

Statement of Common Ground between local planning authorities in Dorset

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Executive Summary

The revised National Planning Policy Framework published in July 2018 introduces the requirement for a Statement of Common Ground to be prepared jointly by local planning authorities.¹ This is intended as an enhancement of the duty to cooperate that is already a legal requirement of the plan making process.

The Dorset Strategic Planning Forum was established to consider strategic planning issues that affect cross boundary matters, and to guide strategic planning at the 'larger than local' scale through effective policy development across boundaries, in order to help ensure that each of the Dorset local planning authorities could meet the duty to cooperate. The local planning authorities are currently at various stages in reviewing their local plans, and the Statement of Common Ground will be required evidence at each local plan examination.

This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared jointly by the local authorities within Dorset, all of which are represented on the Strategic Planning Forum, and will be extended to include the surrounding authorities. It describes the geographical area covered by the statement; the plan-making authorities responsible; and the proposed governance arrangements for joint working. The main body of the Statement provides a summary of the key strategic planning matters in Dorset on which cooperation is intended. This has taken account of the guidance in national planning policy on strategic issues where cooperation might be appropriate. These include the need for homes and jobs; provision of shops and leisure facilities; ensuring that supporting infrastructure is in place; promoting healthy communities; and protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

The revised National Planning Policy Framework introduces a new standard methodology for the assessment of housing requirements at district level. It states that strategic plans should be based upon a local housing need assessment conducted using this standard methodology, unless there are exceptional circumstances that justify an alternative approach. It also states that in establishing this figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account.²

The standard methodology is due to be reviewed again and so the housing figures to be planned for are not fully confirmed. It is likely however that there will be an increase in the requirements for the area, compared with the combined current adopted local plan targets. As a result, there is a key requirement for the local planning authorities to work together to set out a strategic approach to the provision of additional homes in Dorset. This will need to be informed by an appraisal of all reasonable options for the distribution of growth. Joint working is already taking place on the provision of accommodation for gypsies and travellers.

In addition to the provision of new homes, the local planning authorities will need to work together to address any cross-boundary issues relating to employment land. A range of related matters also need to be considered as an integral part of planning for new homes and jobs. These include highlighting the importance of providing services and facilities to support growth, supporting healthy communities through effective planning, and the need to continue with effective joint working to protect Dorset's outstanding natural environment, including internationally protected sites.

¹ Paragraph 27, National Planning Policy Framework 2018

² Paragraph 60, National Planning Policy Framework 2018

Introduction

1. The requirement for the preparation of a Statement of Common Ground to demonstrate effective and ongoing joint working on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries was introduced in the revised National Planning Policy Framework published in July 2018.³ This is intended as an enhancement of the 'duty to cooperate' introduced in the Localism Act 2011 as a legal requirement of the plan making process⁴. The duty requires councils and public bodies to '*engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis*' to develop strategic policies on cross boundary matters.
2. The Statement of Common Ground is intended as a written record of progress made on planning for strategic matters across local authority boundaries. It is intended to record where effective cooperation is or is not taking place, demonstrate that plans are deliverable, and provide evidence that the duty to cooperate has been fulfilled.

Plan making authorities and governance arrangements

3. This Statement has been jointly prepared by the nine local authorities within Dorset, including the Bournemouth and Poole unitary authorities: Bournemouth Borough Council; Christchurch Borough Council; Dorset County Council; East Dorset District Council; North Dorset District Council; Borough of Poole; Purbeck District Council; West Dorset District Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council. After 1 April 2019, these local authorities will be replaced by two new unitary authorities: Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council; and Dorset Council. The Statement has also been prepared in discussion with the adjoining local authorities of New Forest District Council; Wiltshire Council; South Somerset District Council; and East Devon District Council.
4. There is a strong history of effective joint working between the planning authorities in Dorset, and continued cooperation will be essential to support sustainable economic growth in the area. Cooperation on planning matters can also contribute to wider partnership working, helping to deliver mutually beneficial objectives for a range of stakeholders
5. The Dorset Strategic Planning Forum was established in 2015 to ensure that cooperation on strategic issues continues on an open and constructive basis across Dorset even where individual authorities may have different points of view. This approach will ensure that constructive cooperation on strategic matters is achieved in accordance with the statutory requirements.
6. Terms of Reference for the Strategic Planning Forum state that the main purpose of the Forum is to fulfil obligations under the legal duty to cooperate. The Terms of Reference go on to state that the Forum will guide strategic planning at the 'larger than local' scale through effective policy development across boundaries, and will work with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Local Nature Partnership

³ Paragraph 27, National Planning Policy Framework 2018

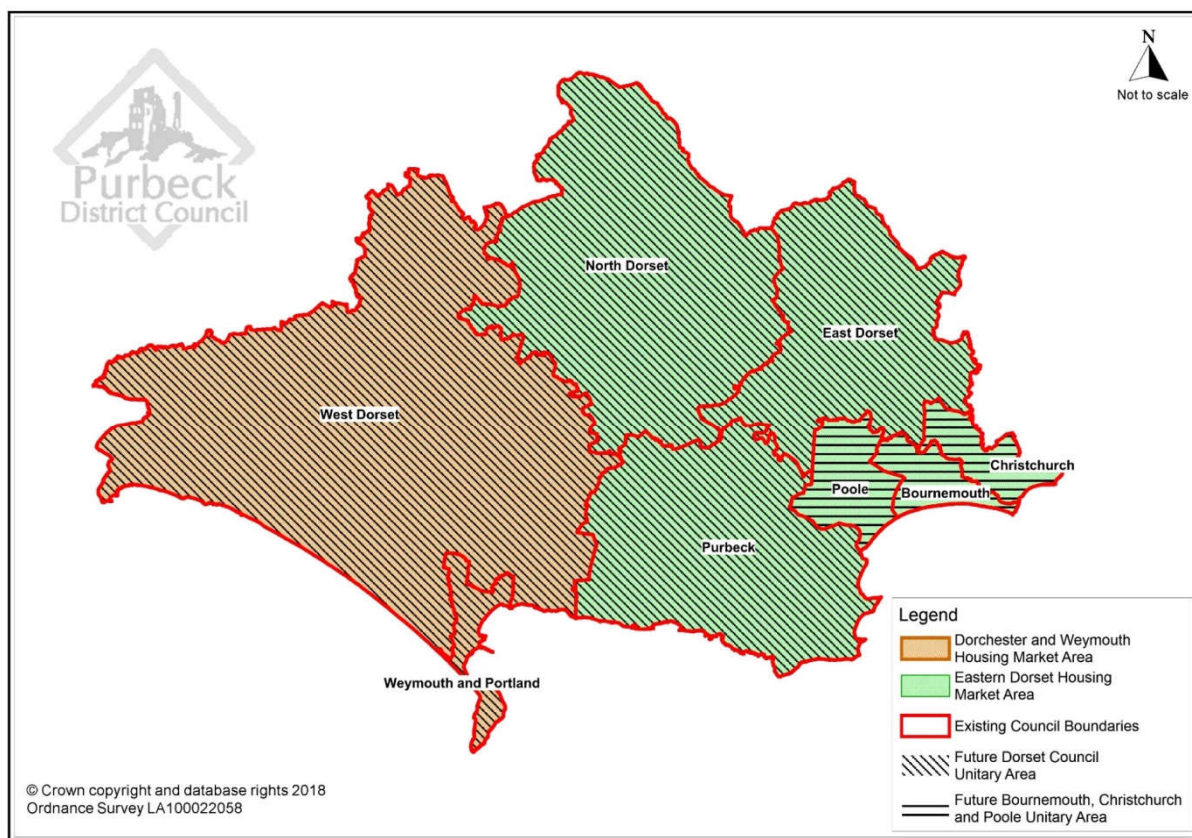
⁴ The duty to cooperate is set out in Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011, available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/section/110/enacted>

(LNP) in the development of strategy to inform and align spatial and investment priorities.

7. The Statement of Common Ground will be maintained and kept up to date through joint working between the plan-making authorities in the area. This will be overseen by the Strategic Planning Forum and the drafts of any revisions to the Statement will be considered by that joint body before being taken to the individual local authorities for approval.

Geographical Area covered by this Statement

8. This statement covers the whole of the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership area: the whole area of Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole. The area is shown on the plan below, which also indicates the current and future local authority boundaries and the housing market areas. It is important to note that the housing market areas do not coincide with the new unitary council boundaries and may be reviewed in future. This geography may be extended in future to include the adjoining authorities of New Forest, Wiltshire, South Somerset and East Devon.



Key Strategic Matters Addressed by this Statement

9. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that the strategic policies required for the area of each local planning authority should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for:

- housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;
- infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
- community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and
- conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscape and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.⁵

10. These strategic policy areas are those for which joint working across local authority boundaries are most likely to be necessary. This Statement considers each of these broad themes in turn, and identifies broad cross boundary issues and opportunities affecting Dorset planning authorities in relation to each theme. The Statement concludes with a summary of the intended scope for joint working, highlighting the importance of cross-boundary working in supporting economic growth and directing development to the most sustainable locations. Joint working on strategic planning matters will have an important role in helping to deliver the LEP’s Strategic Economic Plan, and any future revisions of this. It will also be influenced by sub-regional issues, such as plans for growth in Portsmouth and Southampton, and the proposed establishment of sub-national transport bodies to formulate and potentially deliver transport strategies for wider areas. Sub-regional issues are not considered in detail in this paper, but will form part of the wider context for strategic joint working in Dorset.

Current and emerging local plans in Dorset

11. The Dorset local planning authorities are currently at various stages in reviewing their local plans, as summarised in table 1. Work on the local plan reviews will both inform, and be informed by, joint working and cooperation across the whole Dorset area.

Local Plan	Plan period	Current status	Progress with review
Eastern Dorset Housing Market Area			
Bournemouth Local Plan Core Strategy 2012	2006 - 2026	Adopted October 2012	Issues consultation took place winter 2017; Issues and Preferred Options consultation due to take place late 2018. Review to run to 2033
Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy	2013 - 2028	Adopted April 2014	Separate local plan reviews now taking place for Christchurch and East Dorset. Options consultation on both plans July-September 2018, and pre-submission

⁵ Paragraph 20, National Planning Policy Framework 2018

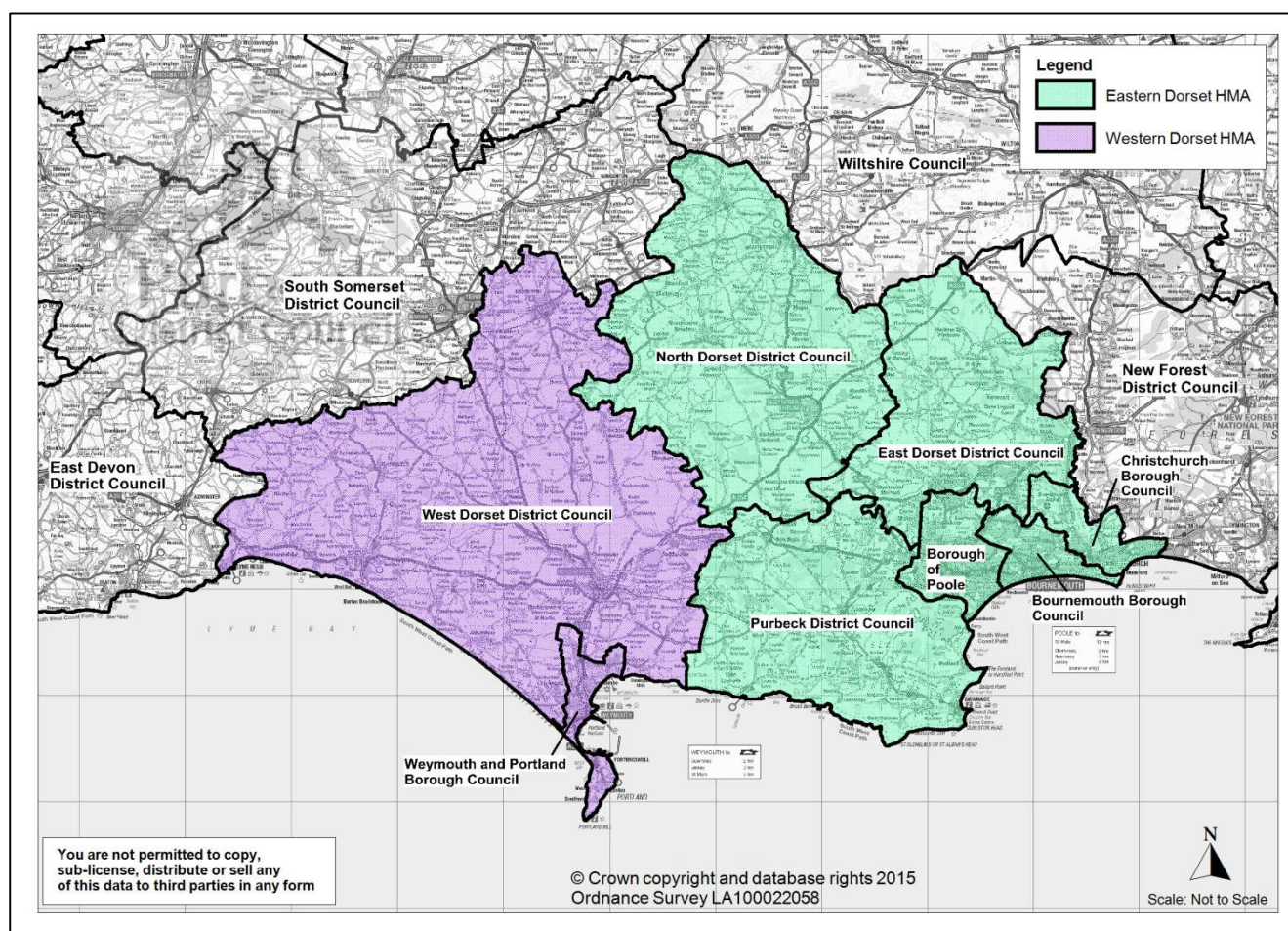
			consultation March 2019. Reviews to run to 2033.
North Dorset Local Plan – 2011 to 2026 Part 1	2011 - 2026	Adopted January 2016	Issues & Options consultation took place winter 2017-18; Preferred Options consultation likely early 2019. Review to run to 2033 but may be extended to 2036.
Poole Core Strategy Site Specific Allocations and Development Management DPD & Poole Infrastructure Plan DPD	2006 - 2026	Adopted February 2009 (Core Strategy) Site Specific Allocations and Development Management DPD & Poole Infrastructure Plan DPD adopted 2012	Plan is due to be adopted in November 2018. Runs to 2033.
Purbeck Local Plan Part 1	2006 - 2027	Adopted November 2012	Options consultations completed. Pre-submission publication autumn 2018, submit by March 2019 and adopt by end of 2019. Runs to 2034.
Western Dorset Housing Market Area			
West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan	2011 - 2031	Adopted October 2015	Issues and Options consultation early 2017; Preferred Options consultation place August-October 2018 and pre-submission consultation 2019. Review to run to 2036.
Pan-Dorset			
Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy	2014 - 2028	Adopted May 2014	No review currently scheduled in Local Development Scheme.
Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Mineral Sites Plan	Likely to be 2018 - 2033	In preparation	Plan submitted March 2018. Examination 2018 (hearings September – October 2018)
Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Waste Plan	Up to 2016: policies saved in 2009	Adopted June 2006	Plan submitted in March 2018. Examination 2018
Joint Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Development Plan Document	In preparation: timetable currently under review.		

Table 1: Status of current and emerging local plans in Dorset (September 2018)

Providing the homes and jobs needed in Dorset

Housing need within Dorset

12. Significant changes have been made in the revised NPPF to the method for assessing housing need.
13. The previous NPPF required local planning authorities to meet *'the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area'*, as far as was consistent with other policies set out in the NPPF⁶. It went on to state that *'joint working should enable local planning authorities to work together to meet development requirements which cannot wholly be met within their own areas'*⁷. Two housing market areas (HMAs) were identified in Dorset, as shown on map 1. The Eastern Dorset HMA includes Bournemouth, Christchurch, East Dorset, North Dorset, Poole and Purbeck, whilst the Western Dorset HMA includes West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland.



Map 1: Dorset housing market areas

14. The objectively assessed housing needs for the Dorset authorities, assessed under the previous national policy requirements, were identified in the Eastern Dorset

⁶ Paragraph 47 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012

⁷ Paragraph 179 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (December 2015, and since reviewed), and the Weymouth and Portland and West Dorset Strategic Housing Market Report (July 2014, with the conclusions reviewed in 2017 during the early stages of preparing the revised local plan).

15. The revised NPPF however introduces a new standard methodology for ‘*local housing need assessments*’ for each local planning authority area. This standard method should now be used unless there are exceptional circumstances that justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals. In establishing this figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account.⁸
16. Table 2 sets out the current adopted local plan housing targets, the local housing needs assessment figures published with the consultation on the new methodology (in September 2017). The Government has already indicated that, following the release of the latest household forecasts (September 2018), the methodology is likely to be reviewed as a result of the reduction in these latest figures for many local authorities across the UK. Accordingly, the local housing needs assessment figures will be calculated and the table below revised once the Government’s intentions are known and any changes made to the methodology confirmed.

Local planning authority	Current local plan housing target	Local Housing Needs Assessment based on published figures from new methodology (September 2017)
Bournemouth	730 homes per annum (2006 to 2026)	1,022 homes per annum
Christchurch	<i>Joint target for 566 homes per annum in Christchurch and East Dorset (2013 to 2028)</i>	352 homes per annum
East Dorset		442 homes per annum
<i>Christchurch and East Dorset (joint)</i>		<i>(or 792 homes per annum joint target)</i>
North Dorset	285 homes per annum (2011 to 2031)	366 homes per annum
Poole	500 homes per annum (2006 to 2026) or 710 per annum, 2013 to 2033, from about-to-be-adopted local plan)	782 homes per annum
Purbeck	120 homes per annum (2006 to 2027)	168 homes per annum
Total for Eastern Dorset	2,201 homes per annum (plan)	3,130 homes per annum

⁸ Paragraph 60, National Planning Policy Framework 2018

HMA	periods not aligned)	
West Dorset	775 homes per annum in West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland (2011 to 2031)	780 homes per annum
Weymouth and Portland		
Total for Western Dorset HMA	775 homes per annum (2011 to 2031)	780 homes per annum
Total for Dorset	2,976 homes per annum (plan periods not aligned)	3,910 homes per annum

Table 2: Comparison of current adopted local plan housing targets and published figures resulting from the new standard methodology (2017)

17. This demonstrates that the housing needs for the whole Dorset area have risen significantly from those in the adopted local plans, in particular in the Eastern Dorset HMA, where the new methodology demonstrates a need to provide between 323 and 1,723 additional homes per year in the Eastern Dorset HMA, over and above the current local plan housing targets. The most significant increase, in the 2017 figures, is in the figure for Bournemouth, where the demographic forecasts are particularly affected by the rate of international migration. The household forecasts published in September 2018 show a reduction from the 2017 figures, but the Government has indicated that the methodology will be adjusted⁹ in order to ensure that the figures are sufficient to meet the national target. The figures arising will be the basis for joint working between the local authorities on the distribution of housing within the area.
18. Recent housing delivery rates across Dorset as a whole have fallen significantly short of the local plan figures. Table 3 shows the housing completions for each local planning authority in 2016/17 and 2017/18. This highlights the need for a step change in housing delivery rates if the housing needs resulting from the new standard methodology are to be met.

Local planning authority	Housing completions (net)	
	2016/17	2017/18
Bournemouth	581	635
Christchurch & East Dorset	430	407
North Dorset	142	152
Poole	570	307
Purbeck	89	124
Total for Eastern Dorset HMA	1,812	1,625
West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland	772	613

⁹ Covering notes at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>

Total for Western Dorset HMA	772	613
Total housing completions for Dorset	2,584	2,238
Total requirement under new standard methodology 2017	3,910	

Table 3: Recent housing completions in Dorset

19. The local housing needs assessments resulting from the new standard methodology do not take account of constraints, such as Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and internationally protected heathlands, which may restrict the ability of the Eastern Dorset authorities in particular to plan for their housing requirements within their areas. Previous Government guidance was clear that assessing need through the SHMA was just the first stage in developing the appropriate housing requirements in a local plan, and that SHMA figures should not be seen as a proxy for the final requirement in the plan.¹⁰
20. The introduction of the new standard methodology places greater emphasis on the importance of cooperation and meeting needs within adjoining local authority areas where they cannot be met in the area in which they arise. The revised presumption in favour of sustainable development in the 2018 NPPF states that strategic plans should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other development as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas (as established through statements of common ground).¹¹

Proposed approach to meeting housing needs

21. There is a key requirement for the Dorset local planning authorities to work together to set out a strategic approach to the provision of additional homes in Dorset, seeking to meet the assessed local housing needs, and this is the greatest priority for joint working. The increased housing targets resulting from the new standard methodology, together with the sensitive and nationally and internationally recognised environmental assets in the area, make this particularly challenging.
22. The starting point for this work is the aim that each local planning authority will seek to meet its housing requirements within its own boundaries. At present, the extent to which each authority can meet its own needs is not fully understood, as the work on assessing potential development options in each area is at different stages, and in particular, the housing requirements are not yet confirmed. The latest household forecasts, published in September 2018, were lower than previously forecast, resulting in lower housing need across most local authorities under the new methodology, compared with those published in 2017. The Government has stated in the updated NPPG on 'housing and economic development needs assessments' that the new methodology is likely to be reviewed very shortly, in order to avoid the requirements falling short of the national 300,000 target by the mid-2020s. This Statement will

¹⁰ This was clarified in a letter from Brandon Lewis to the Chief Executive at the Planning Inspectorate about strategic housing market assessments (19 December 2014) which can be accessed online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-housing-market-assessments>

¹¹ Paragraph 11(b), National Planning Policy Framework 2018

therefore need to be updated as soon as possible after any change in the methodology is finalised. That update will set out an indicative assessment of each area’s likely ability to meet its own needs. In the meantime, the table below sets out the interim position at September 2018. This indicates that there is a strong possibility that Bournemouth and Christchurch will be unable to meet their needs as a result of their limited geographical areas and significant environmental constraints. There is also a risk of unmet need arising from the adjoining New Forest District (see paragraphs 29-32 below). These risks will increase if the housing requirements are raised.

23. Should it prove to be the case that some authorities in the area are unable to meet their identified needs, the local planning authorities are committed to working together to assess the potential for some or all of this need to be met within other authorities’ areas. This work will need to be informed by an appraisal of all reasonable options for the distribution of growth across Dorset, taking account of issues such as land availability, infrastructure capacity, and development constraints.

Local plan review	Current/last stage	Proposed figure in local plan review	Likelihood of OAN being met in local plan review
Bournemouth	Reg 18 Issues and Preferred Options to go to Cabinet for approval	Not yet determined	Risk of not being met
Christchurch	Reg 18 Options consultation July-September 2018	5,270 (2013-2033): 263 per annum	Not being fully met (up to 2033)
East Dorset	Reg 18 Options consultation July-September 2018	8,854 (442.7 per annum)	Being met up to 2033
North Dorset	Reg 18 Issues and Options consultation	Not yet determined (but aiming to meet in full)	Not yet known
Poole	Post-examination	14,200 (2013-2033): 710 per annum	SHMA figures being met (to 2033) but new methodology figures to be considered in next review
Purbeck	Preparing for pre-submission	2,688 (168 per annum)	Intending to meet requirements up to 2034
West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland	Reg 18 Preferred Options consultation	Supply 19,116 (2016-2036): 955.8 per annum, against target of 15,880 or 794 per annum	Likely to be fully met or exceeded (to 2036)

Table 4: Latest housing numbers in local plans

Strategic Green Belt Review

24. The South East Dorset Green Belt extends over some 168 square kilometres of open land in and around Upton, Wimborne, Ferndown, Poole, Bournemouth and Christchurch and stretching south-west as far as Wareham. As highlighted above, land allocated as Green Belt can be a constraint which may prevent local planning authorities from meeting their full objectively assessed housing needs. National policy refers to '*policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance*' and defines these as including '*land designated as Green Belt*'. Where such policies provide a clear reason for refusing development, this is justified under the presumption in favour of sustainable development even if development plan policies are out of date.¹²
25. National policy states that once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans. Strategic policies should establish the need for any changes to Green Belt boundaries, having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so they can endure beyond the plan period.¹³
26. Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development, including making best use of brownfield sites, optimising the density of development, and discussing with neighbouring authorities whether they could accommodate some of the identified need, as demonstrated through the statement of common ground.¹⁴ Before any amendment to Green Belt boundaries in South East Dorset, therefore, it will need to be demonstrated that this latter solution has been properly considered through joint working.
27. When considering whether or not to allocate land for development within the South East Dorset Green Belt, it is important to recognise the potential sustainability benefits of providing new homes in close proximity to the conurbation, within easy reach of jobs and services. Not developing in the Green Belt would displace development pressure to elsewhere in Dorset. This is not to say that all areas outside the Green Belt are inherently unsustainable, but there are some more remote parts of the county where development could result in less sustainable commuting patterns and an increase in congestion. There is also the risk of market demand in these areas being lower, so that development might be less likely to be implemented.
28. It will therefore be important for joint working on strategic planning issues across Dorset to be informed by an appraisal of all realistic options for development, including the option of releasing land from the Green Belt. Green belt boundaries have been reviewed in the emerging local plan reviews, on an individual local authority basis, but a Strategic Green Belt Review will be required to help inform this options appraisal. The Strategic Green Belt Review will need to consider whether or not the current extent of the Green Belt remains fit for purpose, and whether changes may be appropriate to help accommodate the county's development needs. Any Green Belt

¹² Paragraph 11 (d) National Planning Policy Framework 2018

¹³ Paragraph 136, National Planning Policy Framework 2018

¹⁴ Paragraph 137, National Planning Policy Framework 2018

reviews across South East Dorset will need to be assessed against the following five purposes of Green Belt as set out in paragraph 134 of the NPPF 2018:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into each other;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Unmet housing need from areas adjoining Dorset

29. The Eastern Dorset SHMA considers housing provision in local authority areas which adjoin the Eastern Dorset HMA and concludes that the principal issue of potential unmet housing need is likely to arise from New Forest District¹⁵. This relates partly to Eastern Dorset and partly to South Hampshire.
30. New Forest District Council has an adopted Core Strategy (adopted in 2009)¹⁶ which covers the area outside the National Park, whilst the National Park Authority has an adopted Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD (adopted in 2010)¹⁷. Both authorities are preparing local plan reviews. The District Council's Local Plan Review was published for pre-submission public consultation on 29 June 2018. It proposes 10,500 additional homes between 2016-2036, based on a 2017 Objectively Assessed Need assessment for the New Forest area, which identified needs of 521 per annum (10,420) for the New Forest District outside the national park, and 63 per annum (1,260) within the National Park. The National Park Authority's Local Plan Review was submitted in May 2018 and examination hearings will take place in November 2018. The submission Local Plan proposes an additional 800 dwellings, rather than the objectively assessed need of 1,260 identified in the SHMA, which cannot be met without conflict with statutory National Park purposes. There is therefore an unmet need in the National Park. The new standard methodology also results in significantly higher figures (965 per annum for New Forest District including that part within the National Park).
31. The Eastern Dorset HMA also adjoins Wiltshire and South Somerset, whilst the Western Dorset HMA adjoins South Somerset and East Devon. Officers have not identified any current issues of unmet need arising from East Devon, South Somerset, or Wiltshire, but discussions with these adjoining authorities will continue through the local plan preparation process and this situation could change.

¹⁵ See paragraphs 10.53-10.58 of the Eastern Dorset SHMA (2015)

¹⁶ The Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy for New Forest District (outside the National Park) (2009) can be accessed online at: <http://www.newforest.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=14183>

¹⁷ The New Forest National Park Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD (2010) can be accessed online at: http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/info/20040/planning_policy/23/core_strategy

32. The Dorset local planning authorities will need to consider any issues of unmet need arising from neighbouring local authority areas. At this stage, it is likely that the principal issue of potential unmet housing need will arise from New Forest District.

Housing mix

33. The NPPF requires local planning authorities to address the need for all types of housing, including affordable housing and the needs of different groups in the community¹⁸. The Eastern Dorset SHMA identifies a recommended housing mix across the HMA for the period 2013-2033, as set out in table 4. This shows a higher need for one and two bedroom properties for affordable homes, and a higher need for two and three bed properties on the open market. However, this will vary by location. The SHMA also includes recommendations for the appropriate housing mix in each local authority area, and goes on to state that local authorities should consider detailed evidence for their areas when setting policies for the future mix of housing.

	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+ bed
Market	10%	45%	35%	10%
Affordable	35-40%	30-35%	20-25%	5-10%
All dwellings	20%	40%	30%	10%

Table 4: Recommended Housing Mix for Eastern Dorset HMA, from 2015 SHMA

	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+ bed
Market	0-5%	30-35%	40-45%	20-25%
Affordable	20-25%	45-50%	20-25%	5-10%
All dwellings	30-35%	35-40%	20-25%	5-10%

Recommended Housing Mix for Eastern Dorset HMA, from emerging SHMA update 2018

34. The Western Dorset SHMA¹⁹ indicates a greater need for two and three bedroom homes on the open market, but again this will vary according to location, and will change over the plan period.
35. The mix of homes needed across the Eastern Dorset HMA is likely to have implications for the most appropriate strategy for housing. As an example, family housing is unlikely to be provided in the more central areas of the conurbation, where flats are more viable, and hence a need for family housing may lead to pressure for development on the edges of the conurbation. This relationship between housing mix and the appropriate location of development will need to be considered as part of the appraisal of options for future growth in Dorset.
36. Local authorities will also need to consider the need for different types of affordable housing (intermediate housing and social or affordable rented homes), specialist housing and accommodation for older persons (sheltered housing and extra care provision), registered care provision (for households who live in care homes), student housing provision, and wheelchair accessible homes. The Eastern Dorset SHMA considers each of these matters and includes recommendations for the individual local authorities to consider through their local plans.

¹⁸ See paragraphs 59-62 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018

¹⁹ The Weymouth and Portland and West Dorset Strategic Housing Market Report (2014) can be accessed online at: <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/article/410419/Local-Plan-Examination-Document-Library-Other-Evidence---Sustainable-Pattern-of-Development>

37. The Government has widened the definition of 'affordable housing' which now includes; affordable housing for rent; starter homes; discounted market sales housing; and other affordable routes to home ownership (the latter including shared ownership and 'rent to buy').²⁰ The revised NPPF states that where major housing development is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the homes to be available for affordable home ownership, as part of the overall affordable housing contribution from the site.²¹
38. The issue of housing mix will be considered in more detail by individual local authorities through their local plans, though there may be a need to consider the broad mix of housing types needed across the whole area, and issues around consistency of approach, as part of any joint working.

Gypsy and Traveller provision

39. The Dorset local authorities are all working together to prepare a Dorset-wide Gypsy and Traveller (including Travelling Showpeople) Joint Development Plan Document (DPD). An updated needs assessment was completed in 2017, taking into account changed definitions in Government guidance, and the pre-submission DPD is currently in preparation. It is anticipated that this issue will be dealt with through the joint DPD.

Dorset's economy and employment land requirements

40. The NPPF sets out that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt, and that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.²² Planning policies should set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration.
41. Dorset is covered by a single Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). A 'Review of Economic Evidence' undertaken for the Dorset Leaders Growth Board in February 2015²³ notes that 'the issue of Dorset as a functional economic market area was fully addressed when the establishment of the Dorset [LEP] was proposed and approved by government'. It goes on to state that 'whilst, like all LEP areas, there is diversity within Dorset, it does function as a specific business location with its own identity and as an economic area, whilst also having links to the wider locality and their economies'.

²⁰ Annex 2: Glossary, National Planning Policy Framework 2018

²¹ Paragraph 64, National Planning Policy Framework 2018

²² Paragraph 80, National Planning Policy Framework 2018

²³ The Dorset Leaders' Growth Board 'Review of Economic Evidence' (February 2015) can be viewed online at: https://www.dorsetforyou.com/media/201819/Dorset-Review-of-Economic-Evidence/pdf/Dorset_Review_of_Economic_Evidence.pdf

42. The Dorset LEP area consists of a range of distinct geographical areas which all play a key part in Dorset's economy²⁴:
- The **Conurbation** (Bournemouth, Poole, Christchurch and parts of East Dorset and Purbeck) contains the majority of Dorset's population and employment. It benefits from an airport, a major port, two universities and a strong business services and visitor economy.
 - The **Central Area** is based on the twin towns of Dorchester and Weymouth and their immediate hinterland, around which major employment sites, two ports and county wide services are based.
 - **Rural Dorset** is characterised by coastal and market towns, including Blandford Forum, Shaftesbury, Gillingham, Wareham, Swanage, Portland, Bridport, Sherborne and Lyme Regis, as well as the wider countryside. This area accommodates a diverse range of businesses in manufacturing, technology, tourism, retail, accommodation and food services.
 - The '**Jurassic Coast**' between Swanage and Lyme Regis (and beyond into Devon) has World Heritage Status and serves as a major attractor of visitors to the area. This rural and semi-rural area is typified by a diverse range of small and micro businesses delivering retail and accommodation and food services.
43. The Dorset LEP has prepared a Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), Transforming Dorset, which outlines ambitions and aspirations for transformative change to the Dorset economy²⁵. This was launched in 2014 and refreshed in 2016. The SEP identifies four thematic priorities (Connected Dorset, Talented Dorset, Responsive Dorset, and Competitive Dorset) and emphasises that partners in Dorset are committed to ensuring that the LEP area can deliver the local growth potential suggested by economic forecasts.
44. Local planning authorities have a key role in helping to deliver the priorities of the LEP through the identification of employment land (for use classes B1: Business, B2: General industrial and B8: Storage or distribution) in their local plans.
45. The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Workspace Strategy was prepared in 2016, updating the previous 2008 and 2012 reports.²⁶ This provides projections of the amount of B1, B2 and B8 employment land required in the period up to 2033, for the Dorset LEP area and the Eastern and Western Dorset HMAs (as functional urban areas). It also provides recommendations regarding the provision and distribution of land and premises across the Dorset LEP area and Eastern and Western Dorset HMAs. The Workspace Strategy forms part of the evidence base for the emerging local plans.

²⁴ See 'Review of Economic Evidence' at link above.

²⁵ The Dorset Strategic Economic Plan, Transforming Dorset (March 2014), is available online at: <http://dorsetlep.co.uk/local-delivery/strategic-economic-plan/>

²⁶ The 2016 Workspace Strategy is available online at <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/joint-planning-policy-work/bournemouth-dorset-and-poole-workspace-strategy-and-study.aspx>

Provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development

Town centres

46. National planning policy states that local planning authorities should allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres²⁷.
47. Table 5 sets out the town centres, district centres and local centres across Dorset, as identified in current and emerging local plans.

Local planning authority	Town, district and local centres
Bournemouth	Town centre: Bournemouth District centres: Castlepoint; Boscombe; Westbourne; Winton; Boscombe East; Charminster; Holdenhurst Road; Kinson; Moordown; Southbourne Grove; Tuckton; Wallisdown
Christchurch and East Dorset	Town centres: Christchurch; Ferndown; Verwood; Wimborne Minster District centres: West Moors; Highcliffe Local centres: Purewell; Barrack Road; Corfe Mullen; West Parley
North Dorset	Town centres: Blandford Forum; Gillingham; Shaftesbury; Sturminster Newton District centre: Stalbridge
Poole	Town centre: Poole District centres: Broadstone; Ashley Cross; Ashley Road (there are also a number of smaller local centres in Poole)
Purbeck	Town centres: Swanage; Wareham; Upton Key service villages: Bere Regis; Bovington; Corfe Castle; Lytchett Matravers; Sandford; Wool
West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland	Town centres: Weymouth; Dorchester; Bridport; Sherborne; Lyme Regis Local centres: Easton (Portland); Fortuneswell (Portland); Beaminster

Table 5: Town, district and local centres in Dorset

48. There are many instances across the county where town centres in neighbouring local planning authorities have an influence on one another (e.g. the town centres in North Dorset are each influenced by larger centres in neighbouring authorities, such as Poole, Salisbury and Yeovil), and this is reflected in recent retail needs assessments.
49. It is also important to recognise that retail need is likely to be driven by the location of future housing. The identification of the most sustainable broad locations for additional housing could therefore have implications for the retail hierarchies identified in the current and emerging local plans. Any cross-boundary issues identified through the retail need assessment updates will need to be considered jointly.

²⁷ Paragraph 85(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018

Tourism

50. Tourism makes an important contribution to Dorset's economy. Around 8% of all Dorset employees work in tourism, with the highest proportions seen in Weymouth and Portland (14%) and Purbeck (13%)²⁸. The current and emerging local plans include policies to support and guide tourism related development, such as tourist accommodation and new tourist attractions. The Dorset strategic planning work offers an opportunity to highlight the importance of planning for sustainable tourism across the area.

Provision of infrastructure

Transport

51. National planning policy sets out that local planning authorities should seek to support a pattern of development which facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport. In addition, local authorities should work with neighbouring authorities and transport providers to develop strategies for the provision of viable transport infrastructure to support sustainable development²⁹.
52. The Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan (LTP) 3 sets out the strategy for the management, maintenance and development of the area's transport system. LTPs explain how funds, largely allocated by the Government, will be used to deliver improved transport and help meet the key objectives for transport established by both government and local authorities.
53. The LTP3 came into effect from April 2011, and covers the period 2011 to 2026. The plan identifies five goals to guide the approach to transport in Dorset:
- Supporting economic growth
 - Tackling climate change
 - Equality of opportunity
 - Better safety, security and health
 - Improved quality of life.
54. Key solutions are identified for each of the five goals. The Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), and future reviews, also have important implications for transport priorities.
55. The need for strategic transport infrastructure to support the delivery of future development across the area, in particular the potential increase in the rate of housing development, is a critical issue that needs to be addressed jointly as part of an integrated strategy to deliver infrastructure improvements alongside new homes and jobs. Proposals are currently being put forward to the Local Enterprise Partnership for

²⁸ Dorset in Profile 2014 (based on data from 2012), available online at:

<https://www.dorsetforyou.com/article/339782/District-profile-leaflets-and-documents>

²⁹ Paragraphs 103-104 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018.

funding to prepare integrated transport studies for both South East Dorset and western Dorset.

Telecommunications

56. National planning policy states that, in preparing local plans, local planning authorities should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next-generation mobile technology such as 5G and full fibre broadband connections³⁰.
57. The Superfast Dorset project is currently progressing across the whole of Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole, and aims to provide as close as practicably possible to 100% superfast broadband connectivity at 30Mbps by 2020, as well as 50% connectivity to ultrafast services and businesses able to access faster services as required, and 50% take up of superfast services by residents and businesses. These aims are set out in the Digital Infrastructure Strategy for Dorset (September 2015). So far, access to superfast broadband has dramatically improved, with 620 structures across the county, 83,633 properties with access to superfast broadband and 96% of the county able to get superfast broadband.
58. No specific cross boundary issues have been identified in relation to telecommunications infrastructure, but there may be opportunities in any joint working to emphasise the importance of improving telecommunications across the area, through projects such as Superfast Dorset.

Waste Management

59. A new Waste Plan is currently being prepared to provide for Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole's waste management needs. This is at an advanced stage with examination hearings taking place in 2018. The Waste Plan identifies sites for new waste management facilities to meet the county's needs. Once adopted, it will provide the policy framework for determining planning applications for waste management facilities.
60. Any cross boundary issues relating to waste management will be dealt with through the emerging Waste Plan, which covers the whole of the area. It is important to recognise the importance of sustainable planning for waste to maximise its value as a resource and as a key supporting element for economic competitiveness.

Water supply and wastewater

61. The Dorset local planning authorities have contacted water suppliers and wastewater treatment providers during the preparation of each of the current and emerging local plans, in order to ensure that any issues arising can be addressed. Joint working on the options for development across the area will need to be informed by a similar exercise, to ensure that any proposed development strategy can be accommodated in terms of water supply and wastewater infrastructure.

³⁰ Paragraph 112 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018.

62. At this stage, officers have not identified any specific cross boundary issues in relation to water supply and wastewater provision. However, it is important to ensure that appropriate infrastructure is provided alongside development.

Flood risk

63. The current and emerging local plans in Dorset are each supported by Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRAs), as required by national planning policy³¹. As an example, a joint Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Level 1 SFRA) was prepared in 2007 for Bournemouth, Christchurch, East Dorset, North Dorset and Salisbury. The study area for the SFRA was defined by the main river catchments of the Stour and the Avon, and the SFRA formed part of the evidence base for the participating local planning authorities. The 2007 SFRA has subsequently been replaced in 2017 by jointly-procured SFRAs for Bournemouth, Christchurch, East Dorset and North Dorset councils, providing updated evidence to underpin local plan production.
64. Another example of cross boundary work in relation to flood risk is the Dorset Stour Catchment Flood Management Plan (CFMP) (2009), which gives an overview of flood risk in the Dorset Stour catchment and sets out a preferred plan for sustainable flood risk management over the next 50 to 100 years. The Management Plan was produced by the Environment Agency and Christchurch and East Dorset Councils, and informed the preparation of the Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy.
65. It is worth noting that flood risk is a significant constraint to development within the urban areas of Christchurch, Poole and Weymouth. This has implications for the appropriate location of future development and will affect decisions about the distribution of growth across the area. There may also be opportunities for joint working on strategic scale flood attenuation and mitigation infrastructure. No other specific cross-boundary issues relating to flood risk have been identified.

Coastal change management

66. The Dorset coast is covered by two shoreline management plans³² which set out policies to assist decision making on flooding from the sea and coastal erosion risk management over the next 20, 50 and 100 years. The original shoreline management plans (SMP1) have been reviewed and updated to produce SMP2.
67. The Poole and Christchurch Bays SMP2 (October 2010) covers the length of coast between Hurst Spit near Milford-on-Sea and Durlston Head near Swanage, and includes the harbours of Poole and Christchurch. The Durlston Head to Rame Head SMP2 (June 2011) covers the length of coast from Durlston Head (near Swanage) to Rame Head (near Plymouth).
68. National planning policy states that local planning authorities should identify Coastal Change Management Areas to cover any area which is likely to be affected by physical changes to the coast. In addition, local authorities should be clear about what development will be appropriate in such areas and in what circumstances, and they

³¹ Paragraph 156 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018.

³² Information about the Shoreline Management Plans can be accessed online via:

<https://www.dorsetforyou.com/article/408559/Shoreline-Management-Plans---round-2-SMP2>

should also make provision for development and infrastructure that needs to be relocated away from Coastal Change Management Areas³³.

69. This matter is being addressed in the local plan reviews of each of the coastal local authorities in Dorset. The local planning authorities will however liaise with each other to ensure that a consistent approach is taken along the full length of the Dorset coastline.

Provision of minerals

70. The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy was adopted in May 2014 and sets out the strategy for quarrying stone, sand and gravel, ball clay and other minerals within the county, taking into account the need to meet requirements in a sustainable manner. The plan contains the policies and criteria used for considering planning applications for mineral developments. The Minerals Sites Plan, allocating suitable sites for quarrying of sand, gravel, building stones and ball clay to meet requirements, is currently going through its public examination.
71. Officers envisage that any cross boundary issues relating to the provision of minerals will be dealt with through the adopted and emerging minerals plans. Future joint work however offers the opportunity to ensure effective integration of minerals planning with growth and infrastructure needs in Dorset. There is also an opportunity to ensure the restoration of quarries has regard to economic, social and environmental opportunities that support sustainable economic growth.

Provision of energy (including heat)

72. National planning policy states that local planning authorities should have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources, and design policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily³⁴.
73. The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Renewable Energy Strategy to 2020 is being implemented by the Dorset Energy Partnership³⁵. The strategy sets out the agenda for renewable energy in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole and identifies six priority areas:
- Supporting the development of community renewable energy;
 - Maximising the local economic benefits of renewable energy generation;
 - Creating a more supporting planning system for renewable energy;
 - Developing locally appropriate technologies;
 - Delivering leadership and partnerships that support renewable energy; and
 - Improving renewable energy communications and learning.

³³ Paragraph 167 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018.

³⁴ Paragraph 151 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018.

³⁵ The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Renewable Energy Strategy to 2020 is available online at: <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/renewable-energy-strategy-2020>

74. The Renewable Energy Resource Assessment for Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole (March 2012) supports the Renewable Energy Strategy and summarises local renewable energy resources, based upon a national methodology³⁶. The assessment covers onshore wind, biomass, microgeneration, hydropower and offshore (wind, tidal and wave) resources.
75. In addition, the local planning authorities for Christchurch, East Dorset, North Dorset and Purbeck commissioned Land Use Consultants Ltd to undertake studies to assess landscape sensitivity to wind and solar energy development in each district. The studies were published in April 2014 and can be accessed on the relevant local planning authority pages of the Dorsetforyou website.
76. National planning policy states that planning applications for wind energy developments should not be considered acceptable unless it is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy in a development plan; and following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by the affected local community have been fully addressed and the proposal has their backing.³⁷ This is reflected in current and emerging local plans across the area. There may be a role for joint working to help ensure a consistent approach to renewable energy provision, including exploring the potential for cross boundary district heating.

Provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure

Promoting healthy communities

77. Councils have a legal duty to take appropriate steps to improve the health and wellbeing of residents³⁸ and in April 2015, Public Health Dorset launched the LiveWell Dorset lifestyle service, which provides a single point of contact to help people with their health and wellbeing across Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole³⁹.
78. National planning policy highlights the role of planning in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities⁴⁰. This should include consideration of how best to promote:
- Opportunities for meetings between members of the community who might not otherwise come into contact with each other;
 - Safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and
 - Safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.

³⁶ The Renewable Energy Resource Assessment for Bournemouth, Dorset & Poole can be accessed online at: <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/renewable-energy-strategy-2020>

³⁷ Footnote 49, paragraph 154b of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018

³⁸ See Section 12 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, available online at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/7/contents/enacted>

³⁹ Further information on the LiveWell Dorset service can be accessed at:

<http://www.livewelldorset.co.uk/index.html>

⁴⁰ Paragraph 91 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018.

79. This also includes planning positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities and other local services; guarding against the loss of valued facilities and services; ensuring that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable; and ensuring an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.
80. These matters are considered through the current and emerging local plans of each of the local planning authorities in Dorset. However, the Strategic Planning Forum is also working with Public Health Dorset and the Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group to improve the links between planning and health systems in Dorset, foster shared understanding and identify opportunities for future collaboration. The aim of this is to highlight the importance of promoting healthy communities through planning, thus contributing to the wider duty on Councils to take steps to improve health and wellbeing. A joint workshop between officers from the planning and health systems was held on 25 June 2018 and the health authorities are regularly invited to the Strategic Planning Forum meetings.

Green infrastructure

81. Green infrastructure can be defined as a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities⁴¹. National planning policy states that local planning authorities in their local plans should take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure, and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.⁴²
82. The South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy (Investing in Green Places, July 2011) was jointly prepared by the councils in South East Dorset (Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset, East Dorset, Poole and Purbeck) in partnership with Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission⁴³. The Strategy provides a non-statutory framework for green infrastructure across South East Dorset. It sets out a vision for the area which seeks to co-ordinate the planning for, and investment in, parks, open spaces, wildlife corridors, street trees and other green spaces.
83. The Stour Valley forms an important sub-regional area of green infrastructure, and the South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy identifies a key strategic project to develop a strategy for the Lower Stour Valley. The project aims to develop a strategy for the river Stour and its floodplain from Sturminster Marshall to Christchurch. Key aspects include provision of an accessible route for walking and cycling, encouraging access to existing 'hubs' (recreational facilities, greenspace, visitor centres, etc) and encouraging multifunctional uses via provision of footpaths, cycle routes, access to river, flood attenuation and biodiversity and landscape enhancements.

⁴¹ Page 67 (Glossary) of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018.

⁴² Paragraph 171 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018.

⁴³ The South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy, Investing in Green Places, can be accessed online at: <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/greeninfrastructure>

84. Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) have a key role in heathland mitigation in the eastern Dorset area, and this is discussed further below, in the section on the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment.
85. Green infrastructure networks are being identified within the current round of local plan reviews.
86. The councils will consider jointly whether any update is needed to the South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy, and whether there could be merit in preparing a single joint Green Infrastructure Strategy to cover Dorset in future.

Housing Standards Review

87. The Housing Standards Review highlighted the issue of councils imposing a range of local technical requirements on the construction of new dwellings (e.g. requiring specific levels of the Code for Sustainable Homes or different wheelchair accessible housing standards). The recommendations of the review have been encompassed in the Deregulation Act which received royal assent in March 2015⁴⁴.
88. The Deregulation Act provides a set of national standards (space, water efficiency and accessibility) that can only be applied if they are included in an adopted local plan. The Act also ended the Code for Sustainable Homes (Part L of the Building Regulations is now the only energy efficiency delivery mechanism) and replaced 'Secured by Design' with Part Q (Security) of the Building Regulations. This means that existing local plan policies which seek to set standards for new development in relation to these matters are now likely to be out of date.
89. Each local planning authority will consider the implications of these changes within their local plan reviews, but the Strategic Planning Forum and joint officer working may offer an opportunity to consider the consistency of approaches to the new national standards across Dorset.

Addressing climate change and conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment

Climate change mitigation and adaptation

90. National planning policy highlights the role of planning in helping to shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure⁴⁵. Climate change mitigation and adaptation are broad ranging topics, encompassing issues of flood risk, coastal change management, water supply and demand, green infrastructure, and planning positively for renewable energy provision. These issues are each considered in more detail elsewhere in this paper, but joint working across Dorset offers an opportunity to re-emphasise the role of planning in supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation.

⁴⁴ The Deregulation Act 2015 can be accessed online at: <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2014-15/deregulation.html>

⁴⁵ Paragraph 148 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018.

Conservation and enhancement of the natural environment

91. Dorset has a high quality natural environment. Around 55% of Dorset is covered by an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), whilst 19,000 hectares of the county (7% of the land area) are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest⁴⁶. The county also includes a number of internationally protected sites (Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas) including the Dorset Heathlands and Poole Harbour.
92. The Dorset Local Nature Partnership (LNP) has adopted a vision and strategy for enhancing 'natural value' in Dorset⁴⁷. The strategy identifies six strategic priorities which will guide the LNP's actions:
- Natural capital – investing in Dorset's natural assets;
 - Natural value – adding value to the local economy;
 - Natural health – developing Dorset's 'natural health service';
 - Natural resilience – improving environmental and community resilience;
 - Natural understanding – improving understanding of, and engagement in, Dorset's environment;
 - Natural influence – integrating natural value in policy and decision-making, locally and beyond.
93. The Dorset AONB stretches from Lyme Regis in the west, along the coast to Poole Harbour in the east, and north to Hambledon Hill near Blandford Forum. It covers parts of North Dorset, Purbeck, West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland. The current Dorset AONB Management Plan (2014 to 2019)⁴⁸ sets out the AONB Partnership's vision for the landscape and describes how the area's authorities, communities and businesses might work together to achieve that vision.
94. The Cranborne Chase AONB extends from Wimborne Minster in the south to Warminster in the north, and covers parts of North and East Dorset. The current Cranborne Chase AONB Management Plan (2014 to 2019)⁴⁹ sets out objectives and policies to help conserve and enhance the AONB.
95. Joint working on strategic planning matters will be an opportunity to highlight the importance of the natural environment and nature conservation issues across the county, and to ensure that these are given full consideration when appraising options for future growth.

⁴⁶ Dorset in Profile (2014), available online at: <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/article/339782/District-profile-leaflets-and-documents>

⁴⁷ Dorset Local Nature Partnership: A vision and strategy for enhancing 'natural value' in Dorset (March 2014) can be accessed online via: http://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/dorset_local_nature_partnership.html

⁴⁸ The Dorset AONB Management Plan can be accessed online at: <http://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/the-dorset-aonb/management-plan>

⁴⁹ The Cranborne Chase AONB Management Plan can be accessed online at: <http://www.ccwvdaonb.org.uk/publications/aonb-management-plan/>

Dorset Heathlands

97. The Dorset Heathlands cover an extensive area of South East Dorset, with many sites designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar sites. The local authorities of Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset County, East Dorset, Poole and Purbeck have been operating a strategy for the protection of heathland since 2007. During this time the local authorities and Urban Heath Partnership have been gathering evidence into the effects of urban pressures on the protected heaths to inform the future strategy for avoiding and mitigating the significant adverse effects of development.
98. Local plans and any other planning strategies will need to be accompanied by a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to demonstrate that any proposed development strategy will not adversely affect the ecological integrity of the European designations (SAC, SPA and Ramsar). The HRA will test growth options, and will include consideration as to whether appropriate mitigation is achievable for the level of growth proposed.
99. The local planning authorities in south east Dorset have jointly produced a planning framework to manage pressures on sensitive heathlands resulting from development. Joint working on the topic has been taking place since 2006 and the latest Dorset Heathlands Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), covering Bournemouth, Christchurch, East Dorset, Poole and Purbeck, was published in January 2016. The SPD aims to ensure that there continues to be a strategic approach to the protection of the internationally important heathlands in South East Dorset. The updated SPD is based on the current local plan housing requirements, and a further update is likely to be required following adoption of any revised local plans by any of the local authorities.
100. Strategic Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) can be provided alongside development to mitigate adverse effects on the Dorset heathlands. The identification of broad locations for strategic SANGs will need to be considered alongside the locations for additional housing development, through local plans and any joint working on the distribution of development.

Poole Harbour

101. Poole Harbour is an outstanding natural feature and is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site for its nature conservation importance. Increasing nitrogen levels from sewage and agriculture are contributing to the growth of algal mats in the harbour, restricting the growth, distribution and variety of important food available for wading birds protected under European law and smothering estuarine habitats.
102. As with the Dorset Heathlands, it will be necessary to demonstrate that any proposed development strategy will not adversely affect the integrity of the Poole Harbour SPA/Ramsar. Adverse effects could arise in relation to recreational pressures and/or impacts on water quality. Habitats Regulations Assessments will need to be prepared alongside local plans and any other relevant planning strategies, to include consideration as to whether appropriate mitigation can be provided.

103. A joint 'Nitrogen Reduction in Poole Harbour' SPD has been adopted, providing detailed guidance to ensure that development does not lead to an increase in the level of nitrates in Poole Harbour. The SPD covers the catchment for Poole Harbour, which incorporates parts of North Dorset, Poole, Purbeck and West Dorset⁵⁰. It has been adopted by all four local authorities in 2017.
104. One of the options for providing mitigation is to purchase agricultural land and change the use to a sparsely treed landscape. This leads to a reduction in the amount of nitrogen which is being spread onto the land within the catchment from agriculture, which offsets the additional nitrates arising due to residential development. It is worth noting that land purchased for nitrogen mitigation can also be considered for SANGs or more general green infrastructure, thus offering multiple benefits. Nitrogen mitigation can be delivered anywhere within the catchment, and local authorities will work together to ensure that appropriate mitigation is delivered.

Conservation and enhancement of the historic environment

105. Dorset has a rich historic environment, and includes 5% of the nationally scheduled monuments⁵¹. 95 miles of the Dorset and Devon coast, between Orcombe Point near Exmouth and Studland Bay near Poole, are protected under World Heritage status as the Jurassic Coast. The county also includes numerous other heritage assets, including listed buildings, conservation areas, and parks and gardens of special historic interest.
106. The current Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site (WHS) Management Plan (2014 – 2019)⁵² outlines aims and policies for managing the WHS over the coming years, and indicates a range of activities for achieving them.
107. National planning policy states that local planning authorities should set out in their local plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats⁵³. Each of the Dorset local planning authorities will have considered these issues through the preparation of the current and emerging local plans, but there is an opportunity for joint work to reinforce the importance of conserving and enhancing the historic environment through planning policy. There may also be scope to develop a positive strategy for conserving the historic environment across Dorset as a whole.

⁵⁰ A small part of the Poole Harbour catchment falls within East Dorset, but as it is protected habitat where no development is planned, mitigation is not necessary.

⁵¹ Dorset in Profile (2014, data from 2013) available online at:

<https://www.dorsetforyou.com/article/339782/District-profile-leaflets-and-documents>

⁵² The Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site Management Plan (2014 - 2019) can be accessed online at:

<http://jurassiccoast.org/conserving-the-coast/management-files/category/14-management-plan-current>

⁵³ Paragraph 185 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018.

Summary and Priorities for joint working

108. This paper has summarised broad cross boundary matters which affect the local planning authorities in Dorset, many of which are already the subject of joint policies or joint evidence base studies. Joint working through the Strategic Planning Forum provides the opportunity to highlight key planning themes and issues across the area, and to promote continued effective joint working. There is also an opportunity for this joint working to develop further, to set out a positive planning strategy to provide for additional growth in Dorset, including additional homes. The priorities for future strategic planning work are set out in table 6. It is important to emphasise that at this stage the suggested scope of the work is necessarily broad. Each of the issues will require further investigation, and further issues may arise, as the work progresses.
109. At the time of preparing this first Statement of Common Ground, the local planning authorities are all in the process of moving towards the establishment of two new unitary councils in Dorset in April 2019. Decisions about the geography of future local plans have not yet been made, and such decisions will need to include the consideration of how best to achieve joint working between the two unitary councils on strategic planning matters including the distribution of development.
110. The table below summarises the issues raised in the main body of this Statement, identifying the potential scope for joint working between the local planning authorities. As described earlier in this Statement, the most significant challenge remains that of meeting the housing needs under the new standard methodology: whether these can be met within individual local authority areas; if not, whether they can be met within neighbouring areas of Dorset; and what the most sustainable and appropriate distribution of development across the area would be. This will be the highest priority for joint working between the local planning authorities.

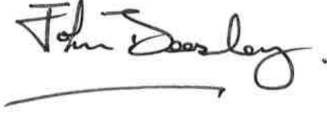

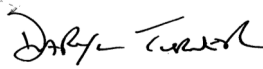
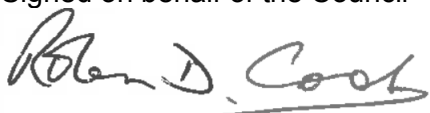

Theme	Potential scope for joint working
Overall strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining the most sustainable pattern of growth to meet future needs, taking account of objectively assessed needs, environmental and other constraints including Green Belt
Homes and jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting out a positive planning strategy to provide for additional growth in Dorset, including additional homes. • Setting out a strategic approach to the provision of additional homes in Eastern Dorset, to meet objectively assessed needs. This strategy will need to be informed by an appraisal of all reasonable options for the distribution of growth, taking account of issues such as housing mix, land availability, infrastructure capacity, and development constraints. It will need to include consideration of all options including urban potential, urban extensions and new settlements. • A Strategic Green Belt Review to help inform the strategy. • Identifying and addressing any issues of 'unmet' housing need arising from areas adjoining Dorset. • Providing an overview of the broad mix of housing types needed • Addressing any cross boundary issues relating to employment land provision identified through the Workspace Strategy. • Addressing any strategic issues relating to education and skills.





Retail, leisure and other commercial development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying key relationships between town centres, both within Dorset and in neighbouring areas. • Emphasising the importance of a ‘town centre’ first approach to new retail development. • Considering any implications of the location of additional housing for the retail hierarchies identified in the current and emerging local plans. • Addressing any cross-boundary issues that may be identified through updates to existing retail studies. • Highlighting the importance of planning for sustainable tourism across Dorset.
Infrastructure and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasising the importance of improving infrastructure, including improvements to transport, telecommunications, water supply and wastewater infrastructure. • Ensuring effective integration of minerals planning with growth and infrastructure needs in Dorset. • Ensuring sustainable planning for waste to maximise its value as a resource and as a key supporting element for economic competitiveness. • Ensuring the restoration of quarries has regard to economic, social and environmental opportunities that support sustainable economic growth, where appropriate. • Highlighting the importance of avoiding inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding. • Exploring opportunities for strategic scale flood attenuation and mitigation infrastructure. • Developing a consistent approach to Coastal Change Management Areas, to be applied along the full length of the Dorset coastline. • Ensuring a consistent approach to renewable energy provision, including wind energy, across Dorset. • Exploring the potential for cross boundary district heating.
Health, security, community and cultural infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlighting the importance of promoting healthy communities through planning. • Encouraging a consistent approach across Dorset to the new national standards for space, water efficiency and accessibility. • Considering whether any update is needed to the South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy, and whether there could be merit in preparing a single joint Green Infrastructure Strategy to cover Dorset.
Climate change and historic and natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasising the role of planning in supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation. • Highlighting the importance of nature conservation issues across the county, and ensuring that these are given full consideration when appraising options for future growth. • Securing renewed commitment to the existing joint approaches to address heathlands and nitrates mitigation. • Identifying broad locations for strategic SANGs (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces), to link in with the preferred strategy for additional housing, once this is identified.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA) to demonstrate that any proposed development will not adversely affect the ecological integrity of the European designations.• Reinforcing the importance of conserving and enhancing the historic environment through planning policy, and developing a positive strategy for conservation of the historic environment across Dorset as a whole.
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Table 6: potential scope for joint working

This Statement of Common Ground has been approved by:

Dorset Strategic Planning Forum	4 December 2018	
Dorset Council Shadow Executive	Shadow Executive Committee 17 December 2018	
Bournemouth Borough Council	Cabinet 20 February 2019	Signed on behalf of the Council  Cllr John Beesley Leader of Council
Christchurch Borough Council	Community Committee 23 January 2019	Signed on behalf of the Council  Cllr Margaret Phipps Chairman of the Community Committee
Dorset County Council	Cabinet 16 January 2019	Signed on behalf of the Council  Cllr Daryl Turner Cabinet member for Natural and Built Environment
East Dorset District Council	Cabinet 4 February 2019	Signed on behalf of the Council  Cllr Robin Cook Portfolio Holder for Planning
North Dorset District Council	Cabinet 10 December 2018	Signed on behalf of the Council  Hilary Jordan Corporate Manager, Planning (Community & Policy Development)

Borough of Poole Council	Cabinet 12 March 2019	Signed on behalf of the Council  Julian McLoughlin Head of Growth & Infrastructure
Purbeck District Council	Full Council 9 October 2018	Signed on behalf of the Council  Bridget Downton General Manager, Planning & Community Services
West Dorset District Council	Strategy Committee 13 December 2018	Signed on behalf of the Council  Hilary Jordan Corporate Manager, Planning (Community & Policy Development)
Weymouth & Portland Borough Council	Management Committee 11 December 2018	Signed on behalf of the Council  Hilary Jordan Corporate Manager, Planning (Community & Policy Development)