

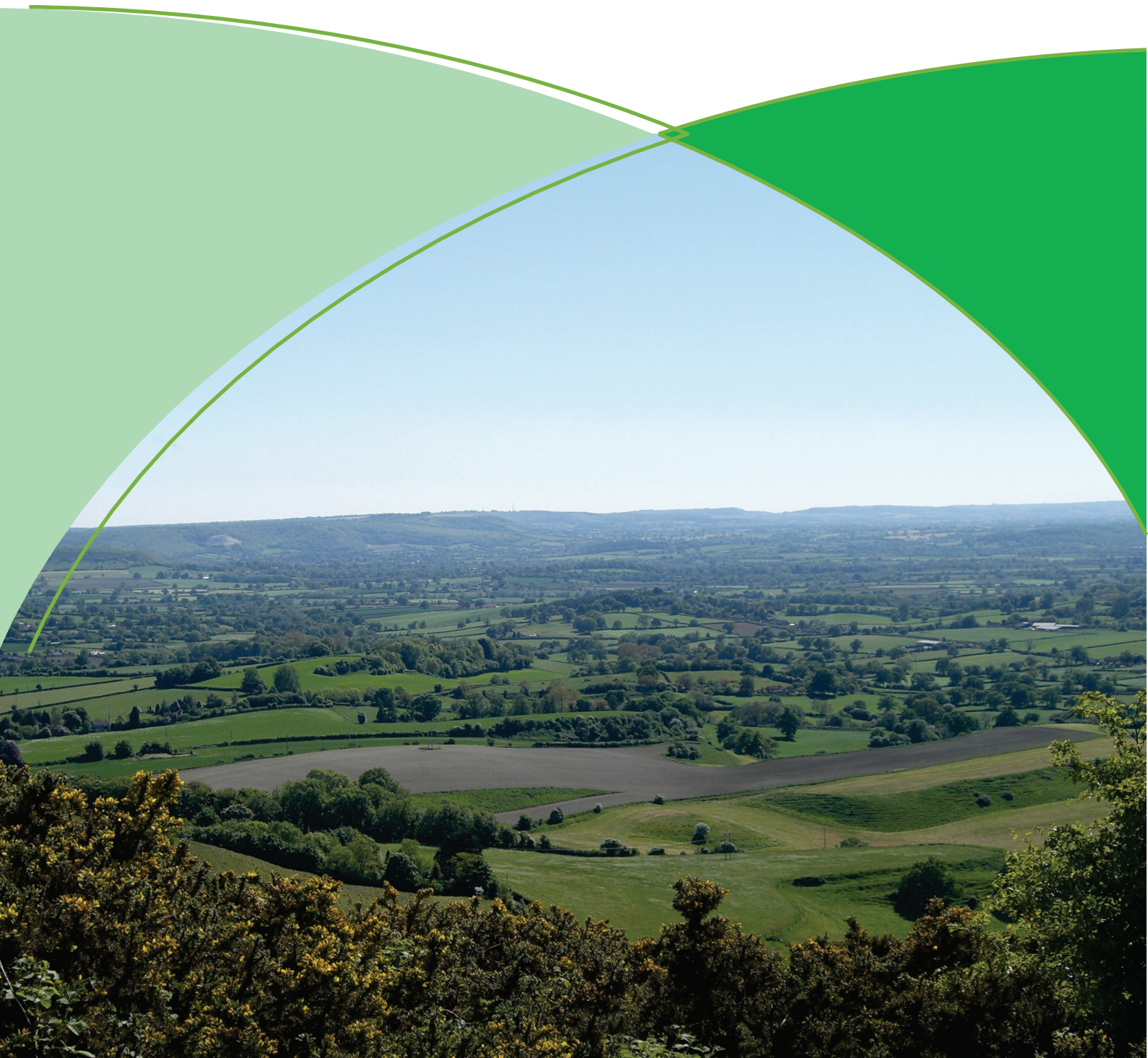
The New Plan for North Dorset

The Draft Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document

Public Consultation

on Key Issues for the Revision of the Draft Document

October 2012



Contents

Section	Page
1. Background to the Autumn 2012 Consultation	3
2. Background to the Revision of the Draft Core Strategy	5
3. Spatial Approach to Growth	13
4. Provision of Housing	19
5. Provision of Employment Land	23
6. Housing Density, Infilling and Residential Gardens	27
7. Affordable Housing	31
8. Affordable Housing Rural Exception Schemes	35
9. Grey, Social and Green Infrastructure	37
10. Blandford	41
11. Gillingham	45
12. Shaftesbury	49
13. Sturminster Newton	51
14. Stalbridge, the Villages and the Countryside	53
15. Development Management Policies	59
Appendix A - Guide to Plans in Dorset: Before and After the Localism Act	63

1. Background to the Autumn 2012 Consultation

Introduction

- 1.1 The District Council produced the Draft Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (the draft Core Strategy - also known as The New Plan for North Dorset) in March 2010¹. Since then the Coalition Government has begun the process of reforming the planning system and there has been a global economic downturn.
- 1.2 In the light of these major changes the Council has investigated different ways of delivering positive outcomes for local communities through planning policy and has reassessed the need for future development, particularly housing and employment development.

'Targeted' Consultation on Key Areas

- 1.3 The further consultation on the draft Core Strategy being undertaken in the autumn of 2012 is 'targeted' on three main areas, which were agreed by Cabinet in June 2011², namely:
- options for the overall level of growth proposed for the District and the main towns (i.e. Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton);
 - the approach to taking forward development at Gillingham through a Strategic Site Allocation (SSA); and
 - the approach to development in Stalbridge and the District's villages revisiting both the spatial strategy and the level of housing provision.
- 1.4 This consultation document focuses on options for the overall level of growth and the spatial distribution of development.
- 1.5 The overall approach the Council is now considering for the town of Gillingham is set out in this document, but the approach to taking forward the Strategic Site Allocation (SSA) to the south of the town will be the subject of a separate consultation exercise³. The local community are developing a neighbourhood plan for the parished area of Gillingham⁴, which will also be the subject of consultation. The Council, the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan Group (GNPG) and developers will work together to co-ordinate these different strands of consultation.

¹ The Draft Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD can be viewed here:

<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=147729&filetype=pdf>

² The agenda for the Cabinet meeting on 13 June 2011 can be viewed here:

<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=163669&filetype=pdf> and the minutes can be viewed here:

<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=164431&filetype=pdf>

³ The consultation material on the proposed Strategic Site Allocation (SSA) for Gillingham can be linked from this page – www.dorsetforyou.com/consultationkeyissues/north

⁴ The web page for the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan can be viewed here – <http://www.gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk/Gillingham-Neighbourhood-Plan/c-1-160.htm>

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)

- 1.6 In June 2011 Cabinet agreed to work towards the production of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule. The main function of the CIL Charging Schedule is to secure contributions from developers to fund infrastructure needed to support growth proposed in the Core Strategy. Support for the production of a CIL Charging Schedule was re-affirmed in September 2012 when Cabinet also approved a CIL Scoping Report⁵. The main infrastructure requirements are set out in a draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) Background Paper, which is also the subject of consultation at this time⁶ (see Section 9).

Purpose of the Targeted Consultation

- 1.7 The purpose of the 'targeted' consultation is to discuss with local communities the main changes the Council intends to make to the draft Core Strategy in the light of the major changes in circumstance that have occurred since it was produced. This document outlines the revised approaches the Council is now considering in relation to certain key issues and asks a number of questions in relation to these proposed approaches.

Next Steps

- 1.8 Having undertaken the 'targeted' consultation, the Council will prepare the revised Core Strategy for submission to the Secretary of State, having regard to the responses received.
- 1.9 The 'pre-submission' revised Core Strategy will be the subject of further public consultation. After submission to the Secretary of State, it will go forward to an examination held by a Planning Inspector who will consider issues of legal compliance and 'soundness'⁷. The Inspector will produce a report setting out a number of recommendations to the Council. Having considered the Inspector's recommendations, the Council will then adopt the Core Strategy.

⁵ The minutes of the Cabinet meeting on 17 September 2012 can be viewed here – <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=176380&filetype=pdf> and the CIL Scoping Report can be linked from this page – <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/newplan/north>

⁶ The draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan Background Paper can be linked from this page – www.dorsetforyou.com/consultationkeyissues/north

⁷ The role of an Inspector in examining a plan is set out in more detail in Paragraph 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

2. Background to the Revision of the Draft Core Strategy

Introduction

- 2.1 The Council is reviewing the draft Core Strategy in the light of the major changes that have occurred since it was produced and is seeking the views of the community through further targeted consultation. This section gives an overview of the main factors the Council has had regard to in reviewing the draft Core Strategy, which are:
- the reforms of the planning system;
 - the responses to public consultation on the draft Core Strategy;
 - new research and technical studies (or 'evidence') to inform policy, especially evidence that re-examines future needs in the light of the economic downturn;
 - Planning Inspectorate advice on the draft Core Strategy; and
 - further work on sustainability appraisal.

Reforms of the Planning System

- 2.2 The main reforms of the planning system being taken forward by the Government are:
- The production of a simple and consolidated national planning policy framework;
 - The revocation of regional strategies and the introduction of the 'duty to cooperate';
 - The introduction of 'new style' local plans at the District level; and
 - The introduction of neighbourhood planning at the local (sub-District) level.
- 2.3 These reforms (and their implications) are discussed in more detail below.
- 2.4 **National Policy** - The Government's comprehensive review of national planning policy resulted in the publication of the 59-page National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012⁸. It simplifies and consolidates national policy by replacing no less than 44 documents⁹ extending to over 1,000 pages.
- 2.5 The NPPF "*provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities*".¹⁰ The NPPF "*must be taken into account in the preparation*

⁸ The NPPF can be viewed here - <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/nppf>

⁹ As listed in Annex 3 of the NPPF

¹⁰ Paragraph 1 of the NPPF

*of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions”.*¹¹

- 2.6 **Regional Planning and the Duty to Cooperate** - A draft of the ‘emerging’ Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West (‘emerging’ RSS) was produced in 2006 and following an examination in public in 2007, it was modified by the Secretary of State’s Proposed Changes in 2008.¹² However, in the light of the Government’s intention to revoke regional strategies¹³, the ‘emerging’ RSS is no longer being taken forward.
- 2.7 Previous legislation made it a requirement for core strategies to be ‘in general conformity’ with the relevant RSS and with the expectation that the ‘emerging’ RSS would be adopted soon, the draft Core Strategy was prepared to be ‘in general conformity’ with the Secretary of State’s Proposed Changes. Once the process of revoking the regional strategy has been completed, conformity with regional policy will no longer be an issue.
- 2.8 Although the regional tier of planning policy is being removed, local councils and other public bodies will still need to plan strategically across local boundaries. To ensure this happens the Government has introduced a statutory ‘duty to cooperate’ in the Localism Act. The NPPF makes it clear that *“the Government expects joint working on areas of common interest to be diligently undertaken for the mutual benefit of neighbouring authorities”*.¹⁴
- 2.9 All Dorset councils are working towards producing a ‘memorandum of understanding’, which will provide an agreed position on joint working. Joint plans on strategic matters and / or joint informal strategies are likely to follow.
- 2.10 **‘New Style’ Local Plans** – The current District-wide Local Plan was adopted in 2003, before the concepts of ‘local development frameworks’ (LDFs) and ‘core strategies’ were introduced¹⁵. It may be regarded as an

¹¹ Paragraph 2 of the NPPF

¹² A composite document setting out the Secretary of State’s Proposed Changes to the Draft Revised Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West can be viewed here - http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/media/SWRA/RSS%20Documents/RPBs%20Response%20to%20SoS%20Prop%20Changes/Proposed%20Changes%20Documents/South_West_Draft_RSS_Proposed_Changes_Composite_Document.pdf. Please note that this is a large document (20MB), which may take some time to download

¹³ The Regional Strategy relevant to Dorset (which will be revoked) consists of: Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG 10), which was published by the Government Office for the South West (GOSW) in September 2001; and The Regional Economic Strategy for South West England 2006 – 2015, published by the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) in May 2006

¹⁴ Paragraph 178 of the NPPF

¹⁵ By the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

'old style' Local Plan, but its 'saved policies' will continue to be used to make planning decisions until they are superseded by new policies.¹⁶

- 2.11 The Council's intention, as set out in the current Local Development Scheme (LDS),¹⁷ was to produce two main Development Plan Documents (DPDs), which would form part of the LDF. These were:
- the Draft Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD (the draft Core Strategy), which would set the strategic policy framework for the District: and
 - the Site Specific Allocations DPD, which would allocate specific sites for a range of different uses.
- 2.12 The draft Core Strategy does not allocate specific sites for development, but 'inset diagrams' for Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton show the location of growth, including housing. The intention was to allocate these sites in the Site Allocations DPD.¹⁸
- 2.13 Although the concept of a LDF has been abandoned, the NPPF recognises that it may be appropriate for a 'new style' local plan to include more than one document.¹⁹ The Council intends to continue with this 'two document approach', but they may be rebranded (perhaps as New Local Plan Part 1 and Part 2).²⁰
- 2.14 The currently adopted District-wide Local Plan made provision for housing development up until March 2011. However, the draft Core Strategy makes provision for the period from April 2006 to March 2026. This reflects the plan period of the 'emerging' RSS, but with the impending revocation of regional strategies there is no reason why the revised Core Strategy should plan for this period.
- 2.15 In order to follow on from the housing provision policies in the adopted District-wide Local Plan, the Council's interim position statement on housing provision and housing land supply indicated that the Council "*intended to re-base the revised housing provision figures in the draft 'New Plan for North Dorset' to April 2011*".²¹ This still remains the case.

¹⁶ Saved policies from the current District-wide Local Plan can be viewed here - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/396496>. The definition of a 'new style' local plan in the Glossary of the NPPF (page 53) explains that "*the term includes old policies which have been saved under the 2004 Act.*"

¹⁷ The latest LDS, which was brought into effect in April 2009, will be updated to reflect the introduction of 'new style' local plans. It can be viewed here - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/396643>

¹⁸ It is now intended to take forward development to the south of Gillingham through a Strategic Site Allocation (SSA)

¹⁹ Guidance on the preparation of 'new style' local plans is set out in Paragraphs 150 to 157 (on Pages 37 and 38) of the NPPF

²⁰ Further detail will appear in the next version of the LDS, which will be made available online

²¹ The Interim Position Statement on Housing Provision and Housing Land Supply can be viewed here - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=160364&filetype=pdf>

- 2.16 **Neighbourhood Planning** - The Localism Act²² introduced a new tier of planning policy at the local level. Neighbourhood planning offers communities a range of tools²³ to deal with local issues and more detailed Regulations²⁴ now set out the legal procedures to guide the preparation and adoption of neighbourhood plans²⁵.
- 2.17 Communities can prepare neighbourhood plans to address local issues relating to the development and use of land in their area. Once adopted, neighbourhood plans become part of the 'Development Plan' and consequently will have an important role in decision making.²⁶ However, they must be 'in general conformity' with the 'strategic policies' for an area²⁷, which in the case of North Dorset will be those set out in the revised Core Strategy. More detail can be found on the Council's neighbourhood planning web page.²⁸
- 2.18 A summary of the various documents that made up the 'old' and 'new' planning systems is included as Appendix A.
- 2.19 **Implications of the Reforms** - The reforms of the planning system will make the overall planning policy framework for North Dorset much more locally-based, since all planning policy documents relevant to the District (apart from the NPPF) will be produced by local councils and local people.
- 2.20 The simplification of national policy and the abolition of regional policy mean that the revised Core Strategy will have more of a role in setting the strategic priorities for North Dorset. For example, it (rather than regional policy) will establish the strategic policies to deliver the homes and jobs needed in the District.
- 2.21 The reforms of the planning system will require a number of changes to be made to the draft Core Strategy. In addition to the major changes discussed in this document, many other amendments to policies and their supporting text will be required. In general terms, these will include:

²² The Localism Act 2011 can be seen here - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>

²³ The main tools available to communities are: neighbourhood plans, neighbourhood development orders and the community right to build. The community right to build is a particular type of neighbourhood development order, allowing people to propose a development in their local area and obtain permission for it, without having to go through the usual planning application process.

²⁴ General Regulations on preparing neighbourhood plans can be viewed here - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/contents/made>. Regulations relating to referendums can be viewed here - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/2031/contents/made>

²⁵ These are described legally as 'neighbourhood development plans', but are referred to in this document (and more generally) as neighbourhood plans.

²⁶ The glossary in the NPPF states that the Development Plan "includes adopted Local Plans, neighbourhood plans and the London Plan, and is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004". Paragraph 11 of the NPPF (on page 3) states that "planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise".

²⁷ As explained in paragraph 184 on page 44 of the NPPF

²⁸ <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/neighbourhoodplanning/north>

- The addition of new policies, or new sections of policies to reflect the reduced scope of national policy. The draft Core Strategy was written so as not to repeat or reformulate national policy, but some additions are now required given the slimmed down nature of the NPPF;
- The amendment of policies and supporting text to reflect the impending revocation of regional strategies. Since the 'emerging' RSS is no longer being taken forward, the Council will no longer be able to rely on it to set strategic priorities;
- The inclusion of policies and text relating to neighbourhood planning. Policies and supporting text will need to be updated so that the draft Core Strategy provides a clear strategic framework for the preparation of neighbourhood plans; and
- Updates of policies and text relating to infrastructure provision and delivery to reflect discussions with communities and infrastructure providers as part of the work to take forward the IDP and CIL.

2.22 **Interim Position Statements** – In January 2011, the Council produced two interim position statements dealing with: housing provision and housing land supply; and affordable housing. A further position statement was produced in February 2011 indicating that the Council would no longer use its Planning Guidance Note (PGN) as a basis for seeking developer contributions towards certain projects.²⁹

2.23 The interim position statements were produced in response to the reforms of the planning system and will assist the Council in taking forward the review of the draft Core Strategy. They will continue to be used in planning decisions until the revised Core Strategy is adopted.

Responses to Public Consultation on the Draft Core Strategy

2.24 The draft Core Strategy was subject to extensive public consultation between 15 March and 14 May 2010. The Council's Planning Policy Panel considered a brief report in June 2010³⁰, which highlighted the main issues raised. A second report was considered by Planning Policy Panel in September 2010³¹, which included an update on progress and some preliminary facts and figures.

2.25 Since then all comments have been analysed in detail and a comprehensive report setting out the responses by policy has been

²⁹ The interim position statements can be viewed here - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/interimposition/north>

³⁰ The report considered by Planning Policy Panel on 16 June 2010 can be viewed here - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/394149>

³¹ The report considered by Planning Policy Panel on 13 September 2010 can be viewed here - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=154330&filetype=pdf>

produced. This was considered by Planning Policy Panel in July 2012³² and reports on the draft 'core policies'³³ and the draft 'development management policies'³⁴ have been made available online.

2.26 For each policy the key issues raised during the consultation are explained and a number of actions and potential amendments are put forward. The responses made to the draft Core Strategy have been taken into account in the preparation of this further 'targeted consultation'. They will continue to be taken into account when the revised Core Strategy is prepared prior to submission to the Secretary of State.

New Evidence

2.27 In order for the Core Strategy to be judged 'sound' an Inspector will, amongst other things, consider whether it is a plan that has been 'positively prepared' and whether it is 'justified'³⁵. The Inspector will examine the 'evidence' that underpins policies to determine whether the plan has been prepared based on a strategy that seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements and whether the plan is the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives.

2.28 The Council has built up an 'evidence base' to support planning policies³⁶ and some new or updated studies have been undertaken since the draft Core Strategy was produced, including:

- an updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for the Bournemouth / Poole Housing Market Area³⁷ (which includes the whole of North Dorset³⁸);
- an updated Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)³⁹ for North Dorset;
- new employment land projections⁴⁰, which update the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Workspace Strategy⁴¹; and

³² The report considered by Planning Policy Panel on 5 July 2012 can be viewed here -

<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=174202&filetype=pdf>

³³ The report on the consultation responses to the draft core policies can be viewed here -

<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=175331&filetype=pdf>

³⁴ The report on the consultation responses to the draft development management policies can be viewed here

- <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=175332&filetype=pdf>

³⁵ These are two of the four tests that an Inspector will have regard to when assessing the 'soundness' of any plan, as set out in Paragraph 182 of the NPPF

³⁶ The evidence base for planning policy in North Dorset can be viewed here -

<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/396704>

³⁷ The SHMA update report for the Bournemouth / Poole Housing Market Area can be viewed here -

<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=170148&filetype=pdf>

³⁸ The SHMA update summary report for North Dorset can be viewed here -

<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=170143&filetype=pdf>

³⁹ The updated SHLAA can be viewed here - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/shlaa/north>

⁴⁰ The employment land projections 2012 update for Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole can be viewed here -

<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/405243>. The 2012 update for North Dorset can be viewed here -

<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=176562&filetype=pdf>

⁴¹ The 2008 Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Workspace Strategy can be viewed here -

<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/394149>

- a Landscape Impact Assessment of potential housing sites at Blandford and Shaftesbury⁴².

2.29 The updated housing and employment land studies are particularly important for the review of the draft Core Strategy because they have reassessed needs in the light of the global economic downturn. These updated studies still indicate a need for future growth, but at below pre-recession levels, which is considered to be more realistic in the circumstances.

2.30 In August 2009 the Council produced five topic papers⁴³. They gave a general overview of the five key topic areas and summarised the 'evidence base' underpinning draft policies. Where appropriate, they also explained the national, regional and sub-regional policy context for the draft Core Strategy. These topic papers have now been updated to incorporate the new evidence and to reflect the very different policy context that now exists⁴⁴.

Planning Inspectorate Advice

2.31 Immediately prior to the publication of the draft Core Strategy, an advisory meeting was held with Jill Kingaby, an Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate⁴⁵. The purpose of the advisory visit was to consider the work undertaken so far and to identify matters and questions that may be potentially problematic in terms of 'soundness'.

2.32 An advisory note was produced⁴⁶, which generally supported the approach taken by the Council. Some of the advice may now be considered to be out of date, in the light of the reforms of the planning system. However, the Council has had regard to the Inspector's advice and will take action on certain key points, for example:

- it is intended to move much of the background information in the front of the draft Core Strategy (i.e. the discussion of issues, challenges, vision and objectives) into a topic paper. This would both shorten the Core Strategy document and enable the background information to be periodically updated more easily;
- in line with the Inspector's recommendations, a sustainability appraisal of the development management policies has now been undertaken (see below).

⁴² The landscape impact assessment can be viewed here - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/399827>

⁴³ There are links to the 2009 topic papers on this page - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/newplan/north>

⁴⁴ The five updated topic papers and a new paper on issues, challenges, visions and objectives can be linked from this page - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/newplan/north>

⁴⁵ On 9th March 2010

⁴⁶ The advisory note from the Planning Inspectorate can be linked from this page - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/newplan/north>

Sustainability Appraisal Updates

- 2.33 An Initial Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report⁴⁷ was produced in March 2010, which assessed the alternative options for achieving the objectives of the draft Core Strategy. SA is an iterative process, which is carried out during the preparation of a plan to assess the economic, social and environmental impacts of implementing its policies and proposals.
- 2.34 Having reviewed the Initial SA Report, it was decided to update the work undertaken so far in two respects:
- Two additional alternative sites have been subject to SA. The SA of Core Policy 15 examined options for the growth of Blandford, but did not assess the possible expansion of the town to the south, on land between the A354 and A350. The SA of Core Policy 16 examined options for the growth of Gillingham, but did not assess the possible expansion of the town to the north east;
 - All 13 development management policies have now been the subject of SA. The Initial SA Report assessed all the draft 'core policies', but did not assess the draft 'development management' policies. This further work has now been undertaken on the advice of the Planning Inspectorate.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ The Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report for the draft Core Strategy can be viewed here: <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=147724&filetype=pdf>

⁴⁸ The update to the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report can be viewed online here – <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/396661>

3. Spatial Approach to Growth

Introduction

- 3.1 The 'emerging' RSS established the overall spatial strategy for the South West, which the Council was required to apply to the towns and villages of North Dorset. However, the abolition of regional planning and the introduction of neighbourhood plans offer the Council the opportunity to reconsider its spatial approach to growth, having regard to the NPPF. This section explains the issues and sets out the revised approach now being considered by the Council.

The Emerging RSS's Core Spatial Strategy

- 3.2 Chapter 3 of the RSS Proposed Changes set out the 'Core Spatial Strategy' (CSS) for the scale and location of development across the region. Individual local authorities were required to apply the 'spatial hierarchy' of Development Policies A, B and C to the settlements in their local areas in their core strategies. This regional approach was seen as a key tool to delivering a more sustainable pattern of development across the region.
- 3.3 Development Policy A defined a series of Strategically Significant Cities and Towns (SSCTs) across the South West, none of which are in North Dorset. Development Policy B sets criteria to be used by local authorities to identify 'market and coastal towns' in their Districts, which should be *"the focal points for locally significant development including provision for the bulk of district housing provision outside the SSCTs"*. Development Policy C sets criteria for development in 'small towns and villages', which should be *"the primary focus for development in the wider countryside away from A and B settlements"*.

Draft Core Policy 3

- 3.4 Draft Core Policy 3 applied the 'spatial hierarchy' of the RSS Proposed Changes to North Dorset. It defined Blandford (Forum and St. Mary), Gillingham and Shaftesbury as RSS Development Policy B Settlements, which would *"function as the main service centres in the District and will be the main focus for growth"*. Sturminster Newton, Stalbridge and 18 larger villages⁴⁹ were defined as RSS Development Policy C Settlements, which would be *"the main focus for sustainable growth outside the main service centres"*. The draft policy also proposed to apply countryside policy (i.e. a policy of restraint) to all other 'smaller villages' and hamlets.

⁴⁹ The 18 larger villages listed in draft Core Policy 3 are Bourton, Charlton Marshall, Child Okeford, East Stour, Fontmell Magna, Hazelbury Bryan, Iwerne Minster, Marnhull, Milborne St Andrew, Milton Abbas, Motcombe, Okeford Fitzpaine, Pimperne, Shillingstone, Stourpaine, Winterborne Kingston, Winterborne Stickland and Winterborne Whitechurch

NPPF

- 3.5 The NPPF now provides a much less rigid 'higher level' policy framework compared to RSS Development Policies A, B and C only requiring planning to "*focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable*".⁵⁰ It also states that in order "*to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities*".⁵¹

The Status of Sturminster Newton

- 3.6 One of the issues the Council had to consider when producing the draft Core Strategy was how to categorise Sturminster Newton, which did not fit easily into either the RSS Development Policy B or C categories. This issue was discussed at some length in the draft Core Strategy's Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report⁵² and a compromise was reached where the town was identified as a RSS Development Policy C settlement, but given its own draft core policy, setting out proposals for future growth, including 500 homes.⁵³
- 3.7 Since there is little dispute that Sturminster Newton is a sustainable location and its future growth is clearly a strategic issue for the District, it is proposed that it will be defined as a 'main town' (alongside Blandford, Gillingham and Shaftesbury) in the revised Core Strategy. Since proposals for the future development of the town (including housing) are already set out in some detail in draft Core Policy 18, the proposed change of status would have no significant implications for the revision of the draft Core Strategy or for the town itself. Proposals for Sturminster Newton are discussed in more detail in Section 13.

Revised Spatial Approach for the District

- 3.8 As part of the review of the draft Core Strategy, the Council proposes to continue taking forward the planned growth of the main towns (including Sturminster Newton) and to develop a Strategic Site Allocation (SSA) policy for the largest urban extension in the District (at Gillingham). The reduced overall housing provision figure for North Dorset (which is discussed in more detail in Section 4) means that it is now possible to meet the vast majority of the strategic need for growth at the four main towns without identifying any additional sites.
- 3.9 This approach will ensure that the vast majority of growth is delivered in the most sustainable locations in the District. It will also enable the

⁵⁰ Penultimate bullet point of Paragraph 17 on Page 6 of the NPPF

⁵¹ Paragraph 55 of the NPPF

⁵² See Option 3(1) on Pages 132 to 136 of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report

⁵³ Draft Core Policy 18 in the Draft Core Strategy

Council to develop a policy framework elsewhere that is much more aimed at meeting the local needs of individual rural settlements. The Council considers that the revised spatial approach for the District is consistent with the guidance in the NPPF.

Spatial Approach to Development in Stalbridge and the Villages

- 3.10 The impending abolition of regional planning means that there is no longer a requirement for Stalbridge and the District's villages to be categorised according to RSS Development Policies B and C.
- 3.11 A considerable amount of work was done to try and apply the regional 'spatial hierarchy' to Stalbridge and the villages most notably in the Spatial Strategy Topic Paper⁵⁴ and the Core Strategy's Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report.⁵⁵ Both of these documents assessed settlements on the basis of their population, facilities and accessibility, with a view to making them 'fit' with the regional 'spatial hierarchy'.
- 3.12 Despite this detailed analysis, the results of consultation on the draft Core Strategy show a high level of objection to draft Core Policy 3.⁵⁶ The main concerns with the approach were that:
- the assessment is 'broad-brush' and does not look in detail at more 'fine-grained' local sustainability issues;
 - the assessment requires a simple 'yes / no' judgement to be made on whether individual settlements are sustainable or not; and
 - this 'one-off' sustainability judgement provides the basis for decisions to be made about the future distribution of housing growth (i.e. it determines which settlements receive growth and which don't).
- 3.13 In the light of these concerns, the Council has considered how a more responsive and flexible framework could be put in place. Options for how this might be achieved were the subject of consultation with Town and Parish Councils in late 2011 and early 2012.⁵⁷ These communities expressed a clear preference for a 'light touch' strategic approach in the revised Core Strategy and showed a considerable appetite for the

⁵⁴ The 2009 version of the Spatial Strategy Topic Paper can be viewed here - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=147731&filetype=pdf>

⁵⁵ The Initial SA Report can be viewed here - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=147724&filetype=pdf>

⁵⁶ The report on consultation responses to the core policies can be viewed here - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=175331&filetype=pdf>

⁵⁷ The results of consultation were reported to Planning Policy Panel on 7 March 2012. The minutes of that meeting can be viewed here - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=171915&filetype=pdf>

preparation of neighbourhood plans to provide a more locally-based framework for decision-making.⁵⁸

- 3.14 The Council's proposed 'light touch' strategic policy framework in rural areas will give greater local choice to communities in deciding how to meet their future development needs. However, it will be important for communities to take forward policy at the more local level through neighbourhood planning to ensure that local needs are met. The Council's proposed revised approach to development at Stalbridge, the villages and the countryside is discussed in more detail in Section 14.

'Opting in' to the Site Allocations DPD

- 3.15 Some communities in rural areas may recognise that they have development needs but either do not have the resources to take forward neighbourhood plans, or have encountered difficulties in getting a neighbourhood plan adopted. The Council is proposing that in such circumstances, a local community would be able 'opt in' to the Site Allocations DPD that will be prepared once the Core Strategy is adopted.
- 3.16 In the event that a local community chose this course of action, the Council would work closely with local people to develop proposals that enabled them to meet their needs.

Proposed Revisions to Draft Policies

- 3.17 The abolition of regional planning and the introduction of neighbourhood planning offer the Council the opportunity to reconsider its spatial approach to growth. The main proposed revisions to policy are:
- to identify Sturminster Newton as a 'main town' alongside Blandford, Gillingham and Shaftesbury;
 - to concentrate the vast majority of housing growth at the four main towns. This growth would be delivered through a subsequent Site Allocations DPD, except at Gillingham where the expansion to the south of the town will be taken forward through a SSA policy in the revised Core Strategy. Other proposals for the town will be taken forward in the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan.⁵⁹
 - For Stalbridge and the villages to focus on meeting local (rather than strategic) needs, which will be delivered primarily through neighbourhood planning; and
 - To give local communities in the rural area the choice to 'opt in' to the Site Allocations DPD, which would be prepared by the Council,

⁵⁸ The results showed that 52% of the parished areas that responded expressed an interest in preparing a neighbourhood plan and 72% opted for 'Option 3' (i.e. for 'light touch' strategic guidance in the revised Core Strategy)

⁵⁹ Any residual issues not addressed either in the SSA policy or the neighbourhood plan could be addressed in the Council's Site Allocations DPD

as an alternative to meeting local needs through neighbourhood planning.

- 3.18 The treatment of existing Local Plan settlement boundaries is discussed in Section 14. In Section 8, the Council is also seeking views on whether an element of market housing should be permitted on rural exception affordable housing sites.

Questions 1 to 4

- 1. Do you agree that Sturminster Newton should be identified as a 'main town' alongside Blandford, Gillingham and Shaftesbury?**
- 2. Do you agree that the Council should concentrate the vast majority of housing growth at the District's four 'main towns', with specific sites (except the SSA at Gillingham) being taken forward primarily through a Site Allocations DPD?**
- 3. Do you agree that in Stalbridge and the villages the focus should be on meeting local (rather than strategic) needs, which will be delivered primarily through neighbourhood planning?**
- 4. Do you agree that communities in Stalbridge and all villages should have the option to 'opt in' to the Council's Site Allocations DPD as an alternative to meeting local needs through neighbourhood planning?**

4. Provision of Housing

Introduction

- 4.1 The 'emerging' RSS established the overall level of housing growth that the Council should make provision for in the draft Core Strategy. However, regional planning is being abolished and the responsibility for determining the overall level of housing growth now rests with local planning authorities. This section explains how the overall level of housing provision for North Dorset has been reassessed and sets out the revised approach now being considered by the Council.

Draft Core Policy 4

- 4.2 Draft Core Policy 4: Housing (Including Affordable Housing) Distribution states that "at least 7,000 net additional dwellings will be provided in North Dorset between 2006 and 2026 at an average annual rate of 350 net additional dwellings per annum".⁶⁰ This overall level and rate of development was proposed on the basis of the housing provision rates set out in the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the 'emerging' RSS, produced in July 2008.⁶¹ Draft Core Policy 4 also explained the proposed spatial distribution of the 7,000 homes, which was:

Location	Homes proposed 2006 to 2026	% of total
Blandford	about 1,500	21%
Gillingham	about 2,300	33%
Shaftesbury	about 1,200	17%
Sturminster Newton	about 500	7%
Stalbridge and the larger villages	about 1,200	17%
Small villages and countryside	about 300	4%
Total	About 7,000	100% ⁶²

Interim Position

- 4.3 In January 2011 the Council indicated that it would review its position with regard to housing provision and housing land supply in the light of the Government's intention to abolish regional strategies. The Council indicated that it would use the average annual rates of provision in the Initial Draft of the 'emerging' RSS (produced in June 2006) as the starting point for the review. These figures (often referred to as the 'Option 1'

⁶⁰ Draft Core Policy 4 is on page 70 of the draft Core Strategy, which can be viewed here - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=147729&filetype=pdf>

⁶¹ The annual average net dwelling requirements for each local authority in the South West are set out in Table 4.1 on Page 121 to 124 of the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the 'emerging' RSS. The annual average net dwelling requirement for North Dorset is 350 dwellings per annum, which over 20 years equates to 7,000 homes

⁶² Note that figures do not sum due to rounding

figures) proposed 255 net additional dwellings per annum (dpa) between 2006 and 2026, which equates to 5,100 homes over 20 years.⁶³

Updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

- 4.4 The NPPF indicates that local planning authorities should *"have a clear understanding of housing needs in their area"* and that they should *"prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to assess their full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries"*.
- 4.5 All the local planning authorities in the Dorset Sub-region commissioned consultants to produce a SHMA in 2008.⁶⁴ In the light of the reforms of the planning system and the economic downturn, the original SHMA was updated in 2012. In relation to North Dorset, the updated SHMA states that *"trend-based data suggests household growth of around 273 per annum for the period from 2011 to 2031 and so a housing delivery figure (on the basis of this figure) might be around 280 per annum (to take account of a small vacancy rate)"*.⁶⁵
- 4.6 The Council has already begun to use the figure of 280 dpa in its monitoring of housing land supply⁶⁶ and it is intended to use this figure as the basis for housing provision in the revised Core Strategy.

Proposed Revisions to Draft Policy

- 4.7 As stated earlier, the Council intends to re-base housing provision figures to 2011, giving a plan period of 15 years to 2026. 280 dpa equates to 4,200 homes over 15 years and this is the revised District-wide housing provision figure that the Council intends to include in the revised Core Strategy.
- 4.8 The levels of provision for each of the four main towns have been re-assessed in the light of: the revised District-wide housing provision figures; housing development that has taken place since 2006; new planning permissions and updates to the SHLAA. As set out in Section 3 the proposed revised approach to the spatial distribution of development is to concentrate the vast majority of housing in the four main towns, with the focus for Stalbridge the villages and the countryside being on meeting

⁶³ The interim position statement on housing provision and housing land supply can be viewed here - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=160364&filetype=pdf>

⁶⁴ The Housing Need and Demand Survey for North Dorset, which forms part of the 2008 SHMA can be viewed here - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=148118&filetype=pdf>

⁶⁵ This statement appears in Paragraph 5.10 of the summary report for North Dorset, which forms part of the 2012 updated SHMA: see here - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=170143&filetype=pdf>

⁶⁶ See Paragraphs 5.56 to 5.64 on Pages 31 to 33 of the Council's Annual Monitoring Report for 2011: see here - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=168650&filetype=pdf>

local needs. In the light of this revised approach the proposed spatial distribution of the 4,200 homes between 2011 and 2026 is:

Location	Homes proposed 2011 to 2026	% of total
Blandford	about 960	23%
Gillingham	about 1,490	35%
Shaftesbury	about 1,140	27%
Sturminster Newton	about 380	9%
Stalbridge, villages and countryside	at least 230	6%
Total	about 4,200	100%

- 4.9 The details of this proposed distribution for the locations in the table above are set out in Sections 10 to 14.
- 4.10 In the main towns the housing provision figures reflect: completions in 2011/12; extant planning permissions; new allocations; and infill sites (within current settlement boundaries) identified in SHLAA and / or where there have been pre-application discussions.
- 4.11 In Stalbridge, the villages and the countryside the housing provision figures make no allowance for infill development as this will not be permitted pending the production, or in the absence, of neighbourhood plans (see Section 14 for more details). The figures reflect completions in 2011/12 and extant planning permissions (about 150 homes). They require only a very modest contribution (of 80 dwellings) from neighbourhood planning, rural exceptions and occupational dwellings over 15 years (or just over 5 dpa) in order to meet the overall District-wide housing provision figure of 4,200 units, which should be achieved easily.

Questions 5 and 6

- 5. Do you agree that the Council should set a revised District-wide housing provision figure of 4,200 homes for the period from 2011 to 2026?**
- 6. Do you agree with the proposed revised distribution of housing development in the District from 2011 to 2026?**

5. Provision of Employment Land

Introduction

- 5.1 The 'emerging' RSS provides some guidance on the jobs and employment land required in the Bournemouth and Poole Housing Market Area (HMA), but draft Core Policy 6 was also informed by more detailed work undertaken at the sub-regional level. With the abolition of regional planning the responsibility for determining the level of job provision and the need for employment land will rest with the District Council.
- 5.2 This section explains how the need for future jobs and employment land has been reassessed in the light of the recent economic downturn and sets out the revised approach now being considered by the Council.

The Emerging RSS and Sub-regional Work

- 5.3 The 'emerging' RSS indicates that between 2006 and 2026, about 45,400 jobs should be provided in the Bournemouth and Poole HMA, of which 42,000 should be in the Bournemouth and Poole Travel to Work Area (TTWA).⁶⁷ This left just 3,400 jobs for the rural parts of the HMA including the whole of North Dorset and parts of East Dorset and Purbeck.
- 5.4 The Council was concerned that this predicted level of job provision was too low. Further work undertaken by Dorset County Council suggested that about 3,300 jobs may be required in North Dorset by 2026⁶⁸ and more detailed work on Gillingham suggested that a 'supply-led' approach could generate as many as 2,500 additional jobs in the town by 2026.⁶⁹
- 5.5 The 'emerging' RSS was unclear about the amount of employment land required in the rural parts of the HMA, but further work at the sub-regional level identified a need for 25.3 hectares of employment land in North Dorset for the period up to 2026. The proposed 'supply-led' approach at Gillingham suggested a need for additional employment land at the town and a site for a new business park was proposed at Wyke.

Draft Core Policy 6

- 5.6 Taking account of all these factors, draft Core Policy 6 indicated that about 4,700 jobs and 38.3 hectares of employment land should be provided in North Dorset by 2026. The supporting text also noted that there was at least 40 hectares of identified employment land for classes B1 (business), B2 (general industrial) and B8 (storage and distribution) across the

⁶⁷ Policy HMA 7: Bournemouth and Poole HMA on Pages 97 and 98 of the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the 'emerging' RSS

⁶⁸ See Paragraph 2.4.35 on Pages 76 and 77 on the draft Core Strategy

⁶⁹ Economic development is discussed in Section 5 of Assessing the Growth Potential of Gillingham, Dorset, produced by Atkins in December 2009

District, including sites with planning permission and sites which were already allocated in the District-wide Local Plan.

Updated Job and Employment Land Projections

- 5.7 The NPPF indicates that local planning authorities should "*assess the existing and future supply of land available for economic development and its sufficiency and suitability to meet the identified needs*".⁷⁰
- 5.8 The estimates for jobs and employment land that informed draft Core Policy 6 were based on pre-recession economic growth projections, which assumed Gross Value Added (GVA) growth of 3.2% per annum across the South West. In the light of the requirements of the NPPF and the economic downturn, it was decided to update the projections based on post-recession economic growth projections, which assume 2.5% GVA growth per annum across Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole.
- 5.9 The updated projections indicate a need for 4,400 full time equivalent jobs in North Dorset over the 20-year period from 2011 to 2031.⁷¹ The projections examined the need for employment land in North Dorset⁷² building in additional flexibility allowances as set out below.

North Dorset Total Employment Land Requirement from 2011 to 2031	
Flexibility Allowance	Hectares required
0%	28.5
10%	29.5
20%	30.5

- 5.10 The updated projections also examined the availability of employment land in North Dorset and indicated that 49.6 hectares are available across the District distributed as set out below.⁷³
- 5.11 The updated study shows that the amount of employment land available in North Dorset on sites with planning permission or on sites which are already allocated in the 2003 Local Plan exceeds the identified need over the next 20 years. The table below also shows that the available land is spread across the District and that each main town has at least one large site where land is available.

⁷⁰ Paragraph 161 of the NPPF

⁷¹ As set out in Appendix A of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Workspace Study: Employment Land Projections 2012 Update

⁷² Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Workspace Study: Employment Land Projections 2012 Update – Extract for North Dorset

⁷³ The sites that make up the supply of available employment land in North Dorset are set out in Appendix d of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Workspace Study: Employment Land Projections 2012 Update

North Dorset Available Employment Land April 2011		
Location	Available land (ha)	Land available on large sites (ha)
Blandford	10.3	The Brewery – 3.0; Land off Shaftesbury Lane – 4.8
Gillingham	17.5	Brickfields Business Park – 11.7
Shaftesbury	8.4	Land South of the A30 – 7.0
Sturminster Newton	6.7	North Dorset Business Park – 6.3
Stalbridge and the rural area	6.7	
Total	49.6	32.8

Proposed Revisions

- 5.12 Given the level of provision of employment land that already exists in North Dorset, the spread of sites across the District and the availability of large sites at each of the four main towns, the Council is not proposing to identify or allocate any further sites in the revised Core Strategy.
- 5.13 The figure of 17.5 hectares at Gillingham excludes the proposed new business park at Wyke that was put forward in the draft Core Strategy. Given the availability of employment land at Gillingham and in the light of revised growth projections, it is proposed to delete the site at Wyke. This is discussed in more detail in Section 11.
- 5.14 Policy 3.2 of the current Local Plan and draft Core Policy 6 both seek to limit development on employment sites to uses within classes B1, B2 and B8. However, since the level of supply is above the projected level of future need, there is the potential for the Council to consider allowing a more flexible approach, particularly in relation to other uses that provide employment, but do not fall within the B-class use definitions.
- 5.15 A more flexible approach to non B-Class uses on employment sites could help to support business. For example, on North Dorset Business Park allowing certain activities relating to food-based businesses (such as training facilities or small scale ancillary retail) could help to support the development of a food-based cluster. However, the Council is also aware that such an approach could potentially lead to pressure for inappropriate developments and any revised policy would make it clear that large-scale retail and any housing development would not be permitted on such sites.

Questions 7 and 8

- 7. Do you agree there is no need to identify further employment sites in North Dorset in addition to those that are already allocated or have planning permission?**
- 8. Do you agree that the Council should allow employment generating uses other than Classes B1, B2 and B8 on employment sites? If so, what uses do you think the Council should permit?**

6. Housing Density, Infilling and Residential Gardens

Introduction

- 6.1 Changes to national policy now offer more scope for the Council and local communities to develop their own approaches to housing density, infilling and the development of residential gardens, which are more focused on local and site-based concerns. The changes to national policy and the revised approach being considered by the Council are explained below.

Housing Density

- 6.2 Draft Core Policy 8 indicated that all development delivering new homes should have a density in the range between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare (dph). The draft core policy reflected both regional policy⁷⁴ and the national indicative minimum density standard of 30dph⁷⁵, which existed at the time.
- 6.3 The aim of this policy was to make more efficient use of land within settlements. However, consultation on the draft Core Strategy revealed a number of concerns including: the lack of outside space; loss of character of settlements; inappropriate housing for certain parts of the population; and the encouragement of on-street parking⁷⁶.
- 6.4 The national indicative minimum density standard was deleted in an earlier review of national policy⁷⁷ and current national policy⁷⁸ now indicates that local planning authorities should "*set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances*".

Infilling

- 6.5 Draft Core Policies 15 to 19 indicated that infilling and redevelopment would be permitted within the settlement boundaries of Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury, Sturminster Newton, Stalbridge and the District's larger villages. This approach reflected national policy at the time, which adopted a 'brownfield first' approach⁷⁹ to housing development.
- 6.6 The aim of this policy was to make more efficient use of land within settlements. However, the priority given to the use of previously developed land coupled with the national indicative minimum density

⁷⁴ Paragraph 6.1.10, The Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the Draft Revised Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West – Government Office for the South West (July 2008)

⁷⁵ As set out in Paragraph 47 of Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS 3): Housing – DCLG (November 2006)

⁷⁶ As set out on Page 69 of the report on consultation on the draft core policies, which can be viewed here: <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=175331&filetype=pdf>

⁷⁷ Paragraph 47 of the June 2011 version of PPS 3: Housing did not include a national indicative minimum density standard

⁷⁸ Paragraph 47 of the NPPF – DCLG (March 2011)

⁷⁹ Paragraph 36 of the June 2011 version of PPS 3: Housing indicated that, in relation to housing "*the priority for development should be previously developed land ...*"

standard reduced the weight that could be given to more local concerns, particularly, concerns about the impact of such development on the character and appearance of an area.

- 6.7 The Government still encourages 'brownfield' development⁸⁰, but no longer adopts a 'brownfield first' approach. National policy now offers more scope for local Councils and communities to develop policies encouraging more sensitive infilling.

Development of Residential Gardens

- 6.8 National policy used to regard gardens as 'brownfield' sites⁸¹, however, Annex 2: Glossary of the NPPF⁸² now expressly excludes them from the definition of previously developed land. The change in the national definition of previously developed land means that residential gardens are now considered to be 'greenfield' sites. Consequently, they are not subject to the national policy to encourage development on 'brownfield' land.
- 6.9 In recognition of this change of status, the NPPF⁸³ states that councils can consider the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, for example where development would cause harm to the local area. National policy now offers more scope for the Council and local communities to develop policies that focus more on local and site-based concerns in relation to the development of residential gardens.

Proposed Revisions to Draft Policy

- 6.10 These changes to national policy provide a much more flexible framework within which local policies relating to density and infilling (including on residential gardens) can be developed.
- 6.11 As stated in Section 14, it is intended to 'wash over' all settlements outside the four main towns with countryside policy, which would not permit infilling. Until neighbourhood plans are produced, any policy that encouraged more sensitive infilling (including on residential gardens) would only apply within the settlement boundaries of Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton.
- 6.12 If a community decides to establish a new settlement boundary in a neighbourhood plan, it would be able to also put in place more detailed

⁸⁰ One of the 'core planning principles' in Paragraph 17 of the NPPF is that planning should "encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value"

⁸¹ Gardens were not excluded from the definition of previously-developed land in Annex B of PPS 3, although parks, recreation grounds and allotments were

⁸² The definition of previously developed land in Annex 2 of the NPPF excludes "land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments"

⁸³ Paragraph 53 of the NPPF – DCLG (March 2011)

local policies relating to infilling, based on more detailed local assessments of character. However, where a new settlement boundary was established in a neighbourhood plan and no more detailed local policies relating to infilling were produced, the District-wide policy encouraging sensitive infilling would apply.

6.13 The overall approach the Council is considering is:

- To not set a density standard for housing development at the District level;
- To set out criteria relating to impacts on character, amenity and other local considerations to encourage sensitive infilling (including the development of residential gardens) in the four main towns; and
- To encourage local communities to develop more detailed policies relating to infilling in neighbourhood plans, or to develop other local policies in town and village design statements or informal design or development briefs for particular sites.

Questions 9 to 11

- 9. Do you agree that the Council should not set a density standard for housing development at the District level?**
- 10. Do you agree that, at the District level, the Council should develop a criteria-based approach to encourage more sensitive infilling (including the development of residential gardens)?**
- 11. Do you agree that, at the local level, the Council should encourage local communities to develop more detailed policies relating to infilling based on more detailed local assessments of character?**

7. Affordable Housing

Introduction

- 7.1 National policy and the Government's approach to the funding of affordable housing have changed since the draft Core Strategy was written. This section explains the changes that have taken place and sets out the revised approach that is now being considered by the Council.

Draft Core Policy 9

- 7.2 Draft Core Policy 9 states that all development with an element of additional housing should contribute to the provision of affordable housing. The draft policy seeks 40% affordable housing except in Gillingham where 35% will be sought. It also sets out the Council's position in relation to tenure split (between social rented and intermediate housing), viability, off-site provision and financial contributions.

The 'Affordable Rent' Product and Changes to National Policy

- 7.3 The Government introduced the new 'Affordable Rent' product in April 2011, which enables Registered Providers (i.e. Housing Associations) to charge higher levels of rent (than were usually charged for social rented properties – up to 80% of local market rents) and offer shorter tenancies (from a minimum of 2 years) for such properties.
- 7.4 The Government has greatly reduced the average level of grant funding for each affordable home and has also (through the Homes and Communities Agency) made the Affordable Rent product the focus of its grant funding. These changes now mean that the emphasis for new provision is very much on the Affordable Rent product.
- 7.5 The Government changed the definition of affordable housing in national policy to include Affordable Rent⁸⁴ and this revised definition is now included in the NPPF.⁸⁵

Interim Position Statement

- 7.6 In January 2011, the Council produced an interim position statement on affordable housing, which included a preliminary review of draft Core Policy 9 reflecting the changes to the planning system at that time. The preliminary review concluded that draft Core Policy 9 remained an appropriate approach to the provision of affordable housing although it also suggested certain amendments in relation to viability assessments

⁸⁴ The definition of affordable housing used to appear in Annex B of PPS 3: Housing, which was revised in 2011 to include the Affordable Rent product

⁸⁵ The current definition of affordable housing (which includes affordable rent) is included in the glossary (Annex 2) of the NPPF

and off-site contributions. This preliminary assessment was undertaken prior to the introduction of the Affordable Rent product.

Tenure Split

- 7.7 Draft Core Policy 9 sets out the starting point for negotiations on the tenure split on individual sites. It indicates that 70% of the affordable provision should be social rented housing and 30% should be intermediate housing, although a different split could be negotiated if it could be justified by local circumstances or local needs. This approach seeks to target provision to those that are most in need, but also recognises the need for flexibility on individual sites. However, it makes no mention of the Affordable Rent product.
- 7.8 'Social rent' and 'affordable rent' are both wholly rent-based forms of tenure (i.e. the tenant does not acquire any equity in the property, as is the case with intermediate products). One option would be for the Council to simply seek 70% 'affordable or social rented' housing and 30% intermediate housing. However, there are many other splits that could be sought as the starting point for negotiations, including options that sought separate percentage figures for affordable rent and social rent.
- 7.9 The Council would welcome views on how draft Core Policy 9 should be revised to take account of this new form of affordable housing.

Viability Assessments

- 7.10 Draft Core Policy 9 recognises that viability is a reason that could justify a reduction in the level of affordable housing provision on a site. However, it is not always easy to reach an agreed negotiated position on viability, as there can be disputes about the way in which viability assessments are carried out and how their results are interpreted.
- 7.11 In many cases this issue can be resolved if both a developer and the Council adopt an 'open book' approach and agree to rely on a single site-based assessment of viability carried out by the District Valuer (or another valuer approved and instructed by the authority). This approach was suggested as a way forward in the Council's interim position statement on affordable housing.⁸⁶
- 7.12 The Council would welcome views on whether draft Core Policy 9 should be amended to facilitate this approach to potentially reaching agreement on assessments of viability.

⁸⁶ In such cases the developer would be expected to cover the cost of the assessment reflecting the fact that the purpose of the exercise is to enable the developer to seek to justify a departure from the normal requirements of the Council

Levels of Off-site Contributions

- 7.13 Draft Core Policy 9 seeks the provision of affordable housing on-site, but recognises that this is not always feasible or viable. In certain circumstances the Council may allow developers to make a financial contribution to the provision of affordable housing off-site. The supporting text to the policy indicates that where this approach is permitted, the Council will seek a commuted sum of broadly equivalent value to the provision of affordable housing on-site.
- 7.14 In the interim position statement on affordable housing it was recognised that the draft Core Strategy gave no indication of the financial value of 'a commuted sum of broadly equivalent value'. On an interim basis, the Council decided to seek financial contributions at a level equivalent to the average level of grant paid by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to deliver an affordable dwelling for rent in the South West, as a basis for negotiation.
- 7.15 The interim position statement indicated that the level of grant (at that time) was usually around £60,000. Although this figure would fall short of the full cost of providing an affordable home, it was considered to be a helpful approach that gave developers an early indication of the likely level of contribution that would be sought by the Council.
- 7.16 The average level of grant funding for an affordable home has now dropped considerably and it is considered that this figure is no longer an appropriate starting point for negotiations. The Council now proposes to seek contributions based on a realistic assessment of the cost of delivering affordable homes. It is intended to ask a valuer to periodically calculate the costs of delivering different sizes of affordable units in North Dorset and for the Council to seek different levels of off-site contributions based on these calculations.
- 7.17 The Council would welcome views on whether draft Core Policy 9 should be amended to seek off-site financial contributions (in appropriate circumstances) based on realistic assessments of the cost of delivering affordable homes.

Proposed Revisions to Draft Policy

- 7.18 It is considered that much of draft Core Policy 9 and supporting text provide an appropriate framework for seeking the provision of affordable housing. However, the policy will need to be updated to reflect the introduction of the Affordable Rent product, which has implications for the tenure split that the Council should seek.

- 7.19 It is intended to offer developers the opportunity to involve a valuer (agreed by the Council) with a view to reaching an agreed negotiated position on viability, where this is in dispute. In relation to off-site contributions, it is also proposed to give more clarity on what is meant, in financial terms, by 'a commuted sum of broadly equivalent value'.

Questions 12 to 14

- 12. What tenure split should be the starting point for negotiations for the provision of affordable housing on individual sites, having regard to the introduction of the new Affordable Rent product?**
- 13. Should draft Core Policy 9 be amended to offer developers the opportunity to involve a valuer (agreed by the Council) with a view to reaching an agreed negotiated position on viability in relation to the provision of affordable housing?**
- 14. In appropriate circumstances, should the Council seek off-site financial contributions towards the cost of affordable housing based on realistic assessments of the cost of delivering affordable homes?**

8. Affordable Housing Rural Exception Schemes

Introduction

- 8.1 The Council recognises that, exceptionally, small sites for affordable housing may be appropriate in rural areas to meet strictly local needs. Draft Core Policy 10: Affordable Housing: Rural Exception Schemes identifies the type of location and establishes the circumstances when rural exceptions schemes may be permitted. Draft Core Policy 10 needs to be reviewed in the light of changes to national policy, in particular the option of allowing some market housing on such sites.

Draft Core Policy 10: Affordable Housing: Rural Exception Schemes

- 8.2 Draft Core Policy 10 allows developments that are 100% affordable which meet an existing demonstrable local need and that are within an identified small rural community. Rural exception schemes are only acceptable within or adjacent to settlements with 3,000 or fewer inhabitants (effectively excluding the main towns of Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton).
- 8.3 The policy does not set a lower limit, but recognises that schemes in settlements with very small populations and a lack of essential facilities are unlikely to be sustainable. The policy seeks rural exception schemes at settlements which have at least one essential community facility within 1 kilometre and an estimated population of more than 100 people.
- 8.4 Rural exceptions housing schemes will only be permitted if: the identified housing need cannot be met through other means; it consists of only affordable dwellings of a number, size and type that will meet or contribute towards meeting the identified local housing need; and the affordable housing remains available to meet local needs in perpetuity.

Interim Position Statement on Affordable Housing and the NPPF

- 8.5 In January 2011 the Council produced an interim position statement on affordable housing, which included a preliminary review of draft Core Policy 10 in the light of the changes to the planning system that were taking place at the time. The preliminary review concluded that "*the approach in draft Core Policy 10 remains appropriate*".⁸⁷ However, further review is now required in the light of changes to national policy.
- 8.6 The NPPF continues to support affordable housing provision and in rural areas it indicates that local planning authorities should be "*responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs,*

⁸⁷ Paragraph 101 of the Interim Position Statement on Affordable Housing, which can be viewed here - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=160360&filetype=pdf>

particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate".⁸⁸

8.7 It defines rural exception sites as *"small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection."*⁸⁹

8.8 National policy now suggests that local planning authorities should *"in particular consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs"*.⁹⁰ *"Small numbers"* may be permitted *"at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding"*.⁹¹

Proposed Revisions to Draft Policy

8.9 The Council proposes to retain draft Core Policy 10 and to update it in the light of the NPPF. The Council proposes to allow a proportion of market housing on such sites, subject to additional criteria to ensure that the market element both contributes to meeting local housing needs and respects local character.

8.10 The revised policy will continue to guide the number, scale and location of rural exceptions sites. However, it will also seek to ensure that:

- any scheme includes the minimum number of market homes necessary to deliver the affordable element;
- the market homes are of a size and type that reflect the market housing needs of the local population; and
- any proposals integrate the market and affordable elements into a single scheme (i.e. proposals seeking to separate the two elements or schemes that seek to build the affordable element separately or remotely, will not be permitted).

Questions 15 and 16

15. Do you agree that an element of market housing should be permitted on rural exception affordable housing sites?

16. Do you agree with the criteria the Council intends to apply to the market element on any rural exception affordable housing site?

⁸⁸ Paragraph 54 of the NPPF

⁸⁹ The definition is given on Page 55 in the glossary in Annex 2 of the NPPF

⁹⁰ Paragraph 54 of the NPPF

⁹¹ The statement regarding "small numbers" is set out in the definition on Page 55 in the glossary in Annex 2 of the NPPF

9. Grey, Social and Green Infrastructure

Introduction

- 9.1 Infrastructure is required to support housing and economic development and in North Dorset its provision is key to supporting our thriving market towns and sustainable rural communities. The draft Core Strategy already includes policies on infrastructure, but more detail is now set out in a draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) Background Paper for the District, which is the subject of consultation at this time.

National Policy

- 9.2 The NPPF requires councils to work with other authorities and providers to *"assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure for transport, water supply, wastewater and its treatment, energy (including heat), telecommunications, utilities, waste, health, social care, education, flood risk and coastal change management, and its ability to meet forecast demands"*.⁹² It also indicates that *"infrastructure and development policies should be planned at the same time in the (new style) Local Plan."*⁹³

Draft Core Policies Relating to Infrastructure

- 9.3 Draft Core Policy 2 sets out the Council's overall approach to infrastructure provision establishing that it should be delivered at the right time and in the right place to support proposed growth.
- 9.4 Draft Core Policies 11, 12 and 13 set out the general requirements for North Dorset in terms of:
- grey infrastructure (transport, utilities and drainage);
 - social infrastructure (community, leisure, cultural, education and health facilities); and
 - green infrastructure (open spaces, recreational areas and wildlife corridors).
- 9.5 Draft Core Policies 15 to 18 provide greater detail on the main grey, social and green infrastructure projects proposed for the District's four main towns and draft Core Policy 19 sets out the general approach to infrastructure provision in Stalbridge and the larger villages.

Infrastructure Delivery Plan Background Paper

- 9.6 The Council consulted communities and bodies responsible for delivering infrastructure to work up policies for infrastructure provision in the draft

⁹² Paragraph 162 of the NPPF

⁹³ Paragraph 177 of the NPPF

Core Strategy. These policies (and the specific) projects identified provide the basis for the draft IDP Background Paper,⁹⁴ which sets out: what infrastructure is required; how and when it will be put in place; likely costs; and how these costs will be met.

- 9.7 Appendix A of the draft IDP Background Paper prioritises different types of infrastructure as critical, essential, necessary or desirable. The Council welcomes views on this proposed categorisation.
- 9.8 Appendix B of the draft IDP Background Paper sets out a schedule of the infrastructure projects needed to support the development proposed in the draft Core Strategy, including details (where known) of funding, phasing and the lead delivery agency. The Council welcomes comments on the projects included in the schedule and any other projects that have been omitted.
- 9.9 Following consultation the relevant policies in the draft Core Strategy will be revised and the IDP Background Paper will be worked up into an IDP.
- 9.10 As part of this consultation, the Council is proposing an approach where development outside the four main towns is focused on meeting local needs delivered primarily through neighbourhood plans and other community-based approaches. Infrastructure projects needed to support growth put forward through the neighbourhood planning process will be listed in future revisions of the IDP.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule

- 9.11 The Council will produce a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule, which will be used to secure financial contributions from developers towards the costs of the infrastructure identified in the draft Core Strategy and the draft IDP Background Paper. Background information on CIL and the implementation of the Charging Schedule are contained in the Council's CIL Scoping report.⁹⁵

Questions 17 to 19

- 17. Do you agree with the level of significance assigned to different types of infrastructure, as set out in Appendix A of the draft IDP Background Paper?**
- 18. Is the information relating to the specific projects identified in Appendix B of the draft IDP Background Paper correct? In particular, do you agree with the significance assigned to individual projects (i.e. critical, essential, necessary or desirable)**

⁹⁴ The IDP Background Paper can be linked from this page - www.dorsetforyou.com/consultationkeyissues/north

⁹⁵ The CIL Scoping Report can be linked from this page - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/newplan/north>

- and do you have any comments on the information relating to funding, phasing and the lead delivery agencies identified?**
- 19. Are there any new or additional projects (that are needed to support growth) that should be included in Appendix B of the draft IDP Background Paper?**

10. Blandford

Introduction

- 10.1 Blandford (including the main town of Blandford Forum and the smaller built-up area of Blandford St Mary) is the main service centre in the south of the District. Draft Core Policy 15 outlines the broad locations for future housing growth and other uses such as employment, retail and open space. Blandford, along with Shaftesbury, Gillingham and Sturminster Newton, continues to be recognised as one of the main service centres in the District (see Section 3).
- 10.2 The Council intends to update figures on the overall level of housing provision for the town to reflect recent developments. It has also re-examined the options for housing and re-assessed the capacity of the proposed development to the west of Blandford Forum (known locally as the Deer Park/Crown Meadows). The Council is also seeking views on the possible creation of a large area of open space at the Deer Park/Crown Meadows site.

Draft Core Strategy Housing Policies

- 10.3 Draft Core Policy 3 identifies Blandford as a "*main service centre*" and a focus for growth in the District. Draft Core Policy 4 sets the proposed level of growth at 1,500 new homes for the period 2006 to 2026. Draft Core Policy 15 in turn provides a breakdown of housing growth with 750 new homes proposed in the period up to 2016 and 750 new homes post 2016. In summary, the draft policy indicates that in the period up to 2016 and beyond Blandford's housing needs will be met through:
- Development of land off Shaftesbury Lane and land behind the Archbishop Wake Primary School off Black Lane;
 - Mixed use regeneration of the Brewery site; and
 - Infilling and redevelopment within the settlement boundary.
- 10.4 Draft Core Policy 3 indicated that after 2016 Blandford's housing needs would also be met through the development of land to the west of Blandford Forum (Deer Park/Crown Meadows) and land to the west of Blandford St Mary.

Housing Development Since 2006

- 10.5 Since 2006 the development of the land off Shaftesbury Lane has been completed and work has commenced on the site behind the Archbishop Wake Primary School. Between 2006 and 2011 280 new homes were built in the town with a further 100 homes completed in 2011/2012.

10.6 Evidence⁹⁶ now suggests that there is capacity for an additional 490 new homes in the town on sites within the existing settlement boundaries and that post-2016, 370 new homes could be accommodated on greenfield sites.

Proposed Revisions to Draft Core Policies

10.7 In view of the housing that has been delivered since 2006 and in the light of the reassessment of capacity within settlement boundaries, the Council now proposes that about 960 new dwellings should be built in Blandford between 2011 and 2026.

10.8 Infilling and redevelopment will continue within the existing settlement boundaries and the proposed greenfield growth will continue to be accommodated on the two sites identified in the draft Core Strategy (to the west of Blandford Forum and to the west of Blandford St Mary). However, the capacity of these sites has been re-assessed, having regard to further landscape sensitivity work⁹⁷.

10.9 It is now proposed that about 150 new homes will be built on the site to the west of Blandford Forum (Deer Park/Crown Meadows). This is a reduction of 50 homes from the 200 originally proposed in the draft Core Strategy and reflects concerns about the visibility of the development in the landscape and the setting of Blandford Forum, particularly in views from the bridge over the River Stour at the entrance to the town. It is also proposed that about 220 new homes will be built on the site to the west of Blandford St Mary.

Sustainability Appraisal Update

10.10 An alternative option for the greenfield expansion of the town could be the area of land to the south of the A350 and A354 junction (opposite Tesco). This site was not assessed when options for growth were originally considered, because planning policies at that time indicated that the land would be required for the implementation of a highway scheme (the A350 Charlton Marshall / Spetisbury / Sturminster Marshall Bypass).

10.11 Transportation Policy X of the Structure Plan indicated that this scheme would be 'constructed by 2011'. However, since then Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP 3) has been produced and the delivery of a number of schemes, including the A350 Charlton Marshall / Spetisbury / Sturminster Marshall Bypass, has been pushed back. This scheme is no longer a firm policy proposal with a timetable for delivery but rather a long-term aspiration

⁹⁶ Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 2010 <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/shlaa/north>

⁹⁷ Including the landscape sensitivity assessment of sites around Blandford and Shaftesbury – <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/399827>

with less certainty about its provision and no firm arrangements for implementation or delivery. In the light of these policy changes, the site can now be considered as a possible option for the growth of the town. The site has been subject to a sustainability assessment, which is included in a update to the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report, which accompanied the draft Core Strategy.

- 10.12 The sustainability assessment recognises the relatively good accessibility of the site, but also raises issues with regard to: the severance caused by the Blandford Bypass; potential impacts on the landscape and wildlife; the loss of agricultural land; and the need for any housing scheme on the site to ensure that the long term implementation of the A350 Charlton Marshall / Spetisbury / Sturminster Marshall Bypass is not prejudiced. The updated assessment of options for Blandford concludes that the approach outlined in the draft Core Strategy is still the preferred option.

Public Open Space

- 10.13 The Crown Estate, the owner of the land to the west of Blandford Forum, has suggested that a large area between the proposed housing development and the River Stour could be made available as public open space, as part of an overall scheme for the site.⁹⁸ Making this land available for informal countryside recreation reflects the aspirations in the currently adopted Local Plan⁹⁹. The Council welcomes views on this suggestion.

Questions 20 and 21

- 20. Do you agree that the indicative capacity of the proposed housing site to the west of Blandford Forum (Deer Park/Crown Meadows) should be reduced from 200 to 150 new homes?**
- 21. Should land be made available as public open space in the floodplain of the River Stour as part of an overall scheme for the development of the land to the west of Blandford Forum (Deer Park/Crown Meadows)?**

⁹⁸ The letter from the Crown Estate setting out the proposal for public open space can be linked from the Blandford evidence base page here - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/396841>

⁹⁹ Paragraph 2.5.2 of the currently adopted District-wide Local Plan seeks to open up public access to the Crown Meadows to allow greater use of the area for informal countryside recreation in conjunction with the Milldown

11. Gillingham

Introduction

- 11.1 Gillingham has seen rapid levels of growth over past decades from a population of 6,740¹⁰⁰ in 1991 to approximately 11,000 in 2010¹⁰¹. It has now become the largest town in North Dorset.
- 11.2 The potential for further growth at Gillingham was identified through a report jointly commissioned by the District and County Councils¹⁰² and draft Core Policy 16 took this potential forward by identifying a number of indicative areas for development around the town. The majority of this growth was to be located to the south of the town comprising the extension of Brickfields Industrial Estate, the construction of around 1,400 homes¹⁰³, improvements to green infrastructure and regeneration and expansion of the town centre along Station Road, providing an improved link to the railway station. There was also a Business Park proposed for the Wyke area to accommodate the town's long-term business related growth needs.
- 11.3 The proposed growth to the south of the town received little objection and hence is still the preferred approach to the growth of the town. However, due to the importance of this development in delivering the objectives of the Core Strategy, it is proposed to add more detail through a Strategic Site Allocation (SSA) policy including a reassessment of the phasing of the site.
- 11.4 Gillingham Town Council has opted to produce a Neighbourhood Plan¹⁰⁴. This will be produced alongside the Council's revised Core Strategy and will add local detail to planning policies for the town.
- 11.5 The proposed revisions to the policies in Gillingham are explained in more detail below.

Draft Core Strategy Policies

- 11.6 Draft Core Policy 3 identifies Gillingham as a "*main service centre*" and a focus for growth in the District. Draft Core Policy 4 sets out that Gillingham will accommodate about 33% of the district's housing growth, at 2,300 new homes for the period 2006 to 2026.

¹⁰⁰ 1991 Census

¹⁰¹ 2010 mid-year population estimates

¹⁰² Assessing the Growth Potential of Gillingham produced by Atkins in December 2009 can be viewed here - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=147773&filetype=pdf>

¹⁰³ In the period 2016-2026 with approximately 600 being delivered after this period

¹⁰⁴ The Town Council's neighbourhood plan page can be viewed here - <http://www.gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk/Gillingham-Neighbourhood-Plan/c-1-160.htm>

- 11.7 Draft Core Policy 16 provides more detail to these housing growth proposals identifying the broad locations where growth will occur at the town. The draft plan envisaged housing being provided through: mixed use regeneration of the Station Road area including offices, shops and residential uses; land to the south and south west of Bay (about 50 homes) and; further infilling and regeneration within the settlement boundary. It also envisaged the existing allocation adjacent to Lodden Lakes¹⁰⁵ being developed along with the land south running up to the flood plain of the River Lodden providing a total of about 300 dwellings.
- 11.8 After 2016, the draft policy envisaged the coordinated development of the land south of the town at Ham and at the land to the east of Ham bounded by Fern Brook, delivering about 1,400 homes.
- 11.9 The draft policy proposed a major new business park of about 10 hectares at Wyke to support the long term growth of the town. This would be aimed at attracting high value businesses to the town.
- 11.10 The above development proposals were to be supported through: the provision of a road link between the B3081 and the B3092; enhancement of the railway station area as a public transport interchange; the provision of enhanced leisure and community facilities; primary and secondary school provision to meet the needs to the town; and a network of green infrastructure focused on the river corridors.

Development Since 2006

- 11.11 Since 2006, Gillingham has experienced relatively low levels of growth with only 180 homes being built in the five year period to 2011 and 10 homes being built in 2011/12. The main sites that have been developed are the residual part of the Ham Farm site (about 30 homes), the former Oake Woods site at Station Road (about 40 homes), the Addison Close/New Road site (20 homes) and the former Royal Hotel site (25 homes in the 2006 to 2011 period with 10 homes being built in 2011/12).
- 11.12 The allocation adjacent to Lodden Lakes in the adopted Local Plan remains undeveloped and this will now form part of the larger southern development proposed in the draft policy.
- 11.13 In addition to the above residential development, Sigma Aldrich have secured permission to build a new head office building on the Brickfields Industrial Estate site. New evidence (see Section 5) has led to a revised assessment of the available land for employment uses to 17.5 hectares.

¹⁰⁵ Land South of The Meadows is allocated for a minimum of 90 dwellings under Policy GH 4 of the adopted District Wide Local Plan

Gillingham Town Design Statement (TDS) and Town Plan

- 11.14 The local community in Gillingham has long had a desire to be more involved in planning the future of their town. In support of this and to support the adopted and emerging policies for the town, local people were encouraged to prepare a town design statement. The role of this was to identify the special characteristics of the town and set out how new development can be integrated into this character. Alongside the production of the town design statement, the community decided to produce a town plan to set out the aspirations of local residents and establish objectives for moving forward.
- 11.15 Both of these pieces of work were well progressed when the Government introduced changes to the planning system. These changes gave local communities the right to take more control of planning for their area through neighbourhood planning. The Town Council decided to take on board this new right and begin the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for Gillingham using the work already undertaken on the Town Design Statement and Town Plan. Work on the neighbourhood plan is well underway with the Neighbourhood Area being formally designated on 20th August 2012.
- 11.16 The Town Design Statement was endorsed by the District Council on 30th March 2012 and is now used to guide development in the town.

Strategic Site Allocation (SSA) Policy

- 11.17 On 13th June 2011 Cabinet decided to take forward the proposals for the Southern Extension to Gillingham in the form of a SSA policy, which would be included in the revised Core Strategy. The SSA will enable the comprehensive development of the Southern Extension with infrastructure being provided in an integrated manner as the site is developed. Work has progressed on the more detailed SSA proposals supported by the landowners and developers who are promoting the site. The basic elements of the Southern Extension are being consulted on alongside this consultation with the aim of the proposals being developed further before insertion into the final version of the Core Strategy.
- 11.18 Work being undertaken on the Neighbourhood Plan (including the development of a vision for Gillingham) will influence the revision of draft Core Policy 16. The Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan Group (GNPG) will also be a key stakeholder in the development of proposals for the Southern Extension site. As the Southern Extension is strategic in nature, the principal, location and size of the development are established through the Core Strategy prepared by the District Council. However, the

Neighbourhood Plan can set the framework for more local issues such as design, open space and street scape.

Sustainability Appraisal Update

- 11.19 To inform the preparation of the draft Core Strategy options for the location of development around Gillingham were considered in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report, which was produced alongside the draft Core Strategy in March 2010. Consultation on the Initial SA Report highlighted that a further option to the north and east of the town (Bay and Bowridge Hill area) had not been assessed. The Initial SA Report has been updated to assess this option, but concludes that the comprehensive development to the south of the town is still the preferred option.

Proposed Revisions to Draft Core Policies

- 11.20 The main change to the policies for Gillingham is the additional detail which will be added through the development of the SSA for the Southern Gillingham Expansion. The site is likely to be developed at a slower rate but over a longer period than initially proposed in the draft Core Strategy with more homes being developed overall. This will have an impact on the total number of homes being delivered in the period to 2026, however if the necessary infrastructure is provided, there would be the opportunity for the site to be developed at a faster rate.
- 11.21 Since the consultation in March 2010, the workspace strategy for North Dorset has been revised. This has reassessed the amount of employment land that is required to meet needs in the District in the light of the recession and concludes that there is less need than originally expected. This enables the business park proposal at Wyke (which was the subject of a wide range of objections) to be deleted in favour of business-related growth being primarily located within the Southern Extension site.
- 11.22 The GNPG has been given the responsibility of preparing the neighbourhood plan. One of their first actions is to establish a vision and some key aims to guide the Neighbourhood Plan's formulation. This vision will incorporate a statement explaining where the town would like to be in the future and how it intends to get there. Policies in the revised Core Strategy will be amended to take on board the vision, once it has been produced. This will ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan and the Core Strategy are aligned to achieve the same objectives for the town.

Question 22

22. Do you agree that the business park proposed at Wyke in the draft Core Strategy should be deleted?

12. Shaftesbury

Introduction

- 12.1 Shaftesbury supports Gillingham in serving the needs of the northern part of the District and neighbouring parts of Wiltshire. Draft Core Policy 17 sets out the main proposals for growth in the town, but also recognises that the potential for expansion is limited by environmental (mainly landscape and biodiversity) constraints.
- 12.2 Shaftesbury continues to be recognised as one of the main service centres in the District (see Section 3) and its future growth will ensure that the Core Strategy's vision and objectives of thriving market towns are delivered.
- 12.3 To reflect recent developments, in particular the building out of land to the east of Shaftesbury, the Council intends to update the figures on the level of housing provision for the town. No additional greenfield sites are proposed, however the capacity of the land to the east of the town to accommodate housing development has been reassessed.
- 12.4 Proposed revisions are explained in more detail below.

Draft Core Strategy Housing Policies

- 12.5 Draft Core Policy 3 identifies Shaftesbury as a "*main service centre*" and a focus for growth in the District. Draft Core Policy 4 sets the proposed level of growth at 1,200 new homes for the period 2006 to 2026. This figure takes account of the housing that would be provided on land to the east of the town, which is already allocated in the adopted Local Plan.¹⁰⁶
- 12.6 Draft Core Policy 17 provides a breakdown of the housing growth and takes forward the proposal for housing on land to the east of the town. Most of the land here has been granted planning permission (670 new homes) and development is guided by the Development Brief¹⁰⁷ that was adopted in 2003 following extensive public consultation. The plan also envisages that small scale infilling will take place during the plan period.
- 12.7 The draft Core Policy envisaged that after 2016 land at the extreme northern end of the allocated site (known as "the Hopkins land") would be built out with approximately 80 further dwellings. In addition two further greenfield sites close to the existing built-up area would be developed: land to the south-east of Wincombe Business Park; and land to the west of the A350 opposite Wincombe Business Park.

¹⁰⁶ See Policy SB8 in the District-Wide Local Plan

¹⁰⁷ Development Brief 2003: Land to the Eastern Side of Shaftesbury, Supplementary Planning Guidance, North Dorset District Council (January 2003)

Housing Development Since 2006

- 12.8 Since 2006 land on the allocated site to the east of Shaftesbury has been steadily built out and other infill developments in the town (most notably on the site of the former Middle School on Mampitts Lane) have been delivered. Between 2006 and 2011, 160 new homes were built in the town, with a further 220 homes completed in 2011/12.
- 12.9 To date developers of land east of Shaftesbury have either secured reserved matters planning permission, or have (through pre-application discussions) given an indication of housing numbers they now consider could be accommodated on the site. Increased densities on parts of the site mean that the 670 dwellings agreed in the original outline permission can be accommodated without the whole of the site being developed leading to an increase in the overall capacity.
- 12.10 Part of the area proposed for a new First School on this site¹⁰⁸ will now be developed for housing. Following the school re-structuring programme and as a result of a re-assessment of school capacities, the County Council now proposes to extend existing primary schools in the town to accommodate additional student numbers, rather than to build a new school.

Proposed Revisions to Draft Core Policies

- 12.11 In view of the housing numbers that have been delivered in Shaftesbury between 2006 and 2011 and the new opportunities for additional development on land to the east of the town it is now proposed that about 1,140 new dwellings will be built between 2011 and 2026.
- 12.12 Infilling and redevelopment will continue within the existing settlement boundaries and the main greenfield sites proposed for housing in the draft Core Strategy will continue to be identified for development. These are:
- land to the east of the town (including the 'Hopkins land');
 - land to the south of Wincombe Business Park; and
 - land to the west of the A350 opposite Wincombe Business Park.

¹⁰⁸ Policies SB 10 and SB 11 of the adopted Local Plan indicate that a new First School may be required on site and that contributions may also be sought for improvements to existing schools off-site. The intended location for the school is shown in Figure 3 of the development brief for land to the eastern side of Shaftesbury, which can be viewed here - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=147935&filetype=pdf>. The southern section of the intended location for the school has already been secured for community and / or informal recreational purposes through a planning agreement. The balance of the site will be developed for housing.

13. Sturminster Newton

Introduction

- 13.1 Sturminster Newton acts as a service centre for the west of the District and the main proposals for the growth of the town are set out in draft Core Policy 18. Section 3 indicates that the Council intends to identify it as one of the District's four main towns in the revised Core Strategy, but this change of status will have no major implications for the level or location of future development.
- 13.2 The Council intends to update figures on the level of housing provision for the town to reflect recent developments, but no additional greenfield sites are proposed. It is also intended to update draft Core Policy 18 in relation to North Dorset Business Park, to ensure that any new building reflects the recently produced design and development brief for the site.
- 13.3 These proposed revisions are explained in more detail below.

Draft Core Strategy Housing Policies

- 13.4 Draft Core Policy 3 identifies Sturminster Newton as a "*local service centre*", but in recognition of the significant opportunities for regeneration in the town, draft Core Policy 4 proposes that about 500 dwellings should be built between 2006 and 2026.
- 13.5 Draft Core Policy 18 indicates that the bulk of new housing development (about 350 dwellings) will take place within the existing built-up area, primarily in locations close to the town centre. After 2016 limited greenfield expansion (of about 150 new homes) is proposed to the north of the town (on land adjacent to Honey mead) and to the east (on land east of the former Creamery site and north of the Trailway).

Housing Development Since 2006

- 13.6 Since 2006 the redevelopments of the former Livestock Market and Creamery sites have taken place and further housing has been delivered on small infill sites. Between 2006 and 2011, 170 new homes were built in the town, with a further 11 homes completed in 2011/12. The fields to the north of the livestock market were allocated for housing in the adopted Local Plan¹⁰⁹ and this site was carried forward into the draft Core Strategy. However, it has not yet been developed.

¹⁰⁹ See Policy SN4 in the District-Wide Local Plan

North Dorset Business Park

- 13.7 North Dorset Business Park is allocated for employment development in the adopted Local Plan.¹¹⁰ The site was carried forward into the draft Core Strategy and draft Core Policy 18 recognises that it will play a key role in meeting the employment needs of communities in the western part of the District in the period up to 2026. The site remains largely undeveloped and draft Core Policy 18 also recognised that a more proactive approach was needed to bring it forward: to provide 'move-on' accommodation for local firms; to meet the needs for firms moving into the area; and to deliver a 'food-based cluster'.
- 13.8 SturQuest, the local community partnership for the area, commissioned consultants to prepare a development brief for the site. The brief has been adopted by the Council.¹¹¹ and proposes a food hub, shared office space and small workshops to support local businesses.
- 13.9 Funding has now been secured to provide the infrastructure needed to bring the site forward and the brief will be used to guide the location of appropriate uses on the site and to help deliver high quality development that respects the character of the local area.

Proposed Revisions to Draft Core Policies

- 13.10 Taking account of the housing that has been delivered in Sturminster Newton between 2006 and 2011, it is now proposed that about 385 new dwellings will be built in the town between 2011 and 2026.
- 13.11 Infilling and redevelopment will continue within the existing settlement boundaries on sites such as the land at the junction of Station Road and the B3091. The main greenfield sites proposed for housing in the draft Core Strategy will continue to be identified for development. These are:
- land north of the former livestock market;
 - land adjacent to Honeymead, to the north of the town; and
 - land to the east of the Creamery development.
- 13.12 It is intended to update draft Core Policy 18 to indicate that any proposals for development on North Dorset Business Park should reflect the design and development brief for the site.

¹¹⁰ In Policy SN6, which refers to it as Rolls Mill Business Park

¹¹¹ The North Dorset Business Park Design and Development Brief was adopted by the Council on 19 March 2012 and can be viewed here - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=171979&filetype=pdf>

14. Stalbridge, the Villages and the Countryside

Introduction

- 14.1 The draft Core Strategy seeks to focus a significant proportion of strategic housing growth in Stalbridge and 18 of the District's larger villages¹¹², but adopts much more of a policy of restraint in the District's smaller villages. The Council is now proposing to change its overall spatial approach to growth across the District (see Section 3) so that outside the four main towns, the emphasis will be much more on meeting local needs, primarily through neighbourhood planning.
- 14.2 The changes in relation to the settlement hierarchy, housing provision figures, methods of delivery, the treatment of existing Local Plan settlement boundaries and countryside policy are explained below. This section also outlines the revised approach now being considered by the Council and alternative approaches that are not being taken forward.

Settlement Hierarchy

- 14.3 Draft Core Policy 3 identifies Stalbridge and 18 of the District's larger villages as 'local service centres' and the main focus for growth outside the four main towns. Draft Core Policy 3 indicates that countryside policy (i.e. a policy of restraint) would apply to the District's 'smaller villages'.
- 14.4 As set out in Section 3, the Council now intends to meet the vast majority of the strategic need for growth at the four main towns of Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton, which are considered to be the most sustainable locations in the District. For Stalbridge and all the District's villages, the policy framework will focus on meeting the local needs of individual settlements.
- 14.5 This approach will change the focus of any assessment of the sustainability of Stalbridge or any of the District's villages from one which was aimed primarily at facilitating the delivery of a proportion of strategic growth, to one which is aimed primarily at identifying the actions needed locally to make settlements more sustainable, which may not be primarily about the provision of housing, but could focus on other issues, such as improving accessibility or securing community facilities.

Housing Provision Figures

- 14.6 Draft Core Policy 4 indicates that Stalbridge and the District's larger villages will accommodate about 1,200 additional homes between 2006

¹¹² The 18 larger villages listed in draft Core Policy 3 are Bourton, Charlton Marshall, Child Okeford, East Stour, Fontmell Magna, Hazelbury Bryan, Iwerne Minster, Marnhull, Milborne St Andrew, Milton Abbas, Motcombe, Okeford Fitzpaine, Pimperne, Shillingstone, Stourpaine, Winterborne Kingston, Winterborne Stickland and Winterborne Whitechurch

and 2026. Paragraph 2.8.120 states *"1,200 dwellings at Stalbridge and the larger villages is considered to represent an appropriate balance between the need for additional housing to support local communities and their services and the need to ensure that the larger villages maintain their character and are not overwhelmed by development. If distributed evenly, 1,200 homes would result in the provision of just over 60 dwellings in each settlement"*.

- 14.7 Draft Core Policy 4 indicates that about 300 homes would be delivered in the countryside (including the District's 'smaller villages') over 20 years.
- 14.8 The Council now intends to not set a housing provision figure for Stalbridge, the villages and the countryside since the vast majority of growth will be met in the four main towns. As explained in Section 4, between 2011 and 2026 about 150 homes will be delivered outside the four main towns just from homes built in 2011/12 and on sites that already have planning permission. Only a further 80 dwellings will need to be delivered from neighbourhood planning, rural exception affordable housing sites and occupational dwellings during this period to meet the District's overall housing provision figure, which should be easily achieved.
- 14.9 In the light of the revised District-wide housing provision figures, it is no longer necessary for core policies to make judgements about the sustainability of Stalbridge and the District's villages with a view to accommodating a proportion of strategic housing growth, since the vast majority of this growth will be met in the four main towns. The Council's proposed 'light touch' strategic approach in rural areas breaks the 'automatic link' between any positive assessment of a settlement's sustainability credentials and the requirement for it to take a quantum of housing development. Housing at Stalbridge and the District's villages will be largely 'additional' to the strategic housing provision figure and consequently, the focus of its provision will be on meeting the local needs of individual settlements.

Delivery

- 14.10 Draft Core Policy 19 indicates that the 1,200 homes proposed at Stalbridge and the larger villages would be delivered through infilling within settlement boundaries and the allocation of additional housing sites in a subsequent Site Allocations DPD. The draft Core Strategy does not identify any sites for development in the settlements, but notes *"in some villages, there is significant potential for infilling and redevelopment within settlement boundaries. Where it is considered that additional housing is needed, though, sites will be identified in the Site Allocations DPD, drawing on the information in the Council's SHLAA"*.

- 14.11 It was always the intention to negotiate with local communities, as far as possible, to find suitable sites to allocate to accommodate the additional housing in Stalbridge and the larger villages (over and above what could be accommodated through infilling). However, under draft Core Policy 19, ultimately the District Council would determine the location of sufficient sites to meet the planned level of housing provision in the Site Allocations DPD.
- 14.12 It is now envisaged that outside the four main towns, housing to meet local needs will be delivered primarily through neighbourhood planning, although other delivery mechanisms will also be available. Affordable homes could be delivered through rural exception schemes and Section 8 seeks views on whether an element of market housing should also be permitted on such sites. Draft Core Policy 20 also permits a range of different uses in the countryside to meet essential rural needs.
- 14.13 Section 3 discusses the option of local communities 'opting in' to the Council's Site Allocations DPD as an alternative to meeting local needs through neighbourhood planning.

Existing Settlement Boundaries

- 14.14 Draft Core Policy 3 envisaged the retention of the current Local Plan settlement boundaries around Stalbridge and the larger villages until they were revised through the subsequent Site Allocations DPD. The supporting text to draft Core Policy 19 states *"in order to accommodate the level of growth set out in the emerging RSS, the current settlement boundaries will be reviewed during the production of the Site Allocations DPD. In the meantime, the settlement boundaries around Stalbridge and the larger villages, as set out in the Local Plan, will continue to be used for development management purposes"*.
- 14.15 Draft Core Policy 3 envisaged the removal of settlement boundaries from the smaller villages, which would be *"treated as part of the countryside for development management purposes until their boundaries are formally removed through the subsequent Site Allocations DPD"*. Draft Core Policy 20 relates to the countryside where the strategy is *"to adopt an overall policy of restraint, whilst also enabling essential rural needs to be met"*.
- 14.16 The Council now intends to remove all settlement boundaries (other than around the four main towns) and to apply countryside policy (i.e. a policy of restraint) to Stalbridge and all the District's villages pending the production, or in the absence of, neighbourhood plans.

Countryside Policy

14.17 Although draft Core Policy 20 applies restraint, it also permits a range of different types of development that may be acceptable in the countryside, including the provision of essential community facilities for 'smaller villages'.¹¹³

14.18 The spatial approach to growth in the draft Core Strategy envisaged that the countryside policy would apply to the District's smaller villages and not to Stalbridge and the larger villages. To reflect the approach to growth that is now being proposed, it is suggested that countryside policies should be amended to indicate that the provision of essential community facilities may be acceptable within or adjoining Stalbridge and all the District's villages.

Proposed Revisions to Draft Core Policies

14.19 As set out in Section 3, the Council proposes to develop a policy framework for Stalbridge and all the District's villages, which focuses on meeting local, rather than strategic, needs. The intention is not to set any overall housing provision figure either for Stalbridge and the District's larger villages or for the countryside (including the District's smaller villages).

14.20 The Council considers that a 'light touch' approach in rural areas is appropriate, given that growth to meet local needs will be largely 'additional' to the strategic growth in the District's four main towns. This approach will enable more 'fine-grained' assessments of the needs of Stalbridge and villages to be made by local communities, which can then be addressed primarily through neighbourhood planning.

14.21 It is considered that continued infilling in Stalbridge and the District's villages, prior to the production of neighbourhood plans is not appropriate. Most infill sites are residential gardens that are no longer considered to be 'brownfield' land and in any event the Government no longer adopts a 'brownfield first' approach. Applying countryside policy (i.e. restraint) to Stalbridge and all the District's villages pending the production of neighbourhood plans will allow local communities to decide whether they wish to permit infilling and, if they do, to put in place local policies to ensure that it respects local character (as discussed in Section 6).

14.22 The approach outlined above requires a consequential change to countryside policy so that essential community facilities may be permitted

¹¹³ Figure 2.8.5 on Page 181 of the draft Core Strategy lists the different types of development that may be acceptable in the countryside

within or adjacent to Stalbridge and all villages (not just the smaller ones).

- 14.23 The overall approach would still enable affordable homes for local people to be provided on rural exceptions sites, which the Council is now proposing could include an element of market housing (see Section 8). Local communities would also have the option of 'opting in' to the Council's Site Allocations DPD as an alternative to meeting local needs through neighbourhood planning (see Section 3).

Alternative Approaches

- 14.24 The Council wishes to give as much discretion as possible to local communities in rural areas to establish planning policies at the local level which enable them to meet their local needs. To achieve this, a 'light touch' strategic policy framework is proposed at the District level, which will require considerable commitment from local communities to deliver neighbourhood plans and take forward other locally-based initiatives.
- 14.25 The Council considered (and rejected) two other alternative approaches, both of which place less reliance on neighbourhood plans and other locally-based initiatives to deliver, but also inevitably offer less choice for local communities.
- 14.26 The Council could simply update the approach in the draft Core Strategy by identifying Stalbridge and 18 larger villages as locations to take a proportion of strategic housing growth, which would be delivered through the Site Allocations DPD prepared by the Council. The 1,200 homes proposed for Stalbridge and 18 larger villages in the draft Core Strategy represented about 17% of the 7,000 homes proposed overall. That would equate to about 700 homes based on the revised District housing provision figure of 4,200 dwellings. Although the revised District housing provision figure would result in less housing in Stalbridge and the larger villages, this approach would not address the fundamental concerns raised in objection to draft Core Policy 3. Sticking with the draft Core Strategy approach would also represent a missed opportunity, which failed to consider how the changes to the planning system might be used to deliver better outcomes for local communities.
- 14.27 The other alternative approach would be to rely on neighbourhood plans to deliver growth, but also to retain the settlement boundaries around Stalbridge and the larger villages to allow infilling to continue in these settlements, pending the production of neighbourhood plans. This policy approach would effectively prioritise infilling as a means of meeting local needs in rural settlements. However, this is no longer considered appropriate given the changes to national policy regarding housing

density, the dropping of the brownfield first approach and the reclassification of gardens as greenfield land (as set out in Section 6).

Questions 23 to 26

14.28 Questions relating to the proposed revised spatial approach to growth appear in Section 3. Other questions relevant to the Councils proposed revised approach to Stalbridge, the villages and the countryside are set out below.

- 23. Do you agree that an overall housing provision figure should not be set for Stalbridge, the villages and the countryside?¹¹⁴**
- 24. Do you agree that the future development needs of Stalbridge and all villages should be met primarily through neighbourhood planning?**
- 25. Do you agree that countryside policy (i.e. a policy of restraint) should be applied to Stalbridge and all villages prior to, or in the absence of, the production of neighbourhood plans?**
- 26. In the event that countryside policy is applied to Stalbridge and all villages do you agree that the policy should be amended to permit essential community facilities within or adjoining Stalbridge and all the villages?**

¹¹⁴ It should be noted that the revised Core Strategy will include an estimate of the number of homes that will be delivered from completions since April 2011 and on sites which currently have planning permission

15. Development Management Policies

Introduction

- 15.1 The Development Management (DM) policies support the 'core policies' in the draft Core Strategy and provide the detailed framework for dealing with particular issues and for assessing the acceptability of certain types of development.
- 15.2 When the draft Core Strategy was prepared, national guidance sought to keep the number of DM policies to a minimum in order to avoid repetition of national and regional policies. This approach was followed in the draft Core Strategy and national and regional policies were relied upon for decision-making in certain policy areas.
- 15.3 The reforms of the planning system have simplified national policy and it remains the Government's intention to revoke regional strategies. The result is that the DM policies in the draft Core Strategy need to be reviewed to identify areas where new policies or more detail is required.

Sustainability Appraisal of the Development Management Policies

- 15.4 A Sustainability Appraisal has recently been undertaken of the Development Management Policies.¹¹⁵ The report identifies three key areas where new or improved policies are required to fill the void created by the reforms of national and regional policy. They are:
- Development Management Policy 4: Amenity needs to refer to noise (as an amenity issue) following the deletion of PPG 24¹¹⁶;
 - Development Management Policy 6: Caravan Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People needs to reflect the new Government policy on Travellers¹¹⁷, in particular the need to maintain a 5-year supply of deliverable sites; and
 - A new policy is required to deal with occupational dwellings (including agricultural workers' dwellings) in the countryside.

Development Management Policy 4: Amenity

- 15.5 Draft DM Policy 4 does not include a criterion relating to noise. However, the supporting text indicates that the Council "*will seek to minimise the adverse impact of disturbance from noise associated with new development in accordance with national policy*".¹¹⁸ The Council's general approach to noise generating development is to ensure that it would not cause an unacceptable level of disturbance to the occupants of nearby

¹¹⁵ The update to the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report can be linked from this page – <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/396661>

¹¹⁶ PPG24: Planning and Noise – Department of the Environment (September 1994)

¹¹⁷ Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (March 2012) DCLG

¹¹⁸ Paragraph 3.2.29 on Page 196 of the draft Core Strategy

properties, having taken account of any proposed attenuation or other measures. The Council's general approach to noise sensitive development (including housing, hospitals, schools and residential care and nursing homes) is to ensure that it is not located in areas where existing noise levels are too high, unless adequate precautions are taken to reduce the noise impact to acceptable levels.

- 15.6 The 40 pages of PPG 24 have now been replaced by one paragraph in the NPPF which 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 impacts¹¹⁹ 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;¹²⁰ 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.*"¹²¹

- 15.7 The Council's general approach to noise issues has not changed but the supporting text to draft DM Policy 4 needs to be updated to reflect the NPPF and a criterion (or criteria) relating to noise needs to be added to draft DM Policy 4 to protect the amenity of the occupants of existing and new development.

Development Management Policy 6: Caravan Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People

- 15.8 Draft DM Policy 6 sets out the specific criteria for the location of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People in the District. It seeks to ensure that sites are provided to meet the needs of the travelling community and that sites are laid out, designed and managed to fulfil their purpose.
- 15.9 National policy¹²² now requires local planning authorities to:
- Identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets; and

¹¹⁹ See Explanatory Note to the Noise Policy Statement for England (Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)

¹²⁰ Subject to the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and other relevant law

¹²¹ Paragraph 123 of the NPPF

¹²² Paragraph 9 of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (March 2012) DCLG

- Identify a supply of specific, developable sites for broad locations for growth, for years 6 to 10 and, where possible, for years 11-15.

15.10 Draft DM Policy 6 (or its supporting text) will be amended to make reference to this new requirement of national policy.¹²³

New Development Management Policy on Occupational Dwellings

15.11 The draft Core Strategy includes DM policies relating to development in the countryside and the introductory text states "*the Council will make planning decisions relating to agricultural, forestry and other occupational dwellings in the countryside (including those related to commercial equine enterprises) in accordance with national planning policy*".¹²⁴

15.12 'National planning policy' in this case was Appendix A of PPS 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, which has since been deleted. This set criteria against which applications for occupational dwellings could be assessed and required the application of 'functional' and 'financial' tests to any proposals. The NPPF still recognises the need for occupational dwellings in the countryside, but provides little detail on how such proposals should be assessed.¹²⁵

15.13 In the light of the changes to national policy, the Council proposes to include a new DM policy to provide the basis for assessing proposals for new agricultural, forestry and other occupational dwellings. The policy would be based on the tests in Appendix A of PPS 7, but would be tailored to the particular circumstances of North Dorset.

15.14 Other DM policies already consider occupational dwellings in terms of the re-use of buildings (DM11 and 12) and equine-related developments (DM13) in the countryside. These policies will need to refer to the new DM policy, in particular the functional and financial tests, but otherwise do not need to be amended.

Questions 27 and 28

27. Do you agree that DM Policy 4: Amenity should be updated to deal with the issue of noise?

28. Do you agree that a new DM policy relating to occupational dwellings in the countryside (and applying functional and financial tests) should be included in the Core Strategy?

¹²³ The needs for pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and plots for Travelling Showpeople are set out in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) for the Dorset sub-region, which can be viewed here – <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/travellerpitches>. This is likely to be updated to determine local needs as part of the work on the Dorset-wide Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations DPD, which can be viewed here – <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/travellerpitches>

¹²⁴ Paragraph 3.4.4 on Page 214 of the draft Core Strategy

¹²⁵ Paragraph 55 of the NPPF

Appendix A - Guide to Plans in Dorset: Before and After the Localism Act¹²⁶

Level	Plans Pre-Localism Act	Plans Post-Localism Act	Comments	Consultation	Time Span
National	Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs)	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012. This single 59-page document replaces nearly all of the PPSs and PPGs that previously existed, as listed in Annex 3 of the NPPF. The NPPF does not form part of the Development Plan. ¹²⁷	The draft NPPF was published in July 2011 and was subject to public consultation	No time span specified
Regional	The Regional Strategy made up of: the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS); and the Regional Economic Strategy (RES)	Regional policy will be replaced by 'strategic planning' under the Duty to Co-operate (see below)	The Regional Strategy relevant to Dorset consists of Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG 10) , published by the Government Office for the South West (GOSW) in September 2001 and the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) for South West England 2006-2015 published by the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) in May 2006. RPG 10 became the RSS (and part of the Regional Strategy) as a result of legislative changes. The Government now intends to revoke regional strategies. However, before that it was intended to replace RPG 10 with a new RSS. A draft of the 'emerging' RSS was produced in 2006, which was modified in 2008 by the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes . In light the of the Government's intention to revoke regional strategies, the 'emerging' RSS is no longer being taken forward.	RPG 10 was subject to extensive consultation prior to adoption. The 'emerging' RSS was subject to various rounds of consultation, but is no longer being taken forward	RPG 10 runs from 1996 to 2016. It will continue to form part of the Regional Strategy until it is revoked. The 'emerging' RSS would have covered the period from 2006 to 2026, if adopted

¹²⁶ The [Localism Act 2011](#) received Royal assent on 15 November 2011

¹²⁷ Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless 'material considerations' indicate otherwise. The NPPF is not part of the Development Plan, but constitutes 'guidance' for local planning authorities and decision-takers both in drawing up plans and as a 'material consideration' in determining applications. In North Dorset, at the current time, the Development Plan includes: RPG10; the Regional Economic Strategy for South West England 2006-2015; the saved policies in the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan; and the saved policies of the District's 'old style' Local Plan

Level	Plans Pre-Localism Act	Plans Post-Localism Act	Comments	Consultation	Time Span
County	Structure Plan ¹²⁸	Structure Plans will be replaced by 'strategic planning' under the Duty to Co-operate' (see below)	The Structure Plan relevant to Dorset is the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan , which was adopted by Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Councils in February 2001. Most of the Structure Plan policies were 'saved' by the Secretary of State and will continue to be used to make planning decisions until they are revoked by the Government.	The Structure Plan was subject to extensive consultation prior to adoption	The Structure Plan runs from 1994 to 2011. Its 'saved' policies will continue to have effect until it is revoked
'Strategic'	Regional and County level plans (see above)	Any documents produced under the Duty to Co-operate	Although regional planning is being abolished and structure plans will be revoked, local councils and public bodies will still need to plan strategically across local boundaries. To ensure this happens, a statutory Duty to Co-operate was introduced in the Localism Act. The Government expects " <i>joint working on areas of common interest to be diligently undertaken for the mutual benefit of neighbouring authorities</i> ". All Dorset councils are working towards producing a 'memorandum of understanding', which will provide an agreed position on joint working. Joint plans on strategic matters and / or informal strategies are likely to follow.	Consultation will depend on the nature of the documents produced under the 'duty to co-operate'	The NPPF indicates that " <i>co-operation should be a continuous process of engagement</i> "
District: pre-2004	'Old style' Local Plans	None, but 'saved' policies from an 'old style' Local Plan may continue to form part of a 'new style' Local Plan (see below)	The 'old style' Local Plan for the District is the North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (1st Revision) , which was adopted by the District Council in January 2003. Most of the Local Plan policies were 'saved' by the Secretary of State and will continue to be used to make planning decisions until they are superseded by new policies. The definition of a 'new style' Local Plan in the NPPF's glossary explains that " <i>the term includes old policies which have been saved under the 2004 Act</i> ".	The Local Plan was subject to extensive consultation prior to adoption	The 'old style' Local Plan runs from 1994 to 2011. Its saved policies will continue to have effect until superseded

¹²⁸ In 'two-tier' areas, such as Dorset, County Councils are also responsible for producing plans dealing with minerals and waste, which are not discussed in this guide

Level	Plans Pre-Localism Act	Plans Post-Localism Act	Comments	Consultation	Time Span
District: post 2004	Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) made up of a Core Strategy and other Development Plan Documents (DPDs) ¹²⁹	'New style' Local Plans, which may include more than one document ¹³⁰	<p>The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced the concept of 'local development frameworks' (LDF), which would be a suite of documents (including a 'core strategy') to replace 'old style' Local Plans. In North Dorset, the Council produced a Draft Core Strategy (including development management policies) for consultation in March 2010. It was also the Council's intention to produce a subsequent Site Allocations DPD, which would allocate specific sites for a range of different uses.</p> <p>The LDF approach has now been abandoned in favour of 'new style' Local Plans, which may include more than one document. The Council intends to continue with this 'two document' approach, but they may be rebranded (perhaps as New Local Plan Part 1: Strategic Policies and New Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Local Policies).</p> <p>In autumn 2012 the Council will consult on changes it intends to make to the Draft Core Strategy with a view to producing a revised document that will become 'Part 1' of the 'new style' Local Plan for the District.</p>	Consultation on future stages will be in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012	The 'new style' Local Plan for North Dorset is being prepared for the period 2011 to 2026
Parish/ Community	None	Neighbourhood Planning Including Neighbourhood Development Plans (commonly known as	<p>The Localism Act introduced a new tier of policy at a local level, known as neighbourhood planning. The main tools available to communities are: neighbourhood plans; neighbourhood development orders; and the community right to build.</p> <p>Neighbourhood plans give communities the power to prepare plans to address local issues relating to the development and use of land in their area. Once</p>	In accordance with The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and The Neighbourhood	Guidance suggest that they have a similar time frame as the new style Local Plan

¹²⁹ Under the LDF approach the core strategy was seen as the principal DPD. All other DPDs had to be 'in general conformity' with the Core Strategy

¹³⁰ Under the 'new style' Local Plan approach all DPDs have equal status making them easier to review in whole or part to respond flexibly to changing circumstances

Level	Plans Pre-Localism Act	Plans Post-Localism Act	Comments	Consultation	Time Span
		'Neighbourhood Plans')	<p>adopted, they will become part of the Development Plan¹³¹. Neighbourhood plans must be 'in general conformity' with the strategic policies for an area - in the case of North Dorset those in the revised Core Strategy (i.e. 'Part 1' of the 'new style' Local Plan). A neighbourhood development order allows a community to grant planning permission for development or for a class of development specified in the order. This effectively removes the need for planning permission to be sought from the local authority for the type or class of development specified in the Order.</p> <p>The community right to build is a particular type of neighbourhood development order, allowing people to propose a development in their local area and obtain permission for it, without going through the usual planning application process.</p>	Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012	
Parish/ Community	Parish Plan	Parish Plan	A parish plan is a non-statutory document that outlines the aspirations of a community and covers all aspects of parish life. It examines local issues, proposes remedies and actions and can be used to seek funding. Parish plans are not adopted by the District Council and do not form part of the Development Plan.	Informal consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders	There is no set timeframe for Parish Plans, but they should be subject to periodic review
Parish/ Community	Village or Town Design Statement (V/TDSs)	Village or Town Design Statement	A town or village design statement is a non-statutory document that describes the distinctive characteristics of a locality and provides design guidance to influence future development. In recent years the District Council has adopted them as supplementary planning documents (SPDs), but they do not form part of the Development Plan. The Council has prepared a guidance note to help local communities prepare	In accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012	There is no set timeframe for V/TDSs, but they can be updated at any time if the character of the settlement

¹³¹ Once all the Government's reforms have been implemented, the Development Plan for North Dorset will include: the District's 'new style' Local Plan, any remaining saved policies from the District's 'old style' Local Plan and any neighbourhood plans which have been produced

Level	Plans Pre-Localism Act	Plans Post-Localism Act	Comments	Consultation	Time Span
			them. Details of the V/TDSs in North Dorset can be found on the website .		changes
Community/ District	Development Briefs	Development Briefs	A development brief is a non-statutory document that informs developers and other interested parties of the constraints and opportunities presented by a site and the type of development expected or encouraged on that site. They may be prepared by the District Council or a local community. The District Council may endorse development briefs ¹³² , but they do not form part of the Development Plan.	Informal consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders	There is no set timeframe for development briefs, but they can be updated at any time

¹³² Such as the [North Dorset Business Park Design and Development Brief](#)

