended to be illuminated; and
  - sky glow, which refers to the 'glow' effect seen over populated areas.
- 10.82 Not all lighting schemes require permission or consent. Those that usually do include:
- external lighting installations which materially alter the external appearance of a building;
  - lighting installations on Listed Buildings which materially affect their character;
  - illumination of outdoor advertisements; and
  - most forms of lighting on columns (for example, lighting at outdoor sports venues or security lighting).
- 10.83 The NPPF urges local planning authorities to encourage good design and use planning policies to limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light. As a basic principle, schemes should use the minimum amount of lighting necessary to achieve visual interest or for working or security purposes. The lighting should be designed to minimise light pollution from glare, scatter and spillage through the control of light direction and intensity.
- 10.84 The Council will take account of the aesthetic impact of the light produced and the daytime appearance of light fittings and cabling. The Council will also consider the impact of any lighting scheme on local residents, highway users, the appearance of streets and individual buildings, particularly if listed or of historic importance, and the visibility of the night sky. Developers will be expected to take account of appropriate published guidance<sup>328</sup>.
- 10.85 As a general guide, applicants are encouraged to submit details as part of the planning application of any external lighting scheme proposed as part of the development, including light scatter diagrams, to demonstrate that the proposed scheme is appropriate for its purpose in its particular setting. The assessment

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<sup>328</sup> Published guidance includes Lighting in the Countryside: Towards Good Practice, Countryside Commission (July 1997); Guidance Notes For The Reduction Of Light Pollution, Institution of Lighting Professionals (2005); Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light, Institution of Lighting Professionals (2011)

should demonstrate that the potential for light pollution from glare and spillage to neighbouring properties, roads and countryside has been minimised. Where floodlighting is proposed, the Council may use planning conditions or seek agreements to limit hours of use.

### Noise and Vibration

- 10.86 Unwanted noise and vibration can significantly affect the quiet enjoyment of property and places and reduce the overall quality of life. Planned new development should take account of this in respect both of its initial construction and eventual use and operation.
- 10.87 The NPPF<sup>329</sup> states that planning policies and decisions should aim to:
- avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life as a result of new development;
  - mitigate and reduce to a minimum other adverse impacts on health and quality of life arising from noise from new development, including through the use of conditions;
  - recognise that development will often create some noise and existing businesses wanting to develop in continuance of their business should not have unreasonable restrictions put on them because of changes in nearby land uses since they were established; and
  - identify and protect areas of tranquillity which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason.
- 10.88 The NPPF also emphasises that the local and natural environment should be conserved and enhanced by the prevention of both new and existing development contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of noise pollution.
- 10.89 Development may be subject to noise from a number of sources, although generally the main concerns in North Dorset tend to be road and industrial noise. However, there may be occasions when other sources of noise need to be considered, such as sports activities, public houses, clubs and restaurants. Noise may be only one element of a general disturbance, though, and regard will be need to be had to other elements, such as light from car headlights.
- 10.90 By avoiding the location of noise sensitive uses such as housing, schools, hospitals, nursing homes and places of worship near to noise-producing premises, noise problems can often be prevented. Where this is not possible, noise controls<sup>330</sup> need

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<sup>329</sup> Paragraph 123, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

<sup>330</sup> Conditions may also need to be attached to any planning permission granted for noise producing activities.

to be incorporated into new noise-producing developments and mitigation measures may be prudent for new noise sensitive developments.

- 10.91 Effective land use planning can help prevent or mitigate potential noise impacts. The express inclusion of noise in the NPPF means that it will be a material consideration in local planning decisions. Where noise may be an issue, both for noise-producing and noise-sensitive development, developers may be required to submit a noise impact study or to assess the effect of an existing noise source on the proposed development. Any noise impact study should be prepared having regard to best practice and relevant British Standards.<sup>331</sup>
- 10.92 In those cases where there is likely to be significant noise impact, the Council will require the submission of mitigation measures as part of the planning application.
- 10.93 When considering planning applications for wind turbines, single or multiple, the Council will have regard to relevant published guidance when assessing such applications.
- 10.94 Vibration may be short term, as caused by construction activities, for example, while long term vibration tends to arise infrequently and then usually in relation to mining and quarrying operations, although it may also arise from industrial processes<sup>332</sup>. The NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities should ensure that any unavoidable vibrations caused by blasting should be controlled, mitigated or removed at source. The Framework is silent on the matter of construction and industrial vibration but extension of the basic source management principle would seem reasonable to these circumstances.
- 10.95 Generally, the Council will seek to locate new residential and other sensitive development away from existing or planned noise and vibration generating development.

### Unpleasant Emissions

- 10.96 Developments such as sewage treatment works, biodegradable waste sites and some industrial uses<sup>333</sup> give rise to unpleasant emissions. Even some food and drink establishments can cause potential environmental nuisances such as smells. Whilst such emissions are not usually harmful to health, they can adversely affect the amenity of people in the immediate vicinity.

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<sup>331</sup> Including: BS4142:1997 - Method for Rating Industrial Noise Affecting Mixed Residential and Industrial Areas; BS8233:1999 - Sound Insulation and Noise Reduction for Buildings; BS 7445: Part 1: 2003 - Description and Measurement of Environmental Noise - Guide to Quantities and Procedures; BS 5228: Part 1: 2009 Noise Control on Construction and Open Sites; BS6472:2008 - Guide to the Evaluation of Human Exposure to Vibration Within Buildings.

<sup>332</sup> Such processes may include the use of die stamping and drop hammers.

<sup>333</sup> These are generally classified as B2 industrial uses under the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended)

- 10.97 Where development is proposed that would give rise to unpleasant emissions (such as odour, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit), the Council will ensure that the amenity of neighbouring uses is not adversely effected. This will not preclude development provided that measures (e.g. dust extractors) are incorporated into its design to reduce the impact of any unpleasant emissions to acceptable levels. The Council will also seek to limit sensitive development (housing, for example) in close proximity to known sources of unpleasant emissions such as sewage treatment works and waste treatment plants.
- 10.98 With regard to sewage treatment works, the Council will recognise such cordons sanitaire as may be notified to it by Wessex Water or other bodies responsible for sewage treatment works.

**POLICY 25: AMENITY****Privacy**

Development will be permitted provided that it is designed to protect the privacy of its occupants and those of neighbouring properties.

**Private Open Space**

Residential development will be permitted provided that it provides private open space in the form of gardens or communal open spaces appropriate to the needs of the intended occupants.

**Sunlight and Daylight**

Development will be permitted provided that any buildings and associated open areas (including gardens) receive adequate levels of daylight and sunlight and the levels of daylight and sunlight reaching any neighbouring property and open space are not reduced below acceptable levels.

**Artificial Light Intrusion**

Where external lighting is proposed, development will be permitted provided that:

- a the scheme is the minimum necessary to achieve its purpose; and
- b light scatter, spillage and glare are minimised through the control of light direction and intensity; and
- c the quality and intensity of the light and the daytime appearance of any light fittings and cables would not have a detrimental impact on local amenity or the character of the surrounding area.

In the case of other development, no light pollution should occur by virtue of lighting schemes incorporated into the development.

**Noise and Vibration**

In the case of noise and/or vibration-generating development, development will be permitted provided that the levels of noise and/or vibration would not cause an unacceptable level of disturbance (that is, exceed adopted or appropriate national standards) to the occupants of nearby properties.

In the case of noise and/or vibration-sensitive development, development will be permitted provided that the intended users would not be subject to unacceptable noise and/or vibration levels from existing noise or vibration-producing uses (that is, exceed adopted or appropriate national standards) having taken account of any proposed attenuation or other measures.



**POLICY 25 (CONT'D): AMENITY**

Where the Council considers that noise and/or vibration may be an issue, developers may be required to submit a noise and/or vibration impact assessment, having regard to best practice and relevant British Standards.

Where noise and/or vibration is likely to result from a proposed development, appropriate attenuation, mitigation and control measures should be agreed with the Council (including the use of planning conditions) such that levels of noise and/or vibration would not cause an unacceptable level of disturbance (i.e. exceed adopted or appropriate national standards) to the occupants of nearby properties.

**Unpleasant Emissions**

Development that would generate unpleasant emissions will only be permitted if the amenity of people living in the locality is not adversely affected.

In the case of residential development or other uses resulting in regular human occupation close to sources of unpleasant emissions, the impact of the emissions on the intended users of the development should be reduced to an acceptable degree through appropriate mitigation and control measures.

## Policy 26 - Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

### Introduction

- 10.99 Provision will be made for sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople<sup>334</sup> by the Council through the Dorset-wide Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Development Plan Document (the DPD). However, allocated sites will still require detailed planning consent while determinations will have to be made of applications for sites made in advance of adoption of the DPD and applications made for sites which are not allocated in the DPD. The criteria and considerations of this policy will be used alongside all other relevant planning policies to determine planning applications on allocated sites, on sites not allocated in the DPD and for applications for all sites prior to adoption of the DPD.
- 10.100 This Policy reflects national guidance in seeking to grant planning permissions for sites in appropriate locations to meet the identified needs of the Travelling community and the needs of different cultural groups within it<sup>335</sup>. This will help increase the number of Traveller sites, enabling the provision of suitable accommodation from which travellers can access education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure while having due regard to the protection of local amenity and local environment.

### Need, Site Type and Occupancy

- 10.101 Applicants will be expected to demonstrate that there is a need for any proposed Gypsy and Traveller site, having regard to the DPD and the availability of pitches on existing sites that could meet the needs of the intended occupants
- 10.102 The traditions and culture of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople mean that these groups usually live in mobile homes or caravans even if they have ceased travelling, either permanently or temporarily. This lifestyle gives rise to particular accommodation needs, not only for permanent residential sites but also for transit sites and emergency stopping places. The Council wishes to ensure that such sites are occupied only by Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople, as defined in national planning policy. In cases where the Council has concerns over occupancy, this may be controlled by condition or legal agreement.
- 10.103 Any application for a site should make clear whether it is intended to be a permanent residential site, a transit site or an emergency stopping place. The use and occupancy of sites may be controlled by condition or legal agreement to ensure that they perform the function for which they are intended.

<sup>334</sup> As defined in Annex 1, Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, DCLG (March 2012).

<sup>335</sup> For example: Roma and Romani Gypsies, Irish Travellers, 'New Age' Travellers. Differences between groups include language, religion, traditions and dress as well as social and work outlooks, customs and practices.

- 10.104 Occupation of a site may be limited to a temporary period and/or for the benefit of named occupiers where particular circumstances warrant this.

### Site Location and Access to Essential Services

- 10.105 National guidance requires that local planning authorities ensure that traveller sites are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable<sup>336</sup>. In the light of this, the Council recognises that the provision of sites within the countryside may be appropriate but all sites, whether located in the countryside or not, need to have good access to local services, not only to ensure that they are sustainably located but also to enable the intended occupants to meet their essential needs. National guidance also requires, amongst other things, that proper consideration be given to the effect of local environmental quality (such as noise and air quality) on the health and well-being of any travellers that may locate there or on others as a result of new development.
- 10.106 The Council will also have regard to access to other essential services, such as local shops and employment sites, as well as schools and the level of public transport provision when considering the suitability of the location of any site.
- 10.107 When assessing the suitability of sites in rural or semi-rural settings, the Council will ensure that the scale of such sites does not dominate the nearest settled community.
- 10.108 Proposals for sites must also comply with other relevant policies in this Plan, particularly those relating to design and landscape character, especially in respect of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB and the Dorset AONB.

### Vehicular Movements

- 10.109 The itinerant lifestyle of many Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople means that they often have large or slow moving vehicles both to tow their homes and in connection with their employment. The access to any site and the local highway network in the immediate vicinity should be capable of safely accommodating movements from these types of vehicle. Any site should also be designed to enable these vehicles to manoeuvre and park without compromising the safety of the occupants.

### Site Design and Size

- 10.110 When assessing the proposed design of a site for Gypsies or Travellers, the Council will have regard to good practice<sup>337</sup>, which suggests that transit sites should have many of the services and facilities that would be found on a permanent site. Sites for Gypsies and Travellers should generally be for residential use only but areas for the servicing of vehicles or the keeping of horses that are used as a means of

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<sup>336</sup> Paragraph 11, Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, DCLG (March 2012)

<sup>337</sup> As set out in Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites: Good Practice Guide, DCLG (May 2008)

transport may be permitted if a developer can demonstrate that they are required by the intended occupants.

- 10.111 The needs of Travelling Showpeople are somewhat different, as their livelihood often depends on them being able to repair and test their equipment (when not holding fairs) at a permanent residential base. In line with emerging national policy<sup>338</sup>, sites for Travelling Showpeople may be permitted for mixed residential and business uses but, in considering such proposals, the Council will have regard to the safety and amenity of the occupants of the site and residents nearby. Where mixed use is permitted on a site for Travelling Showpeople, the business element usually should be separated from the residential element.
- 10.112 National guidance suggests that sites should ideally have a maximum of 15 pitches but also points out that smaller sites of 3-4 pitches may be quite acceptable where occupied by a single extended family.

### Site Management

- 10.113 Some sites are privately owned and occupied, often by a single family group, but more often they are managed by a local authority, a registered social landlord or a private landlord. Developers of managed sites will be expected to demonstrate that management arrangements will be put in place to ensure the well-being of the intended occupants, including relationships between different ethnic groups, which is also likely to help foster good community relations<sup>339</sup>.
- 10.114 Developers should provide the Council with details of the arrangements for day-to-day site maintenance (for example the management of communal areas and the carrying out of minor repairs) and the arrangements for liaison with the intended occupants on matters relating to the site itself (such as the re-filling of vacant pitches) and social matters (such as support in securing access to education and healthcare).

### Keeping Animals

- 10.115 Where there is a likelihood that animals, notably horses and ponies, are likely to be kept then suitable provision should be made for grazing and shelter.

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<sup>338</sup> Consultation on Revised Planning Guidance in Relation to Travelling Showpeople, DCLG (January 2007)

<sup>339</sup> One of the key points made in research produced by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in October 2007 (Providing Gypsy and Traveller Sites: Contentious Spaces) was that 'well-managed sites were not only good places to live for Gypsies and Travellers, but also improved the perception of the travelling community in the eyes of the 'settled community', thereby allaying fears that might feed into public objections to future site proposals.'

**POLICY 26: SITES FOR GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING****SHOWPEOPLE**

Permanent caravan sites, transit caravan sites and emergency stopping places for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will be permitted given that the Council will have regard to:

- a the overall level of need in the District; and
- b the need for different types of site (such as permanent residential sites, transit sites and emergency stopping places); and
- c the needs of different groups within the travelling community (for example: Roma and Romani Gypsies, Irish Travellers, 'New Age' Travellers), both in terms of their site-based and locational requirements, taking account of their established cultural and travelling patterns; and
- d demonstration by the applicant of why, where a site is proposed in a location that has not been allocated in the Dorset-wide Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Development Plan Document, none of the allocated sites could be developed for use by the intended occupants; and
- e demonstration by the applicant of why, when new pitches are proposed and there are vacant pitches elsewhere within the District (either available on established sites or likely to become available in the near future on as yet undeveloped sites with planning permission), none of these would be a suitable alternative;

and providing that:

- f the occupation of the site is restricted to Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople; and
- g the site is located within, on the outskirts of, or within reasonable distance of, a settlement that offers local services and community facilities; and
- h there is safe access to the highway network and adequate space within the site for the parking and turning of vehicles;

**POLICY 26 (CONT'D): SITES FOR GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE**

and, in the case of permanent residential and transit sites:

- i the proposal secures the provision of facilities to meet the needs of the intended occupants including, if necessary, the servicing of vehicles and the keeping of horses that are used as a means of transport and other animals; and
- j there is adequate space for the storage and servicing of rides, where it is intended that the site would be occupied by Travelling Showpeople; and
- k there are satisfactory arrangements for site management (where it is intended that the site would be managed), both in terms of site maintenance and liaison between the manager and the intended occupants.

## Policy 27 - Retention of Community Facilities

### National Policy

- 10.116 The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. National policy states that to deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services that local communities need, planning policies should plan positively for the provision of community facilities<sup>340</sup>. Policy 14 - Social infrastructure aims to deliver this strategic objective for the District.
- 10.117 National policy also states that planning policies should guard against the unnecessary loss of 'valued' facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs. Policies should also seek to ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable and should be retained for the benefit of the community.
- 10.118 In rural areas, national policy<sup>341</sup> requires local plans to promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

### The District Council's Approach

- 10.119 Access to services is a key issue in North Dorset and the Council wishes to ensure that community facilities are retained, where possible. This policy sets out the circumstances when the Council may permit the loss of a community facility. It draws the distinction between those facilities that are run as private commercial businesses and others. For private commercial facilities, the key consideration is whether the business is viable or could be made viable. For other facilities, the main issues are whether there is a need for the current use and, if not, whether the facility could be put to an alternative community use, bearing in mind funding issues.

### Permitted Development Rights

- 10.120 Recent changes to legislation would allow the temporary change of use (up to 2 years) of up to 150 square metres floor space of some community facilities (provided they are not located in a listed building) to certain commercial uses

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<sup>340</sup> Paragraph 70, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

<sup>341</sup> Paragraph 28, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

under permitted development rights.<sup>342</sup> At expiry of the two year term, the site would revert to its previous lawful use.

- 10.121 Such temporary changes of use under permitted development rights cannot be controlled by the policies in this Local Plan but the success (or otherwise) of the enterprise and any impacts associated with the temporary change of use may be material considerations in the event that a land owner or developer subsequently submits a planning application to seek a permanent change of use.

### **Community Right to Bid**

- 10.122 A local community facility may be listed in the Council's register of 'assets of community value', under the Community Right to Bid. When a listed asset comes to be sold, a moratorium on the sale (of up to six months) may be invoked, providing local community groups with a chance to raise finance and to make a bid to buy the asset on the open market.
- 10.123 In the event that a land owner or developer submits a planning application putting forward proposals that would result in the loss of a community facility, the Council will have regard to the listing of any such facility as an 'asset of community value' and any initiative by the community to acquire the asset under the Community Right to Bid when considering the application.

### **Commercial Community Facilities**

- 10.124 The loss of commercial community facilities, such as neighbourhood shops in towns or village shops and public houses, reduces customer choice and can also necessitate people travelling further afield to meet their needs. This is a particular problem in rural areas, where village shops, post offices and pubs are central to village life, but the policy below applies to all community facilities.
- 10.125 Where viability is an issue, the Council would hope that owners of commercial community facilities would have explored all options available to them to ensure the continued success of their business. Where facilities need to extend to improve their viability, the Council will respond positively to applications for development to ensure local needs continue to be met.
- 10.126 If facilities need to diversify to maintain their presence on the high street or in the local village then again the Council would consider favourably applications for new uses in addition to the existing use. Depending on the scale of diversification sought, owners may be able to include a change of use in part of their premises through permitted development rights. Although this may only be temporary (for a two year period) it may be a useful tool to 'test the water' or appetite of local residents for such a use.

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<sup>342</sup> The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended by Statutory Instrument SI 2013 No. 1101).



10.127 To encourage diversification of rural services to ensure that they stay at the heart of local communities, more information and support can be provided by the Pub is The Hub<sup>343</sup>, a ‘not-for-profit’ organisation dedicated to offering advice and support to licensees, rural pubs and community services. An example of a successful diversification of a commercial community facility in North Dorset is the White Horse public house in Stourpaine, Blandford. When a nearby local shop was forced to close, a new store was built inside the pub. This new part of the business has been enthusiastically received by the local community and has helped the local landlord not only boost an existing community resource but saved another from being lost altogether.

10.128 The Council does not seek the retention of unviable commercial community facilities but wishes to prevent the loss of those that are viable or could be made viable. Opportunities within the permitted development rights allow temporary changes to other uses but, where a permanent change to another use or redevelopment is proposed, the Council will need to be convinced that the facility is not viable. Developers will be expected to show evidence of attempts to dispose of the property as a business. The Council will expect developers to provide evidence:

- of widespread advertising of the property as a business within North Dorset and neighbouring districts or counties for a minimum of 12 months;
- of the terms of disposal or the type of lease being offered;
- of the prices at which the disposal or lease of the business was being offered, which should reflect market values for such a business;
- of all offers received by the applicant or the estate agent marketing the business; and
- that no reasonable offer for the sale or lease of the business has been rejected.

### Other Community Facilities

10.129 Within the towns and villages, in addition to commercial community facilities (shops and pubs) there are those facilities that the Council considers are non-commercial community facilities (meeting rooms, village halls, sports clubs, places of worship, etc) that are of great value to local communities. These facilities require careful financial management but are not commercial concerns, and the Council will seek their retention to ensure such facilities are maintained in our towns and villages.

10.130 As with commercial community facilities, where facilities need to extend to ensure their continued use then the Council will respond positively to applications for development. Where facilities need to diversify, whether through permitted

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<sup>343</sup> [www.pubisthehub.org.uk](http://www.pubisthehub.org.uk)

development initially or by application for change of use for part of the premises, again the Council will consider applications favourably.

- 10.131 However, there will be occasions when a facility may become unused or underused and this policy outlines the Council's preferred approach to complete re-use or redevelopment. Where a change to another use or redevelopment is proposed, the Council will need to be convinced that the site or premises is no longer suitable or needed for the current or an alternative community use or that its continued community use cannot realistically be funded.
- 10.132 If it is considered that a facility is no longer needed for its current use then developers will be expected to demonstrate that the potential to use the site or building for other community uses had been investigated. Funding issues may relate both to the running of the facility itself and to its maintenance. In such cases, the Council will expect evidence to be provided of the running and/or capital costs and of the efforts made to secure adequate capital or revenue funding.
- 10.133 For the reuse or redevelopment of both commercial and non-commercial community facilities, the Council will take into account the importance or value of the facility to the local community and the area it serves. Those facilities listed as an 'asset of community value' will be given greater weight in the decision making process.

## **POLICY 27: RETENTION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

To ensure community facilities (both commercial and non-commercial) are retained the Council will:

- a respond positively to applications where facilities need to be extended to improve their viability or to ensure their continued use; and
- b look favourably on diversification to support the continuation of the existing use (i.e. change of use of part of the site to support the original use).

Development (including the change of use of an existing premises) which involves the loss of a commercial community facility (including a local shop or a public house) will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that the use is no longer commercially viable or cannot be made commercially viable.

Development (including the change of use of an existing premises) which results in the loss of a local community facility which is not run as a private business will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that it is no longer practical or desirable to use the facility for its existing use or another use likely to benefit the local community.

For all applications for development, the Council will take into account the importance of the facility to the local community and the area it serves but greater weight will be given to those facilities listed as an ‘asset of community value’.

## Policy 28 - Existing Dwellings in the Countryside

### National Policy

10.134 Core planning principles outlined in national policy<sup>344</sup> state that planning should support thriving rural communities whilst also recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. National policy<sup>345</sup> also emphasises that AONBs have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty and that great weight should be given to conserving their qualities.

### The District Council's Approach

10.135 In North Dorset, a general policy of restraint applies in the countryside but, since many people live in existing dwellings, it is inevitable that proposals to replace, extend, alter or add ancillary buildings to these dwellings will come forward.

10.136 The Council may permit the replacement, alteration or extension of existing dwellings in the countryside and the construction of ancillary domestic buildings within an existing residential curtilage, provided that such change would not undermine the general policy of restraint and / or have a detrimental impact on the character and beauty of the countryside. This policy therefore seeks to ensure that:

- these exceptions to the general policy of restraint in the countryside are not abused, for example, by attempts to establish new or additional permanent dwellings in the countryside; and
- any development associated with existing dwellings in the countryside does not have a harmful effect on its surroundings.

10.137 When considering proposals relating to existing dwellings within or close to AONBs, the Council will have regard to the potential impacts on AONB landscapes and their scenic beauty.

10.138 Different types of works affecting existing dwellings in the countryside give rise to a number of common issues which are discussed together in the supporting text. However, for ease of use and clarity, the policy has been divided into three sections, dealing with replacements, alterations and extensions and ancillary buildings separately.

### Existing Permanent Dwellings

10.139 The policy only permits the replacement, alteration or extension of existing permanent dwellings or the construction of ancillary domestic buildings within the residential curtilages of existing permanent dwellings. This is to ensure that the policy is not used to establish a permanent residential use on a site where only temporary consent exists or where such a use has lapsed as a result of dereliction.

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<sup>344</sup> Paragraph 17, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

<sup>345</sup> Paragraph 115, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

A proposal to replace a temporary or derelict dwelling with a permanent dwelling would fall outside the remit of this policy and would not be permitted. However, the replacement of a dwelling which has been severely damaged or destroyed accidentally (for example by fire) in the recent past (within two years) and which was in occupation at the time of the accident may be permitted.

### **Additional Separate Dwellings**

- 10.140 An additional separate permanent dwelling (or dwellings) should not be created on the site of an existing dwelling in the countryside as this would undermine the general policy of restraint. The policy below permits replacement dwellings in the countryside on a 'one for one' basis (one existing dwelling to be replaced by one new dwelling). It also seeks to ensure that an additional separate dwelling (or dwellings) is not created through the alteration or extension of an existing dwelling or the construction of an ancillary building within an existing residential curtilage. Whilst the creation of ancillary residential accommodation for a dependent relative (sometimes known as a 'granny annex') may be acceptable, any proposal to increase the number of separate residential units (for example, by replacing one existing dwelling with two or more dwellings or severing an extension from an original dwelling to form a separate unit) falls outside the remit of this policy and will not be permitted.

### **The Siting of Replacement Dwellings**

- 10.141 A replacement dwelling in the countryside should normally be located over the footprint of the existing dwelling. If it is proposed to relocate the dwelling elsewhere within the existing residential curtilage, the developer will be expected to demonstrate that this is necessary in order to bring about a significant environmental benefit. For instance, relocation elsewhere within the existing residential curtilage may make the replacement dwelling less intrusive in the landscape or may be required in order to achieve safer access to the highway. In cases where a replacement dwelling is permitted within an existing residential curtilage, but not on the site of the original dwelling, the demolition of the original dwelling will be required by condition or legal agreement.

### **The Extension of Existing Residential Curtilages**

- 10.142 The encroachment of domestic gardens into open countryside (and their associated structures, such as sheds, greenhouses, washing lines etc.) can have a significant impact on the rural landscape. Any development associated with an existing dwelling in the countryside should, therefore, take place within the existing residential curtilage. The proposed extension of an existing residential curtilage into the countryside will not be permitted.

## Size and Design

- 10.143 Size and design are key considerations when assessing the acceptability of proposals for replacement dwellings, alterations and extensions to existing dwellings and ancillary buildings within residential curtilages in the countryside. In all circumstances the design of any development associated with an existing dwelling in the countryside should be sympathetic to the site itself, the areas adjacent to the site (for example, neighbouring properties, nearby farm buildings or nearby landscape features) and the wider area as a whole (that is, Landscape Character Area, AONB or Conservation Area). Proposals, either individually or cumulatively, should not lead to over development of the site or, in the case of alterations, extensions and ancillary buildings, should not over dominate the existing dwelling.
- 10.144 The innovative, high-quality contemporary design of any development associated with an existing dwelling in the countryside that is sensitive to its immediate setting will be encouraged whereas poorly designed replacement dwellings, alterations and extensions or ancillary buildings will be refused permission, regardless of their size.
- 10.145 A replacement dwelling should not have a materially greater impact on its surroundings than the dwelling it replaces. Impact is likely to increase with size and, in many cases, a larger replacement dwelling would have a materially harmful impact that would not be acceptable. As a guide, a replacement dwelling should not be more than 50% larger than the existing dwelling it replaces (including any previously approved extensions or alterations to the original dwelling that have been constructed). When assessing the percentage increase in size, the floor space (not the footprint) of the existing dwelling (measured externally) will be compared to the floor space (not the footprint) of the proposed replacement dwelling (measured externally).
- 10.146 For alterations or extensions and ancillary buildings, the relationship with the existing dwelling is important. The scale, height and massing of any alteration or extension should appear subservient to the existing dwelling and the design should respect the character and appearance of the existing dwelling. In considering the size and design of extensions, account will be taken of the extent to which the dwelling has been previously extended or could be extended under Permitted Development Rights<sup>346</sup>.
- 10.147 Ancillary domestic buildings within existing residential curtilages can have a variety of uses. They can be used for domestic purposes, such as a games / hobby room or

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<sup>346</sup> The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 as amended makes provision for a certain scale of development without the need for planning permission subject to certain criteria. Statutory Instrument SI 2013 No. 1101 allows larger extensions (outside AONBs and Conservation Areas) subject to a prior approval process.

workshop or as a residential annex for dependent relatives or domestic household staff. In order to be genuinely ancillary, such buildings should be no larger than necessary to perform the particular function for which they are intended.

- 10.148 Where successive alterations, extensions or ancillary buildings are proposed (included those constructed under Permitted Development Rights), the Council will have regard to the cumulative effect on the existing dwelling, its immediate setting and its wider surroundings.

### **Use and Occupancy**

- 10.149 Whilst an increase in the floor space of an existing dwelling in the countryside may facilitate home working or enable domestic hobbies to be pursued, such development to enable commercial or business activities will not be permitted. In the case of a residential annex, occupancy will be restricted by condition or agreement to ensure that it would not be occupied as a separate dwelling.

**POLICY 28: EXISTING DWELLINGS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE****Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside**

The replacement of an existing dwelling in the countryside will be permitted provided that:

- a the existing dwelling is permanent, has not become derelict and is not the result of a temporary permission; and
- b the existing dwelling will be replaced by a single new dwelling; and
- c the replacement dwelling is located on the footprint of the existing dwelling unless the relocation of the dwelling within the existing residential curtilage will bring about a significant environmental benefit; and
- d there is no extension of the existing residential curtilage; and
- e the replacement dwelling is of a size and design that is no more visually intrusive in the landscape than the existing dwelling; and
- f the replacement dwelling is of a size and design that respects the character and appearance of the existing residential curtilage, its immediate setting and its wider surroundings.

**Alteration or Extension of Existing Dwellings in the Countryside**

The alteration or extension of an existing dwelling in the countryside will be permitted provided that:

- g the dwelling to be altered or extended is permanent, has not become derelict and is not the result of a temporary permission; and
- h the alteration or extension would not create an additional separate dwelling (or dwellings), or be capable of severance to form an additional separate dwelling (or dwellings); and
- i the alteration or extension would not require an extension of the existing residential curtilage; and
- j the dwelling as altered or extended would be of a size and design that is no more visually intrusive in the landscape than the existing dwelling; and
- k the extension or alteration would be of a size that is subservient in scale to the existing dwelling and designed to be in character with the existing dwelling.



## **POLICY 28 (CONT'D): EXISTING DWELLINGS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE**

### **Ancillary Domestic Buildings within Residential Curtilages in the Countryside**

An ancillary domestic building within an existing residential curtilage in the countryside will be permitted provided that:

- l the building is ancillary to an existing permanent dwelling; and
- m the building would not create an additional separate dwelling (or dwellings), or be capable of severance to form an additional separate dwelling (or dwellings); and
- n the building either would be used for purposes incidental to the enjoyment of the existing dwelling or would be a residential annex ancillary to the existing dwelling; and
- o the building would not require an extension of the existing residential curtilage; and
- p the building would be of a size and design that would not be visually intrusive in the landscape; and
- q the building would be designed to be proportionately smaller in scale and subsidiary in form to the existing dwelling and designed not to detract from the character of the existing dwelling.

## Policy 29 - The Re-use of Existing Buildings in the Countryside

### National Policy

- 10.150 In support of the transition to a low carbon future, national policy indicates that planning should encourage the re-use of existing resources, including existing buildings.<sup>347</sup>
- 10.151 National policy recognises that the conversion of existing buildings can help to promote a strong rural economy, as can the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses and sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments<sup>348</sup>.
- 10.152 Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances, such as where the development would re-use a redundant or disused building and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting<sup>349</sup>.

### The District Council's Approach

- 10.153 Stimulating economic growth and supporting the recovery of the local economy is one of the Council's corporate priorities. In support of this priority, and in the context of the national policy framework, Policy 29 encourages the re-use of existing buildings primarily for economic development or community purposes. It may also permit the re-use of an existing building for an occupational dwelling but only permits non-occupational re-use in exceptional circumstances.
- 10.154 This policy is primarily aimed at redundant, disused or underused buildings. It sets out:
- the characteristics existing buildings should have to make them acceptable for re-use;
  - the Council's approach to different types of use; and
  - how the Council will assess the acceptability of any scheme for re-use.
- 10.155 Proposals for re-use that may lead to the loss of an existing community facility in the countryside will be considered under Policy 27. Proposals for the redevelopment of exiting employment sites in the countryside for employment purposes will be considered under Policy 30.

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<sup>347</sup> Paragraph 17, National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

<sup>348</sup> Paragraph 28, National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

<sup>349</sup> Paragraph 55, National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

- 10.156 To support the move to a low carbon future the Council, where practicable, will seek to ensure that the highest standards of energy efficiency are incorporated into the design of re-use developments in line with national policy<sup>350</sup>.

### Permitted Development Rights

- 10.157 A building in the countryside that was in, or converted to, an office use (Use Class B1 a) prior to 30 May 2013 may be able to change to residential use without planning permission under permitted development rights. However, any existing building in the countryside converted to an office use after 30 May 2013 would not benefit from this right.
- 10.158 Recent changes in legislation<sup>351</sup> allow the flexible re-use of up to 500 square metres of an agricultural building and land within its curtilage. A range of economic and community uses are permitted but this right would only apply to a building whose agricultural use commenced after 3 July 2012, after 10 years agricultural use. Once the use of an agricultural building has been changed under this permitted development right, it is treated as having a sui generis use. This effectively precludes any further changes of use outside the range of flexible economic and community uses deemed to be acceptable under this permitted development right.
- 10.159 Such changes of use under permitted development rights cannot be controlled by the policies in this Local Plan but the success (or otherwise) of any economic enterprise or community project and any impacts associated with the flexible change of use may be material considerations in the event that a landowner or developer subsequently submits a planning application to seek a permanent change of use with or without associated external alterations.

### Characteristics of the Existing Building

#### Permanency

- 10.160 The Council only permits the re-use of existing permanent buildings under this policy to ensure that it is not used to establish a permanent use on a site where only temporary consent exists or where a permanent use has lapsed as a result of dereliction. However, exceptionally, the Council may permit the re-use of a derelict building if the developer can demonstrate that dereliction was the result of severe accidental damage or accidental destruction (for example, by fire) in the recent past (within two years).

#### Status

- 10.161 The re-use of buildings in the countryside policy is primarily aimed at buildings with an existing use and those that are underused. An existing building does not need

<sup>350</sup> Paragraph 95, National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

<sup>351</sup> Class M of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended - most recently by Statutory Instrument SI 2013 No. 1101)

to be empty before a scheme for conversion or diversification would be considered, however, the Council will wish to ensure that any existing use or activities could be accommodated, either on or off site, without the need for an additional building to fulfil the function of the building being converted.

- 10.162 Buildings need to be soundly constructed to merit retention and re-use. Derelict buildings are clearly no longer of sound construction but some other buildings are also not suitable for re-use. These include buildings constructed with temporary or short-life materials and those built without proper foundations.
- 10.163 Where a building is redundant or disused re-use is permitted under national policy, however, this is limited to a number of ‘special circumstances’. In each case the developer will need to demonstrate the redundant or disused status of the building.

### Location

- 10.164 The Council supports the re-use of buildings in the countryside, particularly those close to towns and villages as a means of supporting sustainable growth. The re-use of buildings in isolated locations, such as those that are located well away from the public highway network in locations that are not served by utilities (such as sewerage, water and electricity), will generally not be allowed.
- 10.165 However, there are some businesses that already exist in isolated locations so development may be permitted where the re-use of a building could support an existing business. Diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses and sustainable rural tourism and leisure development are supported to promote a strong rural economy.
- 10.166 The re-use of a redundant or disused building in isolated locations will only be allowed in special circumstances.

### Merits

- 10.167 The countryside includes many buildings of historic or architectural importance and buildings which contribute to local character. Such buildings enhance the countryside and the Council will actively encourage their retention and re-use.
- 10.168 However, national policy has widened the types of building suitable for re-use with changes to agricultural permitted development rights.
- 10.169 For agricultural buildings over 500 square metres, the Council will not seek the retention and re-use of existing buildings as it considers these larger buildings to potentially have a harmful impact on their surroundings or the wider landscape. In many circumstances, the removal of disused agricultural buildings would be preferable to retention as this would bring about an environmental improvement. This is most likely to be the case with a modern building, whose retention and re-use is unlikely to be acceptable if it is large in scale, clad with unattractive materials (such as profiled steel or asbestos sheeting) or has a very utilitarian appearance.

## Proposed Uses

### Economic Development and Community Uses

- 10.170 In line with national permitted development rights the Council's preferred re-use of a building in the countryside is for economic development purposes. Such uses can help significantly towards the diversification of the rural economy and in principle the Council may permit business use, storage, small-scale tourist attractions, holiday accommodation, or non-residential uses associated with a caravan and/or camping site (for example toilets and washing facilities). Further guidance on re-use of buildings for Tourist Accommodation can be found in Development Management Policy 31.
- 10.171 The Council also supports the re-use of buildings in the countryside for community facilities (both commercial and non-commercial as outlined in Policy 14) and recreational uses (including equine-related developments), especially where this would improve accessibility to services for local people. Again, further guidance on Equine Related Development in the Countryside can be found in Development Management Policy 32.

### Occupational Dwellings

- 10.172 National policy indicates that residential development in the countryside may be justified where there is an essential need for a worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside. The re-use of an existing building for such purposes can reduce the pressure for new occupational dwellings on greenfield sites. Where the re-use is proposed to support an existing business, such as an existing farm operation, it will be supported by the Council. In such cases, the Council will consider the functional and financial need for the dwelling in accordance with Policy 33: Occupational Dwellings in the Countryside.
- 10.173 In cases where residential re-use is proposed as part of a scheme for the re-use of a building or group of buildings for economic development purposes, or where the residential use is proposed to support a rural business (such as an equine-related enterprise), developers will be expected to demonstrate that there is an essential need for the dwelling. Evidence of need in the form of both functional and financial tests will be required, in accordance with Policy 33 Occupational Dwellings. In cases where a dwelling is permitted as part of a scheme for business re-use, or to support a rural business, the Council will tie the occupation of the dwelling to the operation of the enterprise by condition or agreement to prevent it from being sold or otherwise severed from the business.

### Non-Occupational Dwellings

- 10.174 National policy allows new isolated homes (those with no occupational conditions or agreements) in the countryside only in 'special circumstances', such as where the development would:

- re-use a redundant or disused building and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting; or
- where a dwelling would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset; or
- would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of a heritage asset (subject to Policy 5 Historic Environment).

10.175 For each of the above special circumstances, the developer will be expected to:

- confirm the status of the building and demonstrate how its development would enhance the immediate setting; or
- provide evidence that a dwelling would represent the optimal viable use of the heritage asset; or
- provide evidence that enabling development is required to secure the future of a heritage asset.

10.176 With the exception of the above, the Council will only allow the re-use of buildings in the countryside for non-occupational dwellings where developers can demonstrate that each of the types of development that the Council considers acceptable in principle (Economic Development and Community Uses or Occupational Dwellings) are impracticable. The Council will expect developers to provide evidence:

- of widespread advertising of the property within North Dorset and neighbouring districts or counties for a minimum of 12 months;
- of the types of re-use that were being suggested for the property in the marketing material;
- of the prices at which the disposal or letting of the property was being offered, which should reflect market values for such buildings;
- of all offers received by the applicant or the estate agent marketing the property; and
- that no reasonable offer for the sale or letting of the property has been rejected.

10.177 Ideally, non-occupational dwellings should be in relatively sustainable locations where the residents have the opportunity to meet at least some of their essential needs locally. In considering the acceptability of any such dwelling, the Council will have regard to access to health and education services, local shops and employment sites and the availability of public transport.

### **Assessing the Acceptability of the Proposed Scheme for Re-use**

10.178 All schemes for the re-use of existing buildings in the countryside should be designed with their rural location in mind and the potential impacts that the re-use might have on the surrounding area.

10.179 Larger scale schemes are more likely to have an impact on the rural roads, the amenity of local residents and the landscape setting. Such impacts will be considered against the relevant policies elsewhere in the Local Plan.

- 10.180 Developers should be realistic about the uses to which an existing building in the countryside might be put. The existing building should be large enough to accommodate the intended re-use but developers should also be aware that a building's design and construction may limit the type of use that can be accommodated. Any scheme should enable conversion to the intended use without the need for complete or substantial reconstruction. The Council may require a structural survey to confirm the level of reconstruction required. As a guideline, the Council will generally not permit schemes for re-use which require more than 25% of the structural walls to be rebuilt or more than 50% of the wall cladding to be replaced.
- 10.181 Since the existing building should be large enough to accommodate the intended re-use, there should be no need for extensions, other than those which are modest in scale and ancillary in nature, such as extensions to accommodate a fire escape or entrance lobby or an external corridor that would be desirable to avoid the need to sub-divide an attractive internal space.
- 10.182 Many buildings of historic or architectural importance or buildings which contribute to local character are listed. Schemes for their re-use will usually require listed building consent even in cases where planning permission is not required. The Council also wishes to ensure that the historic or architectural importance of unlisted buildings is not harmed by any scheme for re-use and that any such scheme would not erode the contribution an unlisted building made to local character.
- 10.183 Many existing buildings in the countryside have a well-defined 'curtilage' or an established site area (which may be defined on the ground or legally, for example, in a Certificate of Lawful Use or Development). In such cases, any activities associated with the re-use of the building should take place within that curtilage or site area. Where it is necessary to define a curtilage or operational site area as part of the scheme for re-use, this should be the minimum required to meet the operational needs of the intended re-use.
- 10.184 Where a scheme for the re-use of a building is permitted, the use should be capable of being accommodated to a large extent within the building itself. Incidental external ancillary uses such as essential operational parking are likely to be acceptable, provided that they are the minimum necessary to meet the needs of the development. Other ancillary uses, such as the outdoor storage of goods or materials, are unlikely to be acceptable. In all cases, the use, layout and design of any outdoor areas should ensure that the development is not visually intrusive in the landscape.
- 10.185 Certain types of re-use could potentially compete with existing services and facilities in the towns and villages. Generally these services and facilities are more sustainability located and schemes for re-use of buildings that would adversely affect their viability should be avoided.

**POLICY 29: THE RE-USE OF EXISTING BUILDINGS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE****Building Characteristics**

The re-use of an existing building in the countryside will be permitted provided that:

- a the existing building is permanent, has not become derelict and is not the result of a temporary permission; and
- b its existing status relates to its proposed use and that it is of sound construction; and
- c where there is a loss of an existing use it would not give rise to a future need for another building to fulfil the function of the building being re-used; and
- d the existing building is not in an isolated location, unless the proposed re-use is to support an existing business or is allowed by national policy as a 'special circumstance'; and
- e the existing building merits retention and re-use.

**Proposed Uses**

The preferred re-use of existing buildings in the countryside are for economic development or community purposes. This includes, but is not limited to, business uses, storage, small-scale tourist attractions, holiday accommodation, non-residential uses in association with a caravan and/or camping sites, community activities or recreational uses (including equine-related recreational use).

The Council also supports the re-use of existing buildings for residential purposes where there is an essential need for a worker to have a dwelling in a countryside location.

Re-use for non-occupational residential purposes will only be allowed when re-use for either economic development or community purposes is not feasible.

Where a building is redundant and disused national policy for the re-use for non-occupational dwellings will apply when the status of the building has been confirmed and evidence to support the special circumstance is provided.



## **POLICY 29 (CONT'D): THE RE-USE OF EXISTING BUILDINGS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE**

### **Assessment Criteria**

All applications for re-use will be assessed using the following criteria:

- f the existing building is inherently suitable, in terms of its size, design and construction for the intended re-use and the proposed scheme enables the intended re-use to be achieved without the need for complete or substantial reconstruction; and
- g the proposed re-use is of a scale that would not have an adverse impact on its surroundings or the viability of existing facilities or services in nearby settlement;
- h any extension to the existing building included in the proposed scheme is modest in scale, ancillary in nature, subordinate to the main building and necessary to meet the essential functional requirements of the intended re-use; and
- i in cases where the existing building is of historic or architectural importance or contributes to local character, the proposed scheme would not adversely affect the character and appearance of the building or its setting; and
- j the proposed scheme does not require an extension of the curtilage of the existing building; and
- k the proposed scheme would not give rise to ancillary uses that could not be accommodated within the site and does not include, or would not give rise to, ancillary uses within the site, such as open storage, that would be visually intrusive.

Where special circumstances apply:

- l the re-use of redundant or disused buildings for non-occupational dwellings an enhancement of the immediate setting will need to be demonstrated; or
- m Evidence of viability and enabling development will need to be supplied.

## Policy 30 - Existing Employment Sites in the Countryside

### National Policy

10.186 The Government encourages planning policies to support a prosperous rural economy and indicates that local plans should support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings<sup>352</sup>. One of the core planning principles of national policy is also to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside<sup>353</sup>.

### The District Council's Approach

10.187 In North Dorset, many employment sites already exist in the countryside, which provide jobs for local people. This policy permits the redevelopment and limited expansion of existing employment sites in the countryside for employment purposes to help support the rural economy. Whilst it provides such businesses with some flexibility, it also seeks to ensure that such development does not have a harmful effect on its surroundings. Proposals for expansion beyond the scale appropriate to a rural location would usually necessitate relocation to alternative premises in a more suitable location, such as an industrial estate at a town or village.

10.188 Proposals for the re-use of existing buildings in the countryside (for a range of economic development and other uses) will be considered under Policy 29.

### Lawful Development and Use

10.189 The policy only permits the redevelopment of, or expansion within, existing employment sites that have been lawfully developed and have a lawful use. In cases where there is doubt over the lawfulness of existing activities, developers would be expected to seek a Certificate of Lawful Use or Development from the Council. In the event that the certificate was not issued, or the lawful development / use could not be established in some other way, development proposed under this policy would not be permitted.

### The Extent of the Existing Employment Use

10.190 Many employment sites in the countryside have a well-defined curtilage within which employment activities take place and for others the extent of the area within which employment activities can take place is defined by a planning consent or a Certificate of Lawful Use or Development. Any proposals for redevelopment or expansion should take place within the area which has a lawful employment use.

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<sup>352</sup> Paragraph 28, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

<sup>353</sup> Paragraph 17, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

## Permitted Development Rights

- 10.191 Recent amendments to permitted development rights<sup>354</sup> allow certain changes of use between employment (Class B) uses in up to 500 square metres of an existing employment building. Recent changes in legislation also increase the scope to erect or alter a non-listed industrial or warehouse building located outside an AONB or Conservation Area, subject to a prior notification process.
- 10.192 Such changes of use, expansion or alterations under permitted development rights cannot be controlled by the policies in this Local Plan but the success (or otherwise) of any economic enterprise and any impacts associated with the works undertaken under permitted development rights may be material considerations in the event that a land owner or developer subsequently submits a planning application for the redevelopment and / or limited expansion of an existing employment site in the countryside.

## Ancillary Uses

- 10.193 Parts of some employment sites are used for ancillary uses such as parking and open storage of goods or materials. It may be appropriate to expand onto or to redevelop these areas, provided that they also have a lawful use. Expansion into areas that do not have a lawful use, even if they are currently used for ancillary uses, will not be permitted. Where it is proposed to expand onto or to redevelop an area with ancillary uses, the developer will be expected to demonstrate that the scheme would not result in pressure for ancillary uses, including car parking, on land outside the existing lawful employment site.
- 10.194 Expansion or redevelopment could result in different employment activities taking place on site, some of which may require the open storage of goods or materials. In such cases, the developer would be expected to demonstrate how such uses could be accommodated on site without being visually intrusive. In cases where ancillary uses are an issue, such activities may be controlled by condition or agreement.

## Size and Design

- 10.195 All schemes for development on existing employment sites in the countryside should be designed with their rural location in mind. They should not be visually intrusive and should be designed with regard to the potential impacts on areas adjacent to the site (for example impacts on nearby residential properties or agricultural holdings) and the potential impacts on the wider area (for example, impacts on an AONB or Conservation Area).
- 10.196 Existing employment sites in the countryside take a variety of forms, ranging from attractive converted historic farm buildings to unsightly utilitarian buildings, many

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<sup>354</sup> The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended - most recently by Statutory Instrument SI 2013 No. 1101)

of which predate planning controls. The general approach to extensions and new buildings on existing employment sites is to ensure that they integrate with the existing development not only in terms of scale, height and massing but also in terms of architectural detailing and materials.

- 10.197 Redevelopment may enable unsightly buildings to be removed or for other improvements, such as safer access to the site, to be made. The general approach to redevelopment should be to use the opportunity to bring about an environmental improvement wherever possible. It may be appropriate to redevelop all of an existing site in phases but the partial redevelopment of a site will only be permitted where the developer has examined the redevelopment opportunities on the site as a whole and can demonstrate that complete redevelopment is neither appropriate nor necessary to achieve an environmental improvement. Whilst redevelopment may enable existing or new businesses to increase floorspace to some extent, the need for all developments on existing employment sites in the countryside to respect their rural location may mean that the scope for enlargement is limited.

### **Use and Occupancy**

- 10.198 The redevelopment of an existing employment site in the countryside is permitted as an exception to the general policy of restraint and in order to assess the potential impacts on the rural area, the Council needs to know who the future occupier will be. Consequently, schemes for the redevelopment of existing employment sites should not be brought forward on a speculative basis. The Council would usually expect a redevelopment scheme to be brought forward by the existing occupier for their own use. However, a scheme for a different user may be permitted provided that the developer can specifically identify the new user and it can be demonstrated that there is a realistic prospect of the potential new user occupying the site.
- 10.199 The isolated location of certain employment sites in the countryside may mean that un-neighbourly uses (such as noisy industrial activities) can be undertaken without causing harm. However, where the expansion or redevelopment of an employment site could give rise to amenity problems, the use and occupancy may be restricted by condition or agreement.
- 10.200 All existing employment sites in the countryside are located outside defined settlement boundaries where residential development is strictly controlled. Consequently, mixed use schemes or individual residential units will not be permitted on existing employment sites in the countryside.

**POLICY 30: EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SITES IN THE COUNTRYSIDE**

Within existing employment sites in the countryside, the extension of an existing building, the construction of a new building or the redevelopment of buildings or the site as a whole will be permitted provided that:

- a the existing development and use is lawful; and
- b the extent of the site in lawful employment use (including ancillary uses) is not increased; and
- c the development would not include or give rise to ancillary uses within the site, such as open storage, that would be visually intrusive, or would not give rise to ancillary uses that could not be accommodated within the site; and
- d the development is of a size and design that is no more visually intrusive in the landscape than the existing development and respects the immediate setting of the site and its wider surroundings; and
- e in the case of an extension to an existing building or a new building, it is of a size that is not disproportionate to the existing building (or buildings). Any extension should be designed to be in character with the existing building (or buildings) and any new building should not detract from the character of the existing building (or buildings); and
- f where redevelopment is proposed, a specific need for the scheme has been identified, the scheme deals comprehensively with the site as a whole, and a significant environmental benefit will be achieved.

## Policy 31 - Tourist Accommodation in the Countryside

### National Policy

- 10.201 The Government encourages planning policies to support a prosperous rural economy and indicates that local plans should:
- support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside; and
  - promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses<sup>355</sup>.
- 10.202 One of the core planning principles of national policy is also to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside<sup>356</sup>.

### The District Council's Approach

- 10.203 There is a range of tourist accommodation in the countryside of North Dorset including hotels, guest houses, bed and breakfast establishments, self-catering accommodation, holiday chalets and caravan and tent camping sites. Whilst tourism brings economic benefits to the area, it is also important to ensure that all tourism-related development (including new tourist accommodation) does not harm the countryside, which many tourists come to enjoy.
- 10.204 This policy differentiates between types of accommodation of a more temporary nature (such as caravans and tents) and those of more permanent construction (that is, built accommodation). The latter will only be permitted in the countryside if an existing building is re-used or extended. It permits caravan and tent camping sites which are sustainably located, or that will demonstrably support farm diversification, provided that in both cases they can be successfully integrated into the landscape.
- 10.205 As with any other form of development, the acceptability of any proposal for tourist accommodation in the countryside (including any extensions to existing hotels, guest houses etc.) will need to be considered against all other relevant planning policies, including those relating to design, amenity and the protection of the environment.
- 10.206 The Council wishes to ensure that where new tourist accommodation is permitted in the countryside, the premises are only used by visitors and do not become part of the local housing stock. The Council will therefore look to secure such arrangements as part of any planning permission.

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<sup>355</sup> Paragraph 28, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

<sup>356</sup> Paragraph 17, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

### Built Tourist Accommodation

- 10.207 The main focus of economic activity in North Dorset (including tourism) is the four main towns of Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton. Additional tourist facilities and larger hotels may be permitted, in principle, as town centre uses within the four main towns in line with Policy 11 – The Economy. Smaller-scale tourist accommodation, such as guest houses and bed and breakfast establishments, may also be permitted within the settlement boundaries of the four main towns<sup>357</sup>.
- 10.208 Outside the four main towns, new built tourist accommodation, including hotels, guest houses, bed and breakfast establishments, self-catering accommodation and holiday chalets will only be permitted if an existing building is re-used. Policy 29- The Re-use of Existing Buildings in the Countryside establishes that tourist accommodation can be an acceptable use in such buildings and sets out criteria to enable the acceptability of any scheme to be assessed. Extensions to existing hotels, guest houses etc. may also be permitted if an essential need for a countryside location can be demonstrated under Policy 20 – The Countryside.

### Caravan and Tent Camping Sites

- 10.209 Tourist accommodation in rural areas has traditionally taken the form of static caravan, touring caravan or tent camping sites. However, proposals may also come forward for more unusual forms of ‘tented’ accommodation, such as yurts, tee-pees and wigwams. All such proposals will be considered in the context of the issues outlined below.
- 10.210 For the purposes of this policy, references to ‘caravan(s)’ means any structure that satisfies relevant legislative provisions as to the meaning of ‘caravan’<sup>358</sup> whilst reference to ‘tent(s)’ means a small moveable structure that is designed or adapted (solely or mainly) for the purpose of sleeping in a place for any period and which is primarily constructed of fabric, skin or similar material.

### Sustainable Location

- 10.211 Generally, a site proposed for caravans or tents in the countryside should be sustainably located so that the type of local facilities that tourists may wish to use can be accessed by means other than the car. In considering such proposals the Council will have regard to:
- the proximity of towns or villages with facilities that tourists are likely to want to use (such as a local shop or public house);

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<sup>357</sup> Reflecting advice on the location of hotels and other service accommodation in Annex A of the Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism, DCLG (2006)

<sup>358</sup> For the purposes of this policy the current relevant legislative provisions are Section 29 of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and Section 13 of the Caravan Sites Act 1968.

- whether the relevant facilities are within easy and feasible walking or cycling distance of the proposed development; and
- whether the relevant facilities could be accessed by a regular and frequent public transport service.

### Farm Diversification

10.212 The Council does not wish to preclude a proposal for caravan or tent accommodation as part of a farm diversification scheme simply by virtue of its location, which may not be considered to be sustainable. The Council may permit such a scheme provided that:

- it would be small in scale both in terms of the number of units / pitches being proposed and the area to be used for such purposes;
- it would be directly linked to an existing farm business and would not form a separate enterprise; and
- the proposal is accompanied by an assessment demonstrating that it will materially assist in maintaining the long term viability of the existing farm business.

10.213 The Council may use conditions or a planning obligation to ensure that the scheme is not severed from the existing business to form a separate enterprise.

### Landscape Impact

10.214 Some caravans and tents can provide accommodation that creates a permanent / semi-permanent visible feature in the countryside all year round. Although many touring caravans and tents may be present only during the summer months, ancillary buildings, such as wash blocks, are often permanent. All these forms of development can have a significant impact on landscape character, especially in areas of high landscape sensitivity (such as AONBs or Conservation Areas).

10.215 A proposed site should be sensitively located to take advantage of natural features, such as local topography and mature vegetation, so as to minimise overall visual impact as much as possible. Any residual visual impacts should be mitigated through measures such as the sensitive layout and siting of the accommodation units, designing and siting ancillary buildings to make best use of existing features and additional landscape planting where necessary.

### Occupancy Restrictions

10.216 The Government supports the use of seasonal and holiday occupancy conditions to ensure that tourist accommodation is only used by visitors and does not become part of the local housing stock<sup>359</sup>.

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<sup>359</sup> National guidance on seasonal and holiday occupancy conditions is set out in Annex B of the Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism, DCLG (May 2006)



- 10.217 The Council defines tourist accommodation as accommodation which is:
- only occupied for holiday purposes and therefore not as a principal residence; and
  - is not occupied continuously by the same person or group of persons for a period in excess of 28 days, or who return where no return is permitted within the following 28 days.
- 10.218 Where tourist accommodation is permitted, the Council may control its use and occupancy by condition. Where it is not possible to include matters in a planning condition, such as when there is a need to secure on-going management or financial payments, a legal agreement may be required.
- 10.219 The Council may require a register of occupancy to be kept or other measures to be put in place to ensure that the accommodation is not used for residential occupation, either on a permanent basis or for temporary periods of more than 28 days. The Council may also require evidenced justification, such as a viability test, to support an application to release holiday and occupancy conditions or renegotiate an agreement.

### **POLICY 31: TOURIST ACCOMMODATION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE**

Proposals for new built tourist accommodation in the countryside will only be permitted if re-using an existing building, in line with Policy 29- The Re-use of Existing Buildings in the Countryside.

Proposals for, and extensions of, sites for static caravans, touring caravans and tent camping will be permitted provided that:

- a the proposal is in a sustainable location where local services that tourists are likely to want to use can be accessed by means other than the car; or
- b the proposal is small in scale and is proven to be needed and viable as part of a farm diversification scheme; and
- c the proposal is compatible in character, design and scale with the area in which it is proposed, particularly in areas of high landscape sensitivity, and any adverse impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated.

## Policy 32 - Equine-related Developments in the Countryside

### National Policy

10.220 National policy<sup>360</sup> indicates that local planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. Local plans should:

- support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas;
- promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside.

### The District Council's Approach

10.221 In North Dorset, the riding and keeping of horses are popular leisure pursuits and equestrian businesses can contribute to the rural economy. However, both of these activities have the potential to adversely affect environmental quality and the rural character of the District.

10.222 This policy sets out the Council's approach to equine-related activities in the countryside, which seeks to promote a strong rural economy whilst also protecting environmental quality and rural character. The policy and supporting text cover both the keeping of horses for private recreational purposes and commercial enterprises. It:

- outlines the types of equine-related activities and developments that are likely to require planning permission;
- discusses some general issues that apply to all equine-related development, such as site suitability and management, horse exercising and highway issues;
- sets out the Council's approach to different types of development (mainly field shelters and private stables, commercial recreation and leisure developments, and commercial training and breeding businesses) and
- discusses the issue of ancillary uses (such as riding arenas and occupational dwellings).

10.223 In the policy and supporting text, the term 'equine' means any domestic horse, pony, donkey and hybrids (including mules) and where the word 'horse' is used the reference applies to all equines.

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<sup>360</sup> Paragraph 28, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

## The Need for Planning Permission

10.224 Developments which normally require planning permission include:

- the use of land or a building to keep horses for recreational purposes;
- the erection of a building to shelter horses or their provisions;
- the erection of a building in which to exercise horses;
- the setting out of a riding arena or exercise area or to create other hard surfaces for a similar purpose;
- the putting up of lights to illuminate a riding arena or other area;
- any residential development associated with the keeping of horses, including the stationing of a mobile home or caravan in a field; and
- the laying out or surfacing of a vehicular access in connection with the keeping of horses.

10.225 Commercial establishments, such as riding schools, livery stables, racing stables and stud farms (and extensions to existing premises) also require consent.

10.226 Planning permission is not usually required to graze horses, which is considered to be an agricultural use but is required for the keeping of horses for recreational or commercial purposes. The distinction between ‘grazing’ and ‘the keeping of’ horses is not always clear but the Council will assume that horses are being ‘kept’ (rather than ‘grazed’) if:

- the animals are being fed by imported food rather than off the land; or
- the land is being used (wholly or in part) as a recreational or exercise area; or
- the stocking density is too high to support the horses by grazing alone. As a general rule, each horse requires about 0.5 – 1.0 hectares (or 1.25 to 2.5 acres) of grazing of a suitable quality if no supplementary feeding is being provided<sup>361</sup>.

10.227 Even where grazing is the primary use, any building (such as a field shelter) or other structure associated with the keeping of horses is likely to require permission.

## General Issues Related to all Equine-related Development

### Site Suitability and Site Management

10.228 Any land associated with any equine-related development should be inherently suitable for keeping horses and should be managed to maintain environmental quality, countryside character, the amenity of local residents and the welfare of the horses themselves<sup>362</sup>.

10.229 A site where the ground is wet and boggy or where poisonous plants, such as ragwort, are present is unlikely to be suitable for keeping horses unless these issues

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<sup>361</sup> Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses, Ponies, Donkeys and their Hybrids, DEFRA (December 2009)

<sup>362</sup> Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 anyone who owns or is responsible for an animal (whether on a permanent or temporary basis) has a legal duty to take reasonable steps to ensure its welfare needs are met.

can be fully addressed through pasture management. Where it is proposed to keep horses close to residential properties they should not be able to gain access to garden waste (including lawn clippings) or garden plants that may be toxic (such as yew and laburnum). There should be sufficient land to support the number of horses proposed without causing problems such as overgrazing.

- 10.230 Horses require regular supervision and, as a minimum, should be visited at least once a day. Consideration therefore needs to be given to the site management regime, which will vary according to the size and nature of the development. However, in all cases consideration should be given to basic operational requirements. For instance, for field shelters or stables for private recreational use, the buildings should be reasonably close to the site access, with the water supply for the horses close to the buildings.
- 10.231 Sound pasture management usually requires droppings to be picked daily and any arrangements for the storage and disposal of manure should not cause amenity problems for neighbours (for example, through smells or flies) or adversely affect environmental quality (for example, through pollution). The Council will have regard to the advice of environmental health officers and the Environment Agency on issues of this nature when making planning decisions.

### Exercising Horses

- 10.232 Where it is proposed to exercise horses primarily on-site, any exercise area should be separate from the area where the horses are kept or grazed. Where it is intended to exercise horses off-site, the routes or sites that will be used for exercise, such as nearby bridleways or areas of open land, should be safely accessible from the proposed development. Where there is, or is likely to be, a need for riding on public roads, the Council will have regard to any highway safety issues. The Council will also seek to ensure that routes and sites can be used for exercise without contributing to soil erosion (especially on well-used bridleways), harming vegetation or having a detrimental impact on wildlife interests, particularly in respect to designated sites such as SACs, SSSIs and Nature Reserves.

### Impact on the Highway Network

- 10.233 A site where horses are kept is likely to require access by towed horseboxes, horse carrying lorries, or other large vehicles with limited manoeuvrability. The vehicular access to such a site should be capable of safely accommodating such vehicles and the routes to the site should be capable of accommodating the type and volume of traffic likely to be generated without harming the character of the route itself.

## Types of Equine Development

### Private Recreation and Leisure Use

- 10.234 The keeping of horses for private recreation and leisure use are popular pastimes in North Dorset and for many owners shelters and stables are necessary for their horses' welfare.
- 10.235 Field shelters or stables will be permitted where they are intended to be used by the horses that are currently present on a site or the horses it is intended to graze or keep on a site for private recreational use, provided that they are suitably designed and located. The need for a field shelter or stable for private recreational use may cease after a period of time. With this in mind, such structures should be built, as far as possible, so that they can be removed when they are no longer needed. The Council may use conditions or seek an agreement to require the removal of such structures in the event that the equine-related use ceases. Such structures will not generally be suitable for re-use under Policy 29 – The Re-use of Existing Buildings in the Countryside.
- 10.236 Shelters and stables should be built of wood or other similar lightweight material, although a concrete base may be acceptable where this is required for the safety and comfort of the horses<sup>363</sup>. New stables of stone, brick or block work will not generally be permitted for private use although the conversion of existing buildings to stables for private recreational use may be acceptable under Policy 29 –The Re-use of Existing Buildings in the Countryside.
- 10.237 A separate ancillary structure of similar construction to store tack, feed and/or bedding may be permitted. The amount of tack stored on site should be kept to a minimum for security reasons.

### Commercial Recreation, Leisure, Training and Breeding Developments

- 10.238 Commercial recreation or leisure equine-related developments (such as livery stables and riding schools) and commercial training or breeding equine-related developments (such as racing stables and stud farms) may be acceptable uses in the countryside. Small-scale businesses, such as riding schools, may provide a useful form of farm diversification but the Council may also permit larger-scale enterprises as they can help to diversify the wider rural economy.
- 10.239 Due to their scale, such enterprises can be difficult to accommodate within existing buildings. An existing building or group of buildings should form the basis for a development of this nature but the Council may permit an additional element of new building where there is an essential need and there is no suitable alternative existing building or group of buildings available. Where an element of new build is

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<sup>363</sup> Further guidance on Stable Accommodation/Housing can be found in the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses, Ponies, Donkeys and their Hybrids, DEFRA (December 2009)

permitted, it should be sensitively designed to integrate with the existing buildings. Elements of new building that are disproportionate in scale to, or out of character with, the existing buildings are unlikely to be acceptable. The Council will also consider the cumulative impact of such developments on the character of the countryside.

### Viability and Change of Use of Commercial Premises

- 10.240 Since commercial equine-related developments may be permitted in the countryside as an exception to the general policy of restraint, the Council will wish to ensure that any such enterprise is likely to be viable before allowing it. Such proposals should, therefore, be supported by a business plan that shows that the proposed enterprise has a sound financial basis. In the event that a commercial equine-related business fails, the owner or occupier will need to produce evidence that the business is not viable, or cannot be made viable, before a change of use may be permitted. Any change of use will be assessed against the criteria outlined in Policy 29 – The Re-use of Existing Buildings in the Countryside.

### Ancillary Development

#### Riding Arenas and other Exercise Facilities

- 10.241 A riding arena (or manège) or other exercise facilities (such as horse exercisers) may be permitted in association with a commercial equine-related development or for private recreation or leisure use. The Council will expect a developer or private individual to be able to explain why an arena or other facility is needed and to be able to justify its intended size and scale. Siting will be a key issue in the design. An arena and other exercise facilities should be sited close to the buildings where the enterprise to which it relates is located as this will limit the impact of the development on the landscape. Other key design issues include hard landscaping including fencing and surfacing, landscape planting, drainage and the potential impacts on the amenity of nearby residents. Given the rural nature of the District, floodlighting generally will not be permitted.
- 10.242 Approvals for riding arenas or other exercise facilities for private recreation or leisure use will be subject to conditions to prevent them from being used commercially. An arena (or other facility) used for commercial purposes has a far greater neighbouring amenity impact than one used solely for private recreation and leisure purposes.

### Occupational Dwellings

- 10.243 The Council may permit occupational dwellings related to commercial equine-related enterprises but will not permit such dwellings to enable people to live close to horses that are kept for private recreation or leisure use. Applications for such occupational dwellings will be determined in accordance with Policy 33 – Occupational Dwellings in the Countryside.

**POLICY 32: EQUINE-RELATED DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE**

Equine-related developments in the countryside will be permitted provided that:

**General Criteria**

- a the site is suitable for the keeping of horses and capable of supporting the number of animals proposed, having taken account of the arrangements for site management; and
- b adequate provision has been made for the exercising of horses without causing harm to rights of way, other equestrian routes, or other areas, such as open land, that will be used for exercise; and
- c vehicular access to the site and the road network in the vicinity are capable of accommodating horse-related transport in a safe manner.

**Private Recreation and Leisure Uses**

In the case of a new field shelter or stable used for private recreation or leisure use:

- d it will be for the exclusive use of the horses that are grazed or kept on site; and
- e it should be of a scale that reflects the number of horses to be kept or grazed on site; and
- f it should be built of timber, or other similar material, so that it is capable of being easily removed if the equine-related use ceases; and
- g any ancillary use, such as a tack room or food storage structure, should be the minimum required to meet the functional needs of the horses on site and should not give rise to security issues.

**Commercial Recreation, Leisure, Training or Breeding Uses**

In the case of commercial recreation, leisure, training or breeding enterprises, the development should re-use an existing building (or group of buildings) in the countryside. An element of new building may also be permitted alongside the re-use of an existing building (or group of buildings), provided that:

- h it can be demonstrated that no other building (or group of buildings) is available that is capable of accommodating the proposed equine-related use; and
- i the element of new building is the minimum required to accommodate the proposed equine-related use (over and above the requirement to re-use the existing building or group of buildings); and
- j any new buildings and ancillary facilities would be erected to integrate with the existing building (or group of buildings).



## **POLICY 32 (CONT'D): EQUINE-RELATED DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE**

### **Failure of a Commercial Enterprise**

The change of use of an existing equine-related commercial site to another use (other than agriculture or forestry) will not be permitted, unless it can be demonstrated that the existing use is not, or cannot be made, viable.

### **Ancillary Development**

In the case of a riding arena or other exercise facility:

- k it is of a size and scale appropriate to the existing commercial enterprise, or the number of privately-kept horses that will use the facility; and
- l it is located close to other buildings on the site and is not visually intrusive in the landscape.

## Policy 33 - Occupational Dwellings in the Countryside

### National Policy

10.244 National policy<sup>364</sup> states that “local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside, unless there are special circumstances such as: ... the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside”.

### The District Council’s Approach

10.245 This policy sets out the Council’s approach to the provision of dwellings for agricultural, forestry and other full-time workers in the countryside where there is an essential need for them to live at or near their place of work.

10.246 A new permanent occupational dwelling will only be permitted:

- for a full-time (rather than part-time) occupational worker;
- if the proposal can be justified on a functional and financial basis;
- provided that the identified accommodation need cannot be met in any other way; and
- provided that the proposed dwelling is of an appropriate size, design and is well-sited.

10.247 The Council may permit temporary agricultural workers’ dwellings but will not permit temporary dwellings in relation to forestry operations or other rural-based enterprises.

10.248 The Council will control the occupancy of any occupational dwelling by condition or planning obligation and will seek to secure the retention of such dwellings for occupational purposes to support the rural economy unless it can be demonstrated that an essential need no longer exists.

### The Need for a Full Time Worker

10.249 The provision of residential accommodation for occupational purposes in the countryside is an exception to policies which seek to safeguard the countryside. Consequently, the Council will not support an application for such accommodation unless available evidence clearly demonstrates that the scale and nature of an existing or intended enterprise is sufficient to require one or more full-time workers to live at or near to the place of work. In this respect, reference to full-time shall be construed as including a person who is employed to solely or mainly work in the relevant occupation. The Council will not permit a permanent occupational dwelling for a part-time worker.

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<sup>364</sup> Paragraph 55, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2013)

- 10.250 In considering whether the need is essential in any particular case, the Council will consider the requirements of the enterprise concerned and not the personal preferences or circumstances of any of the individuals involved.

### **Functional Need and Financial Test**

- 10.251 The Council will seek functional and financial justification for all occupational dwellings in the countryside but the particular assessments applied can be different depending on whether the application is for a dwelling for an agricultural, forestry or other essential rural worker and whether the application is for temporary or permanent accommodation.

### **Functional Need for a Permanent Dwelling**

- 10.252 The assessment of functional need establishes whether the proposed dwelling is essential for the existing proper functioning of the enterprise for one or more workers to be readily available at most times, provided that such a requirement cannot be reasonably dealt with by any other means.
- 10.253 For agricultural workers, such a requirement might arise, for example, if workers are needed to be on hand day and night:
- in case animals or agricultural processes require essential care at short notice; or
  - to deal quickly with emergencies that could otherwise cause serious loss of crops or products, for example, by frost damage or the failure of automatic systems.
- 10.254 The protection of livestock from theft or injury by intruders may contribute on animal welfare grounds to the need for a new agricultural dwelling, although it will not by itself be sufficient to justify one. Requirements arising from food processing, as opposed to agriculture, cannot be used to justify an agricultural dwelling, nor can agricultural needs justify the provision of isolated new dwellings as retirement homes for farmers.
- 10.255 Given the nature of forestry, its limited scale in North Dorset, and having regard to conventional methods of forestry management (which can involve the use of a peripatetic workforce), it is unlikely that an essential functional need for a dwelling for a forestry worker could be justified, except perhaps where there are special circumstances; for example, the need to service the intensive nursery production of trees.
- 10.256 There may also be instances where special justification exists for new isolated dwellings associated with other rural-based enterprises. The essential need for a rural worker's dwelling should be justified in relation to the activities and operations of the business, not the personal preferences or circumstances of the individuals involved or for security reasons. In these cases, the enterprise itself, including any development necessary for the operation of the enterprise, must be

acceptable in planning terms and permitted in that rural location, regardless of the consideration of any proposed associated dwelling.

### Financial Test for Permanent Dwellings

- 10.257 New permanent accommodation cannot be justified on agricultural, forestry or business grounds unless the farming, forestry or rural business enterprise is economically viable. A financial test is necessary to establish whether this is the case.
- 10.258 To justify a permanent occupational dwelling, the farming, forestry or rural business enterprise must be well-established. At the date when an application is submitted, it will need to be demonstrated that the enterprise to which the application relates:
- has been established for a continuous period of at least the previous three years prior to the date of the application (and in the case of an enterprise consisting of more than one activity, the three years shall apply to the latest activity upon which reliance is being placed);
  - has been profitable for at least one of those three years; and
  - is both financially sound on that date and also has a clear prospect of remaining so.
- 10.259 A proposal should be supported by a business plan prepared by a suitably qualified person and be accompanied by evidence of how the maintenance or growth of the enterprise will be funded.
- 10.260 Applying the financial test can also help to establish the size and design of the dwelling the farming, forestry or rural business unit can sustain. In applying this test, the Council will take a realistic approach to the level of profitability, taking account of the nature of the enterprise concerned.

### Meeting Need in Other Ways

- 10.261 The Council will need to be convinced that the identified accommodation needs could not be met in ways other than through the provision of a permanent dwelling. For example, applicants will be expected to demonstrate why agricultural, forestry or other essential rural workers could not live in nearby towns or villages, or make use of accommodation already existing on the farm, area of forestry or business unit.
- 10.262 The Council will normally seek to carry out an investigation where it is considered that circumstances suggest a genuine need may not exist. For example, the Council may look into the history of an agricultural holding, area of forestry or rural business to establish the recent pattern of use of land and buildings and whether any dwellings, or buildings suitable for conversion to dwellings, may have recently been sold separately or otherwise alienated from the farmland, area of forestry or rural business concerned. Such activity may well indicate a lack of a genuine need.

In circumstances where the Council considers that a genuine need does not exist, the proposal for an occupational dwelling will not be permitted.

### **Dwelling Size**

- 10.263 Agricultural, forestry or other occupational dwellings should be of a size commensurate with the established functional requirement. In determining the size of dwelling that is appropriate to a particular agricultural holding, area of forestry or rural business, the Council will have regard to the requirements of the enterprise, rather than those of the owner or occupier. The Council will not permit dwellings that are unusually large in relation to the agricultural, forestry or rural business needs of the unit, or unusually expensive to construct in relation to the income the unit can sustain in the long-term. Proposals for accommodation of a size in excess of the minimum that is demonstrated to be required will not normally be supported.

### **Siting of the Dwelling**

- 10.264 Agricultural forestry or other occupational dwellings should be sited so that the agricultural, forestry or essential rural worker is conveniently located to undertake the activities required to meet the established functional need. The Council will expect new agricultural or forestry dwellings to be well-related to existing farm or forestry buildings, or other dwellings, where these exist on or adjacent to the unit for which the functional need has been established. Occupational dwellings associated with a rural business should be located on the site of the rural business and well-related to existing buildings, or other dwellings, where these exist on the site for which the functional need has been established.

### **Temporary Agricultural Workers' Dwellings**

- 10.265 The Council may permit a temporary dwelling for a full-time agricultural worker if it can be demonstrated that it is essential to support a new farming enterprise, whether on a newly-created agricultural unit or an established one. The Council will not permit temporary dwellings in relation to forestry operations or rural-based enterprises.
- 10.266 The Council will assess the functional need and apply a financial test to any proposal for a temporary dwelling.
- 10.267 The functional need for temporary accommodation will need to be justified in the same way as the need for a permanent occupational dwelling, except that need will have to be demonstrated in relation to the new farming enterprise. In this respect, clear evidence of a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise concerned, such as significant investment in new farm buildings, will have to be available. The Council will also require evidence that the functional need could not be fulfilled in any other way.

- 10.268 In the case of assessing financial need, the Council will require the available evidence to demonstrate that the proposed enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis with a reasonable prospect of delivering a sustainable profit before or by the expiry of the temporary period that the proposal seeks to secure.
- 10.269 The temporary dwelling should take the form of a caravan, a wooden structure or other temporary accommodation which can be easily dismantled, as any temporary permission will be granted for a specified period that will usually be for no longer than three years. Conditions will be imposed requiring its removal at the end of that period. Strong and clear justification will be required to support any proposal that a temporary period should be granted for any longer period.
- 10.270 The Council will not normally give temporary permission in a location where a permanent dwelling would not be permitted or grant successive extensions to a temporary permission over a period of more than three years. If permission for a permanent dwelling is sought subsequently, the merits of the proposal will be assessed against the criteria in this policy relating to permanent occupational dwellings in the countryside.

### **Occupancy and Other Conditions**

- 10.271 Where a dwelling for a farm, forestry or essential rural worker has been permitted, the Council wishes to ensure that the dwelling is kept available for meeting this need for as long as it exists. The Council may control the occupancy of dwellings for farm, forestry or essential rural workers by condition. Where it is not possible to include all relevant matters in a planning condition (such as the possible future separate sale of the occupational dwelling from all or part of the unit to which it relates) then a legal agreement may be required.
- 10.272 Where a dwelling for a farm, forestry or essential rural worker is proposed, the Council will usually seek to impose, as part of any permission, conditions removing permitted development rights to ensure the continued viability of maintaining the property for its intended use. Permitted development rights allow certain developments, such as extensions, within the curtilage of a dwelling house. Developments of this nature could result in an occupational dwelling increasing to a size beyond which could be justified by the identified functional requirement of the unit or becoming too expensive for any future potential occupier to acquire.

### **Removal of Occupancy Conditions**

- 10.273 The removal of an agricultural or forestry occupancy condition will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that it has outlived its usefulness.
- 10.274 The Council would expect evidence to demonstrate why the dwelling is no longer required in connection with the holding to which it relates. Before considering the possibility of removing an occupancy condition, the Council will also expect it to be evidenced that the dwelling has been:

- made publically available without any unreasonable restriction and with amenity land proportionate to its size; and
  - suitably advertised and marketed at a price reflecting its condition and the existence of the occupancy restriction for a continuous period of at least twelve months immediately prior to the date that an application is submitted.
- 10.275 The Council would not expect an occupational dwelling for an essential rural worker to be severed from the business unit to which it is tied, unless the business fails. In particular, in such circumstances, the Council would be unlikely to support any subsequent application to remove an occupational condition on such a severed dwelling or any future application for a new dwelling relating to the business.
- 10.276 Even if the business to which dwelling relates fails, the Council would expect every reasonable effort to be made to retain the occupational dwelling applying the same principles as it would to a proposal to remove an agricultural or forestry condition.
- 10.277 Proposals for the removal of an agricultural or forestry occupancy condition will be considered on the basis of an up-to-date assessment of the demand for farm or forestry dwellings in the locality and not just on the particular farm or forestry holding. When considering proposals to remove the occupancy condition for an essential rural worker, the Council will need to be convinced that the dwelling is no longer needed for the continuing rural enterprise or, in the event that the enterprise fails, for any proposed new use with planning permission and to meet a wider need in the locality for an occupational dwelling for an agricultural, forestry or essential rural worker.

### **Information and Appraisals**

- 10.278 Applicants will be expected to provide sufficient information to enable the Council to determine any application for an occupational dwelling or the removal of an occupancy condition. The Council may also seek the advice of agricultural or other consultants to give a technical appraisal of the case being put forward for the occupational dwelling or of the case for the removal of an occupancy condition.

**POLICY 33: OCCUPATIONAL DWELLINGS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE****Permanent Occupational Dwellings**

A new permanent dwelling for an agricultural, forestry or rural worker will only be permitted if:

- a the need relates to a full-time worker and does not relate to a part-time requirement; and
- b there is an essential existing functional need for a worker to live at, or in the immediate vicinity of, their place of work; and
- c the economic viability of the enterprise to which the proposed dwelling relates can be demonstrated by satisfying the 'financial test' applied by the Council; and
- d the functional need could not be fulfilled by any other means; and
- e it is of the minimum size and an appropriate design commensurate with the established functional requirement and reflective of the enterprise's financial projections; and
- f it is sited so as to meet the identified functional need and is well-related to existing farm, forestry or rural business buildings, or other dwellings.

**Temporary Agricultural Workers' Dwellings**

A new temporary dwelling for an agricultural worker will only be permitted if:

- g the need relates to a full-time worker and does not relate to a part-time requirement; and
- h it is essential to support a new farming activity for which there is a clearly established functional need for the worker to live on or in the vicinity of the holding; and
- i the economic viability of the enterprise to which the proposed dwelling relates can be demonstrated by satisfying the 'financial test' applied by the Council; and
- j the functional need could not be fulfilled by any other means; and
- k it takes the form of a caravan, a wooden structure, or other temporary accommodation of the minimum size required to support the proposed new farming activity.



## **POLICY 33 (CONT'D): OCCUPATIONAL DWELLINGS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE**

### **Removal of Occupancy Conditions**

An agricultural or forestry occupancy condition will only be lifted if it can be demonstrated that:

- l a suitable sustained attempt has been made to advertise and market the dwelling; and
- m the occupational dwelling no longer serves a need in connection with the holding to which it relates and there is no agricultural or forestry occupational need elsewhere that it could reasonably serve, nor is it likely that any such needs will arise in the foreseeable future.

In cases where there is an occupational dwelling associated with a rural enterprise site, the occupancy condition will only be lifted if it can be demonstrated that:

- n a suitable sustained attempt has been made to advertise and market the site with the occupational dwelling; and
- o the occupational dwelling no longer serves a need in connection with the rural enterprise site to which it relates and there is no agricultural, forestry or essential rural business need elsewhere that it could reasonably serve, nor is it likely that any such needs will arise in the foreseeable future.

# 11. Implementation

## Introduction

- 11.1 This chapter sets out how the policies in the Local Plan Part 1 will be monitored.
- 11.2 The Localism Act removes the requirement for councils to produce an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) for Government, while retaining the overall duty to monitor. They can now choose which targets and indicators to include in their reports as long as they are in line with the relevant UK and EU legislation. The Government's view is that the primary purpose of monitoring reports should be to share the performance and achievements of the planning service with the local community<sup>365</sup>.
- 11.3 The Council's approach is to use the monitoring framework in this chapter as the basis for regularly assessing and reviewing outcomes against the six objectives of the Local Plan Part 1, set out in Chapter 2. The Council intends to set out this information in regularly produced monitoring reports.

## Monitoring

- 11.4 Assessing outcomes against objectives will enable the Council to monitor the effectiveness of the policies in the Local Plan Part 1. The monitoring framework, in Figure 11.1 sets out:
- the intended outcomes to achieve different aspects of each objective;
  - the indicators that will be used to assess the achievement of performance against the intended outcomes;
  - targets that establish the level of performance that is being sought in relation to each relevant indicator; and
  - the policy (or policies) relevant to the delivery of intended outcomes.
- 11.5 The Council has produced an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) each year since 2005 and will continue to produce monitoring reports at least annually, setting out the extent to which the intended outcomes of planning policies are being achieved and targets are being met. Monitoring takes place throughout the year and the Council may be able to report some information as it becomes available on [dorsetforyou.com](http://dorsetforyou.com).

## Outcomes

- 11.6 The Outcomes presented in Figure 11.1 below relate to the objectives for the Local Plan Part 1, as set out in Chapter 2, which are:
- meeting the challenge of climate change;

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<sup>365</sup> Monitoring That Matters – Towards a Better AMR, Planning Advisory Service (April 2011)

- conserving and enhancing the historic and natural environment;
- ensuring the vitality of the market towns;
- supporting sustainable rural communities;
- meeting the District’s housing needs; and
- improving the quality of life.

11.7 The objectives are linked to the overall Vision for North Dorset (in Chapter 2), which sets out how the District and the places within it should develop over the next 15 years, drawing on identified issues and challenges.

### Achievement Indicators

11.8 The Government has a set of National Indicators (NIs) that local councils should use to assist in forming an overall view of their performance and their arrangements for improving their services to the public<sup>366</sup>. For example, there are National Indicators relating to the number of planning applications determined in each local authority area within certain time limits.

11.9 The Council also wishes to monitor whether the strategic policies in the Local Plan Part 1 are delivering positive outcomes that benefit communities in North Dorset and consequently Table 11.1 includes a number of more local indicators. Some of these are derived from national policy (for example, the UK has signed up to generating<sup>367</sup> at least 15% of its energy requirement from renewable sources by 2020), some relate to required returns to Government (such as the number of Gypsy and Traveller caravans in an area) and some have been developed through the sustainability appraisal process in order to ensure that the Local Plan Part 1 is helping to achieve sustainable development through economic, social and environmental gains.

### Targets

11.10 The Council has used the objectives and related policies to guide the selection of meaningful indicators and associated targets as a means of ensuring effective policy implementation, monitoring and review. Where possible, the Council has endeavoured to set realistic yet challenging targets. In a very few cases, national targets have been used.

11.11 In some cases, it has not been possible to set a quantifiable or descriptive target so in those instances the Council will monitor trends to give an indication of performance (for instance, whether or not new dwelling completions are proceeding as intended).

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<sup>366</sup> National Indicators for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships: Updated National Indicator Definitions, DCLG (February 2009)

<sup>367</sup> The EU Renewable Energy Directive – 2009/28/EC

## Using Monitoring Information to Manage Delivery

- 11.12 The delivery of positive outcomes will require the Council to work collaboratively with landowners, developers, key stakeholders and local communities both through the planning application process and other mechanisms.
- 11.13 The provision of infrastructure will be critical to the delivery of positive outcomes and the Council's overall approach to infrastructure provision is set out in the Introduction to Chapter 7. The provision of infrastructure will require the deployment and management of financial resources, including:
- funding from central and local Government sources;
  - funds collected under the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL); and
  - contributions for site-specific works from developers (via obligations secured by way of Section 106<sup>368</sup> and Section 278<sup>369</sup> agreements).
- 11.14 Monitoring will provide the Council with information to assess performance against policy objectives and delivery on the ground, including the delivery of infrastructure. If performance falls below target, the Council will investigate the reasons why and consider the need for remedial action or the need to amend policy.

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<sup>368</sup> Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

<sup>369</sup> Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980.

Figure 11.1 – Monitoring Framework for the North Dorset Local Plan 2011 to 2026 Part 1

Objective 1 – Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change				
Objective 1 is to address the causes and effects of climate change by:	Intended Outcomes	Achievement Indicators	Targets	Policy
encouraging the use of sustainable construction techniques;	Improved energy efficiency in buildings and reduced carbon emissions from new build properties	Greenhouse gas emissions (CO <sub>2</sub> equivalent)	Reduction since 2011 relative to 1990 levels	3
encouraging the use of renewable energy technologies appropriate to the local area; and	More widespread renewable energy generation	Renewable energy generation by installed capacity and type	Monitor	3
		Percentage of total energy consumption from renewable sources	Monitor	22
ensuring the wise use of natural resources, particularly previously developed land and water.	Water resources well managed	% of dwellings with water meters installed	Increase	3
	Fewer flooding incidents	Number of planning applications approved contrary to Environment Agency advice	Zero	3
	Amount of housing development on previously developed land maximised	Amount of housing development on previously developed land	35% of new housing development on previously developed land	7

Objective 2 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic and Natural Environment				
Objective 2 is to conserve and enhance the environment of North Dorset by:	Intended Outcomes	Achievement Indicators	Targets	Policy
ensuring that North Dorset's wildlife, landscape and cultural heritage are protected and well managed;	All wildlife sites protected	Changes in areas of international, national and local biodiversity importance	Monitor	4
	Internationally / nationally important wildlife and geological sites protected and enhanced	Number of new SSSIs designated	Monitor	4
		Number of planning applications approved against Natural England advice	Zero	
		Condition of international sites / SSSIs	No international sites / SSSIs adversely affected by development	
	Local biodiversity improved	Number of declared Local Nature Reserves	Monitor	4
		Extent of Local Nature Reserves	1 hectare per 1,000 population	
	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty protected from inappropriate development	Number of planning applications approved against AONB Management Board advice	Zero	4
Tree Preservation Orders	Number of occurrences of unauthorised works to	Reduce	24	

	maintained	protected trees		
		Number of new TPOs made	Monitor	
	Heritage assets of historic or architectural importance protected	Number of heritage assets on the national at risk register	Reduce	5
encouraging design that maintains the quality of the District's built and natural environment; and	Quality of areas and buildings safeguarded	Number of new Conservation Areas designated	Monitor	5
		Number of Conservation Areas with up to date Appraisals and Management Proposals	All	
ensuring that the District's residents are able to enjoy their homes and public places without undue disturbance or intrusion from neighbouring uses.	Residents' enjoyment of private and public places and spaces not compromised	Number of noise nuisance complaints received	Zero	25
		Number of cases of dust or other types of pollution received	Zero	

Objective 3 - Ensuring the Vitality of the Market Towns				
<b>Objective 3 is to support the role and function of the market towns of Blandford Forum (and Blandford St. Mary), Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton as the main service centres for the District by:</b>	<b>Intended Outcomes</b>	<b>Achievement Indicators</b>	<b>Targets</b>	<b>Policy</b>
making them the main focus in the District for housing development, including affordable housing;	Appropriate distribution of housing land achieved	Distribution of new housing development across district	Homes built 2011 to 2026: Blandford about 960 (23%)	6
			Gillingham about 1490 (35%)	16 17
			Shaftesbury about 1140 (27%)	18 19
			Sturminster Newton 380 (9%)	
	Development concentrated in main towns	% new development in main towns	All development located in accordance with Core Spatial Strategy	2
	Appropriate supply of housing land maintained	Overall annual average provision of new dwellings in North Dorset	Average annual net additional dwellings provided at about 280 dpa	6
enhancing their employment and training opportunities, particularly through the provision of sufficient	Existing and future commercial and industrial development safeguarded	Provision of employment land	26.2 ha of employment land developed by 2026 of which at least:	11



employment land, to meet the growing needs of the towns and their hinterlands;		Blandford	6.0 ha	
		Gillingham	9.2 ha	
		Shaftesbury	7.1 ha	
		Sturminster Newton	2.4 ha	
		Amount of employment land lost to non-employment uses	None	
		Amount of employment land developed per annum	Monitor	
		Net commercial floorspace completions	Monitor	
focusing an improved range of retail, cultural and leisure uses within the town centres;	Retail viability of town centres safeguarded and market town functions strengthened	Net industrial/ commercial floorspace completions within town centres	Monitor	12
		Amount of primary town centre retail frontage lost	None	
		% and number of vacant premises in town centres	Minimise	
		Amount of retail / main town centre uses floorspace allowed outside town centres	Monitor	
improving health, education and community services to meet the	More accessible healthcare facilities	Proportion of new housing within 30 minutes by public	Increase	14

needs of the towns and their rural hinterlands;		transport of key healthcare facilities		
	Appropriate and sufficient primary school places available and accessible	Adequate size and location of Primary school places to meet North Dorset's needs	By 2026 additional Primary Forms of Entry: Blandford 2	14
			Gillingham 2-3	
			Shaftesbury 2-3	
	Sturminster Newton 2			
Appropriate and sufficient secondary school places available and accessible	Adequate size and location of Secondary school places to meet North Dorset's needs	By 2026 additional Secondary Forms of Entry: Blandford 1 - 1.5	14	
		Sturminster Newton 1		
improving sustainable transport links and accessibility within the towns; between the towns and the villages in their rural hinterlands; and, through improved linkages with strategic transport networks;	Less use of the private car	Proportion of new housing within 30 minutes by public transport of key facilities	Increase	13
	Extended use of North Dorset Trailway	Length of Trailway available for use	Increase	
	More cycling trips	Annualised index of cycling trips at selected monitoring sites	Increase	
securing the delivery of mixed use regeneration on previously developed land in accessible locations;	Amount of development on previously developed land maximised	Amount of new development on previously developed land	35% of new development on previously developed land	7

ensuring that housing development is delivered in step with employment opportunities, community facilities and infrastructure; and	Appropriate infrastructure provided in a timely and efficient manner	Number of residential planning applications approved which include a Section 106 planning obligation providing a contribution towards necessary on-site services / infrastructure	Monitor	2
		Number of identified infrastructure schemes delivered on time	100% of identified infrastructure delivered on time	13
		Amount of developer contributions received	Monitor	14
		Cost of identified infrastructure schemes delivered	No schemes delivered over budget	15
	Co-ordinated development of Strategic Site Allocation at Gillingham	Integrated and co-ordinated development of strategic site in Gillingham according to development programme/phasing plan	Monitor	21
taking account of the effects of any interaction between the towns themselves and with the large towns and cities in neighbouring districts.	Duty to cooperate fulfilled	Implementation of, and adherence to, working arrangements, protocols etc. involving other authorities	Monitor	16
				17
				18
				19

Objective 4 - Supporting Sustainable Rural Communities				
<b>Objective 4 is to enable a network of sustainable smaller rural communities where local services and employment opportunities enable day-to-day needs to be met locally by:</b>	<b>Intended Outcomes</b>	<b>Achievement Indicators</b>	<b>Targets</b>	<b>Policy</b>
adopting a general policy of restraint outside the District's four main towns, whilst also enabling essential rural needs to be met;	Appropriate distribution of housing land achieved	Distribution of new development across district	By 2026 levels of new development in Stalbridge, Villages and Countryside: at least 230 new dwellings (6%)	6
	Development in Stalbridge, the villages and the countryside limited	% new development in Stalbridge, the villages and the countryside	All development located in accordance with Core Spatial Strategy	20
	Essential need for rural exception housing met	Number of dwellings granted planning permission on rural exception sites	Monitor	9
	Replacement dwellings of appropriate size allowed	Number of dwellings granted planning permission as replacements more than 50% larger than original	Monitor	28
	Dwellings with residential occupancy conditions attached allowed where appropriate	% of applications for dwellings with residential occupancy conditions attached granted planning permission	Monitor	33

	Residential occupancy conditions attached removed where appropriate	% of applications for removal of residential occupancy conditions granted planning permission	Monitor	33
	Redundant agricultural buildings in the countryside put to use	Loss of agricultural land and buildings to other use	Monitor	29
	Existing and future commercial and industrial development safeguarded	Provision of employment land	26.2 ha of employment land developed by 2026 of which at least 1.6 ha outside the four main towns	11
	Existing rural employment sites extended beyond existing curtilage / area of lawful use	Number of rural employment sites granted planning permission for significant extension beyond existing sites	Monitor	30
focusing on meeting local (rather than strategic) needs in Stalbridge and the District's villages;	Essential need for rural exception housing met	Number of dwellings granted planning permission on rural exception sites	Monitor	9
	Use of rural buildings maximised	Number of conversion of agricultural buildings to residential or other use	Monitor	11
enabling individual rural communities to plan to meet their own local needs, especially through neighbourhood planning; and	Planning policies developed at the local level	Number of neighbourhood plans adopted	Monitor	2
	Support provided for rural businesses	Number of VAT registrations recorded per annum involving rural businesses	Increase	11

securing the retention, enhancement and future viability of local community facilities and local services.	Appropriate and sufficient community facilities available and accessible	Amount of community building floorspace	Increase	14
	No loss of community facilities	Number of community facilities lost	Zero	27
		Number of community facilities listed as 'Asset of Community Value' lost	Zero	

Objective 5 - Meeting the District's Housing Needs <sup>370</sup>				
Objective 5 is to deliver more housing, including more affordable housing, that better meets the diverse needs of the District by:	Intended Outcomes	Achievement Indicators	Targets	Policy
ensuring that all new dwellings contribute to overcoming the affordable housing shortfall;	Appropriate provision of affordable housing made	Number of affordable homes approved	30% of new dwellings within Gillingham provided as affordable	8
			35% of new dwellings within the Gillingham southern extension provided as affordable	
			40% of new dwellings elsewhere in the District provided as affordable	
ensuring that the type, design and mix of housing reflects housing needs in up-to-date assessments;	Mixed and balanced communities	Proportions of 1/2 and 3/3+ bedroom dwellings granted planning permission	40% of market housing made up of 1 or 2 bedroom dwellings	7
			60% of market housing made up of 3 or more bedroom dwellings	
			60% of affordable housing	

<sup>370</sup> The first two bullets of Objective 5, relating to the spatial distribution of housing development, have been omitted from the monitoring framework. The housing related achievement indicators and targets for Objective 3 (first bullet) and Objective 4 (first bullet) provide the monitoring framework for Objective 5 bullets 1 and 2 respectively.

			made up of 1 or 2 bedroom dwellings	
			40% of affordable housing made up of 3 or more bedroom dwellings	
ensuring that housing is designed to support the changing needs of its occupants and users; and	Housing needs of particular groups met	% of dwellings granted planning permission subject to occupancy age restriction	Monitor	7
	High quality of new development in North Dorset achieved	Number of schemes achieving green lights in Building for Life assessment	Monitor	24
ensuring that sufficient, sustainably-located sites are provided to meet the needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling show people in the District.	Needs of travelling community met	Number of authorised public and private sites (both permanent and transit) and numbers of pitches on them	Monitor	10 26
		Number of unauthorised sites	Zero	10 26



Objective 6 - Improving the Quality of Life				
Objective 6 is to improve the quality of life of North Dorset's residents, particularly the older population and the young, by:	Intended Outcomes	Achievement Indicators	Targets	Policy
encouraging the provision and retention of viable community, leisure and cultural facilities both in the main towns and rural communities;	Appropriate and sufficient leisure facilities available and accessible	Loss of local sports pitches and recreation grounds	None	14
	Appropriate and sufficient community facilities available and accessible	Amount of community building floorspace	Increase	14
	No loss of community facilities	Number of community facilities listed as 'Asset of Community Value'	Monitor	27
retaining the current range of healthcare and education services and ensuring that additional healthcare and education facilities are provided in accessible locations;	Enhanced healthcare facilities	Number of new facilities/ extended facilities available	Monitor	14
		Number of GPs in North Dorset	Monitor	
	Healthcare facilities more accessible	Proportion of new housing within 30 minutes by public transport of key healthcare facilities	Increase	14
ensuring that a network of multi-functional Green Infrastructure including sport and recreation facilities, open and natural space, is	Allotments generally available to meet local demand	Number of new allotment plots provided	1 plot per 60 residents	15
	Appropriate and sufficient amenity greenspace available	Amount of new formal and informal open space	Monitor	15

provided across the district;	and accessible	provided within settlements		
		% of open space managed to Green Flag standard	Increase	
securing an integrated approach to private and public transport (including parking provision and management), which improves accessibility to services; and	Enhanced accessibility to services and employment for residents	% of households satisfied with bus services	Monitor	13 23
		Number and location of new public car parking spaces provided	Monitor	
		Travel plans secured for housing developments of 80+ dwellings	Monitor	
		% of households within 30 minutes of employment centre by public transport	Monitor	
ensuring that development makes a positive contribution to enhancing existing and providing new transport infrastructure.	Greater consideration of impact of development on transportation	Number of housing developments of 80+ dwellings approved with a transportation related Section 106 planning obligation attached	100%	13





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