

# Purbeck Local Plan

Submission January 2019

Economy background paper



Thriving communities in balance  
with the natural environment

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## Introduction

1. This paper has been prepared to explain Purbeck District Council's approach to economic development within the Purbeck Local Plan. It provides a context for Purbeck's economy and explains the decision making behind the policies; illustrating the alignment with neighbouring local authorities, the wider economic area and Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership.
2. The paper also looks at the District's town centres and explains the emergence of the proposed policy as well as looking at supporting the role of tourism in Purbeck whilst managing potential environmental impacts.

## Context of economic development in Dorset

### NPPF

3. The most relevant areas of the National Planning Policy Framework (2018) contain sections directly relating to employment land and retail. They encourage strengthening of the economy and creating vibrant town and centre uses. Particularly ensuring policies remain 'flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices (such as live-work accommodation), and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.' (Paragraph 83).
4. Concerning the effective use of land, the draft NPPF states that where there is 'no reasonable prospect of an application coming forward...(officers should) as part of plan reviews, reallocate the land for a more deliverable use to help address identified need' (Paragraph 120).

### Employment land

5. Purbeck District Council is part of the Eastern Dorset housing market area and functional economic area. Purbeck also falls within the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (Dorset LEP). The supply of existing allocated employment land is concentrated at Holton Heath Industrial Estate and Dorset Innovation Park, two strategically important employment sites within the Dorset LEP area and the Eastern Dorset area. Other smaller employment sites are dispersed across the District next to, or within, existing towns and villages.
6. Ensuring sufficient suitable land is available to support the growth of new and existing employment sites is important in encouraging the District's prosperity over the period of the local plan. Purbeck also has a wider strategic role in the sustainable economic growth and prosperity of the region.

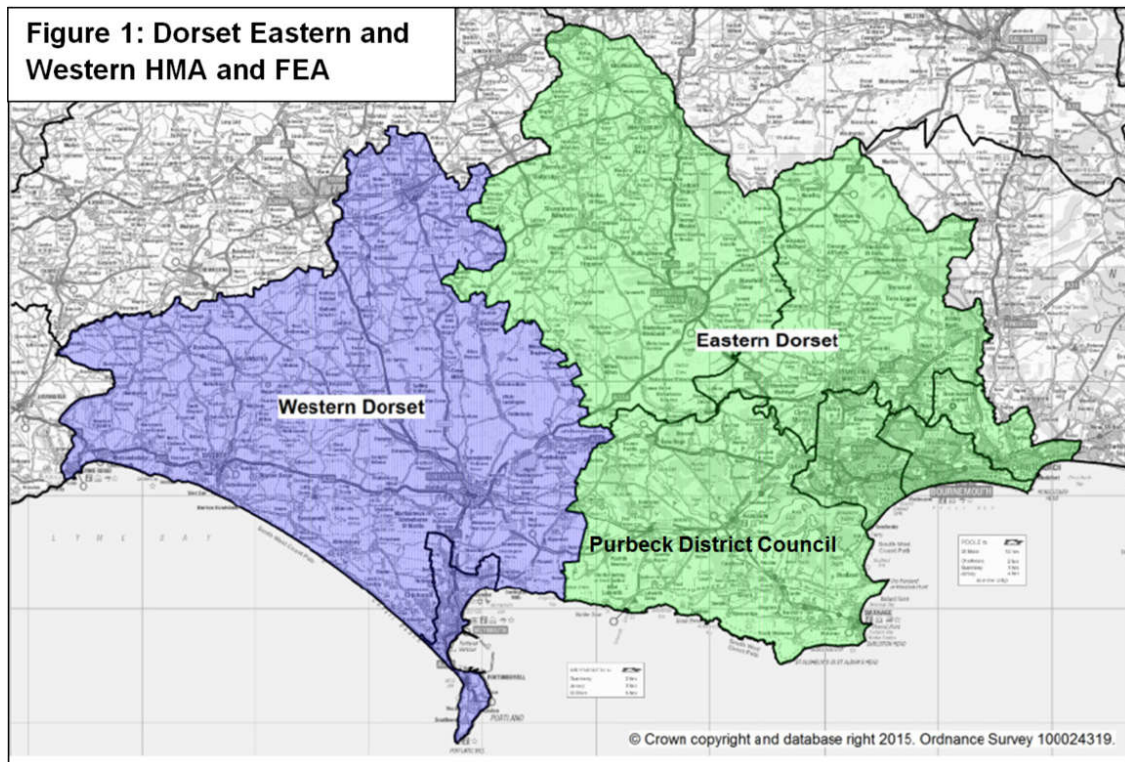
### Retail and town centres

7. Towns and villages across Purbeck perform an important role in enabling residents to access the services and facilities they require locally. The current centres maintain butchers, bakers and local shops creating a unique shopping experience.
8. Preserving the vitality and vibrancy of the town and village centres, whilst recognising changes in demand and function, will be important in ensuring that over the plan period Purbeck remains an attractive place to live, work and visit.

## Tourism related development and growth

9. Tourism is recognised as playing an important role in the economy of Purbeck, directly through employment, spending by visitors at local holiday parks, tourist accommodation, tourist facilities or attractions and indirectly by visitor spending on other related services and facilities across the District.

## Employment land in context



10. The total population of Purbeck District Council is 46,800 (ONS Mid-year population estimate, 2017) of which 26,400 are aged between 16 and 64. Of these 21,200 (78.3%), are economically active, comparable to the national average of 78.4% which is marginally lower than the South West as a whole at 80.9%.
11. Based upon 2011 Census data of commuting flows 8,800 residents commute out of Purbeck for work and 7,600 commute into the District to work. Considering its position, adjacent to a large urban area and predominantly rural in character, Purbeck District Council has a relatively modest net outflow of commuters. The most significant commuting relationship is with the Borough of Poole with 4,000 residents commuting from Purbeck to work in Poole and 2,200 commuting from Poole to work in Purbeck each day. The next closest relationships are with West Dorset District (972 out-commuters and 1,263 in-commuters) and Bournemouth (937 out-commuters and 791 in-commuters). About 3,000 of the people who are economically active and resident in Purbeck are self-employed and 17,000 are employees.

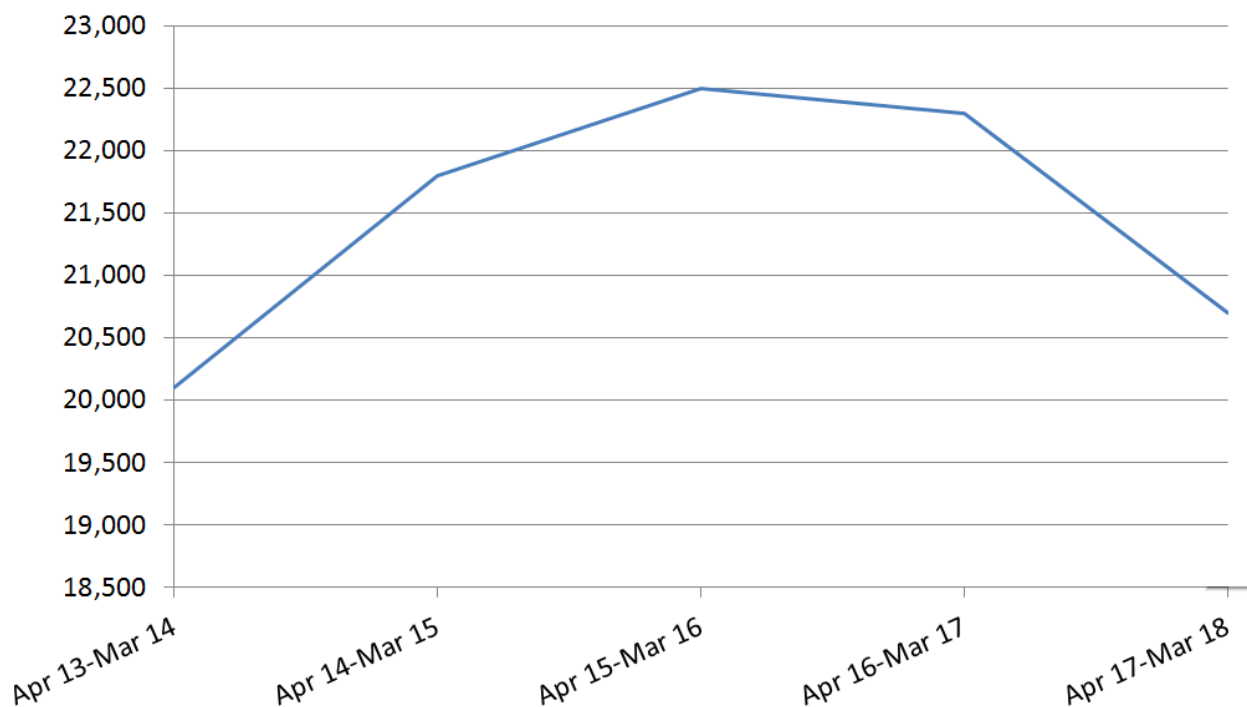


Figure 2: Numbers of Purbeck residents in employment, 2013 to 2017 (Source: Office for National Statistics, Annual Population Survey)

13. Figure 2 shows a changes in the number of people who are economically active and resident in Purbeck over a five year period between April 2013 and April 2018. There was an increase (around 2,500) in the number of people employed in 2015/16 and a subsequent decline in the years that followed. Over the four year sample period there was an overall growth in the numbers of people in employment of 600.
14. Table 1 lists a number of broad industry sectors responsible for employment in Purbeck and the numbers and proportion of Purbeck’s working population which are employed in each of these sectors (the table also summarises the proportion of the national / regional population employed in these sectors for comparison).

	Purbeck (%)		South West (%)	Great Britain (%)
I: Accommodation and food service activities	3,000	17.6	9.8	7.5
C: Manufacturing	2,000	11.8	8.6	8.2
P: Education	1,750	10.3	9.4	8.9

	Purbeck (%)		South West (%)	Great Britain (%)
	Jobs	Percentage		
G: Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	1,500	8.8	16	15.2
M: Professional, scientific and technical activities	1,500	8.8	7.3	8.4
O: Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	1,250	7.4	4.2	4.3
Q: Human health and social work activities	1,250	7.4	13.7	13.3
F: Construction	1,000	5.9	5.3	4.8
R: Arts, entertainment and recreation	1,000	5.9	2.5	2.6
N: Administrative and support service activities	700	4.1	7.4	9.1
S: Other service activities	700	4.1	1.9	2.0
H: Transportation and storage	500	2.9	3.6	4.7
J: Information and communication	400	2.4	3.6	4.4
E: Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	300	1.8	0.8	0.7
L: Real estate activities	225	1.3	1.5	1.7
B: Mining and quarrying	200	1.2	0.1	0.2
K: Financial and insurance activities	150	0.9	3.5	3.5
D: Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	0	0	0.5	0.5

Table 1: Purbeck District Council employee jobs by industry (Source: Office for National Statistics, Business Register and Employment Survey)

15. The above table illustrates the importance of accommodation / food services and manufacturing industry sectors to employment in Purbeck. Both of these industry sectors

employ a greater proportion of Purbeck's working population than the regional and national average, and together are responsible for almost 30% of all employment in Purbeck. Some of this is inevitably relating to the tourist trade.

16. Levels of unemployment in Purbeck are very low. Total job seekers allowance claimants in August 2018 stood at 0.2% compared to 1% nationally, whilst overall unemployment rates modelled through the Annual Population Survey 2017-18 stood at 2.7% compared to 3.3% for the South West and 4.3% for Great Britain as a whole.
17. However, average gross weekly pay for all full time workers indicates relatively lower overall incomes for workers in Purbeck at £506 per week. This compares to an average gross weekly salary of £497 per week in North Dorset, £537 per week in Poole and £527 per week in the South West region.

## Evidence relating to employment land

19. The Council's approach to supporting economic growth across the District has been informed by a number of earlier assessments and projections. These documents are listed below:

- Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Transforming Dorset: Strategic Economic Plan, 2014
- Strategic employment land availability assessment (SELAA), 2016
- Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Workspace Strategy, 2016
- Purbeck Local Plan Options Consultation, 2016
- Purbeck Economic monitoring report, 2006-2018
- Purbeck Employment Land Demand Projections, 2017.

20. Dorset LEP's strategic economic plan, the workspace strategy, consultation responses and recent employment land demand projections has informed the Council's strategy and they are summarised below.

### The Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership and Strategic Economic Plan 2014

21. The Dorset LEP is a business led private and public sector partnership that aims to promote local economic growth and prosperity. The Dorset LEP area includes Dorset County Council and its districts (including Purbeck), Poole and Bournemouth. It covers an area of 1,025 square miles and contains a population of 745,300. The population is concentrated in a number of key towns and urban areas that includes the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole conurbation. Whilst often perceived to be predominantly rural in character, it is arguably more accurate to see the Dorset economy as focused in a large conurbation wrapped in a rural envelope.

22. The Dorset Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) published in 2014 identified parts of East Dorset and eastern Purbeck District as having close functional links with the conurbation. The SEP notes that these areas contain the majority of Dorset's employment. Outside these areas Purbeck District Council (and the remaining area of the Dorset LEP) is predominantly rural in character.

23. The key objectives of the Dorset SEP are to:

- Provide a business environment that accommodates up to 40,000 additional jobs by 2021.
- Prioritise key sectors and high growth companies that strengthen the knowledge based economy and provide higher paid and higher skilled jobs.
- Exploit potential for high growth in advanced manufacturing, creative and digital, marine, and healthcare technologies with an explicit aim to boost exports.
- Transform Dorset by leveraging its natural advantages to bring people and resources to the region.
- Strengthen economic growth through investment in transport and services and digital infrastructure.



- Maximise the contribution of talented people and businesses in rural Dorset, linking education and training systems to the needs and opportunities of a growing economy.
  - Ensure a sustainable, affordable and diverse housing market meets the needs of residents and employees relocating to the region.
24. The SEP incorporates specific strategies for two major employment sites in Purbeck; Holton Heath Industrial Estate and Dorset Innovation Park (formerly Dorset Green, and Winfrith Technology Park). The SEP recognises their importance as part of the overall strategy for supporting growth in the advanced manufacturing / engineering sectors.
25. Planning policies will help to create a positive context to support and unlock growth at these sites and therefore form a key part of the economic strategy in the Purbeck Local Plan.

### Need for employment land to support economic growth

#### **Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Workspace Strategy 2015**

26. The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole workspace strategy 2016 models various scenarios for calculating land demand in the wider functional area - the Dorset LEP area. This covers the economic areas of Eastern Dorset (this sector includes a hinterland around the Poole, Bournemouth and Christchurch conurbation) and Western Dorset. The methodology used the impact of housing growth combined with employment projections from Cambridge Econometrics Local Economy Forecasting Model (LEFM); however, it's important to note that in 2016, the housing need calculation was much greater than is currently forecast.
27. The study concludes 'there is currently adequate employment land supply in Eastern Dorset to meet current and projected market requirements for industrial development in relation to the Step Change growth scenario with 20% flexibility' but this is dependent on 'minimising any net loss of employment land suitable to meet market requirements for office use' (page 154, Workspace Strategy 2016). Yet it was the local agents' view that Eastern Dorset has 'insufficient employment land and premises of the right type, quality and appropriate location' (Pg. iii, Workspace Strategy 2016).  
In Western Dorset it was concluded there was sufficient supply.

#### **How are neighbouring Councils in the Dorset LEP area meeting their demand?**

28. The Borough of Poole has recently (Autumn 2018) adopted a new local plan. The adopted strategy fully meets the demand for 33ha of additional employment land identified in the Workplace Strategy, allocating 14 separate employment sites through Policy PP17.
29. Dorset Council Partnerships (DCP) comprising a partnership of councils including North Dorset District, West Dorset District and Weymouth and Portland Council) are currently reviewing their adopted local plans. They also include a strategy supporting economic growth.
30. East Dorset have recently consulted (summer 2018) on proposals to allocate 46ha of additional land to meet the requirements of existing and new businesses. This is based on the available supply across the housing market area and to allocate more would require off site transport infrastructure improvements.

31. In the course of negotiations under the duty to cooperate no other councils within the functional economic area identified in the Workplace Strategy 2016 have identified any unmet need for employment land to support economic growth in their administrative areas.

### Updated employment land demand projections

32. Following the 2016 strategy, updated projections were modelled in 2017. They were developed by Dorset County Council in partnership with Dorset local authorities. The projections use the 2016/17 update of the Cambridge Econometrics model – the Local Economy Forecasting Model for Dorset – to estimate economic growth in Purbeck.

33. The 2017 update modelled growth uses the following two scenarios:

- Trend scenario, 2017: This scenario is based on employment growth rates from the Cambridge Econometrics LEFM for Dorset (2017) applied with some adjustments for local knowledge. This scenario forecasts growth of approximately 44,000 full time equivalent (fte) jobs in eastern Dorset. About 1,700 of which would be in Purbeck District.
- Strategy scenario, 2017: This scenario takes into account local knowledge, specifically regarding opportunities for intervention over the forecast period. This increases total growth across the Eastern Dorset SHMA to 54,000 fte. However, growth in Purbeck District Council's area remains unchanged in this scenario at 1,700 fte.

### Employment land conclusions

34. The scenarios modelled in 2017 represent the most up-to-date evidence for guiding the employment strategy in the Council's plan between 2018 and 2034. The 2017 scenarios indicate that there is a need for between 8.8 and 8.9 hectares of employment land to support growth of over the plan period.

35. However, the Council decided to make adjustments to this demand as suggested by the modelled scenarios in order to:

- support delivery at the same level anticipated in the Purbeck Local Plan Part 1 (2006 to 2027);
- reflect the comments of commercial agents;
- support the wider growth of the LEP area;
- allow for response to market changes in circumstances where demand is greater than the model anticipates;
- reflect the Council's work (including preparing a local development order) in creating the conditions necessary to support sustainable economic growth in the Enterprise Zone at Dorset Innovation Park; and
- support the Council's strategy of encouraging growth at key employment sites.

36. To ensure there is sufficient flexibility and to accommodate changes in need the Council considers that more employment land than 8.8ha is needed. For these reasons the Council has decided to maintain the need required in PLP1 and plan for 11.5 hectares of employment land.

37. The strategic policies in the Purbeck Local Plan relating to employment land supply (policy EE1), and its strategy for supporting economic growth (policy EE2), will need to be

reviewed as new evidence emerges relating to the demand for employment land and the supply of employment land.

38. None of the figures and findings have taken into account the impact of the UK’s impending withdrawal from the European Union as at this stage the impacts are unknown. It is anticipated that impacts will be considered as part of a future review of the plan.

### Employment land strategy

39. The overall strategy for delivery of employment land to support the economic prosperity of Purbeck District reflects the characteristics of Purbeck as a rural District and its position within the Dorset LEP area – particularly its proximity to the Poole and Bournemouth conurbation in the east.
40. The retention of two strategic employment sites at Holton Heath and Dorset Innovation Park recognises the long standing experience and expertise regarding the sites’ support for specific areas of advanced manufacturing, research and development. The wider distribution of small industrial estates across the District is particularly tailored to supporting a range of business opportunities for residents, and ultimately will be fundamental to the area’s sustainable growth.
41. The table below identifies sites which the Council plans to continue to safeguard for employment uses and the land available to support further economic growth over the local plan period.

Table 2 Employment land portfolio: safeguarded employment land and employment land available for employment development

Site Name	Safeguarded employment land (ha)	Available employment land (ha)	Review of suitability
Dorset Innovation Park, Wool / Winfrith	43.4	38.4	The boundary for safeguarded employment has been adjusted to reflect the boundaries of the Enterprise Zone and takes account of other planning considerations / restoration of the neighbouring licensed nuclear site.
Holton Heath Industrial Estate, Wareham	35	5.7	Strategic allocation, retained site area as unchanged from PLP1 2012

Site Name	Safeguarded employment land (ha)	Available employment land (ha)	Review of suitability
Axium Centre, Organford	0.5	0	Retained site area as unchanged from PLP1 2012
Factory Road Trading Estate, Upton	3.9	0	Retained site area as unchanged from PLP1 2012
Freeland Business Park, Lytchett Matravers	0.6	0	Retained site area as unchanged from PLP1 2012
Old Milk Depot, Corfe Castle	0.4	0.3	Retained site area as unchanged from PLP1 2012
Prospect Business Park, Swanage	2.2	0	Retained site area as unchanged from PLP1 2012
Romany Works Estate, Sandford	1.6	0	Retained site area as unchanged from PLP1 2012
Sandford Lane Estate, Wareham	9	1	Retained site area as unchanged from PLP1 2012
Townsend Business Park, North Street, Bere Regis	0.8	0	Retained site area as unchanged from PLP1 2012
Victoria Avenue Estate, Swanage	2.4	0	Retained site area as unchanged from PLP1 2012
Admiralty Park, Sandford	12	0	Retained site area as unchanged from PLP1 2012, but recognise site as part of District's safeguarded employment land
<b>Total Provision</b>	<b>111.8</b>	<b>45.4</b>	

42. There is an excess of available employment land to satisfy the District's needs and most of it is concentrated at Holton Heath Industrial Estate and Dorset Innovation Park. Safeguarding this land for employment purposes will help continue to provide the conditions needed to support growth not only in Purbeck but also across the wider region.

### Employment land supply

43. It is concluded that as the district has a surplus of land available, no land needs to be allocated for development and there is no requirement to complete an updated SELAA. The SELAA presented in 2016 is likely to be out of date due to the availability of land.

### Key employment sites in Purbeck

44. The first part of the Council's strategy is on the strategic sites. As key sites and because of their significance to the prosperity of the wider region, this part of the paper provides further detail on these key sites.

### Dorset Innovation Park

45. Dorset Innovation Park is located just to the west of Wool, where the Council's local plan allocates land for 470 new homes, the Park is also positioned close to Moreton Station / Redbridge Pit where the Council's plan allocates land for 490 new homes. The site is well connected to the area's road network and lies close to the railway line (this provides access to local towns, including Bournemouth, Dorchester, Poole and Weymouth and the wider region). These transport links provide the opportunity for good connections between the site and the surrounding sub-region.
46. As already discussed in relation to the Dorset SEP, the Dorset Innovation Park has been recognised as a key site in delivery of the overall ambitions for growth in the LEP area. Dorset Innovation Park was awarded Enterprise Zone (EZ) status at the end of 2015. Purbeck District Council and Dorset County Council with LEP financial support were then able to purchase the freehold and in April 2017 the EZ status came into effect.
47. Central Government approved EZ status on the basis that the site provides the opportunity to create a sector focus for businesses specialising in advanced engineering (including sectors relating to marine, defence and energy) with the potential to support 2,000 new jobs, 55 new businesses and 58,000sqm of workspace. The estimated £30m of business rates that will be retained provides an opportunity for investment in local infrastructure that will support possible growth.
48. Purbeck District Council approved a 25 year Masterplan in June 2017 and a 5-year implementation plan in September 2017. The Council has prepared a local development order (LDO) for some of the EZ area. The LDO permits new employment uses (as defined in Class B of the Use Classes Order 2015) and buildings. The development permitted by the LDO is limited by its detailed terms and subject to planning conditions. The LDO will take effect over the next 25 years.
49. PLP1 safeguards a larger area for employment purposes but the Council no longer considers that this approach can be justified as not all of the safeguarded land is available

for employment related development. Some of it includes land that is still being used as Dorset police headquarters, playing fields and areas associated with nuclear decommissioning.

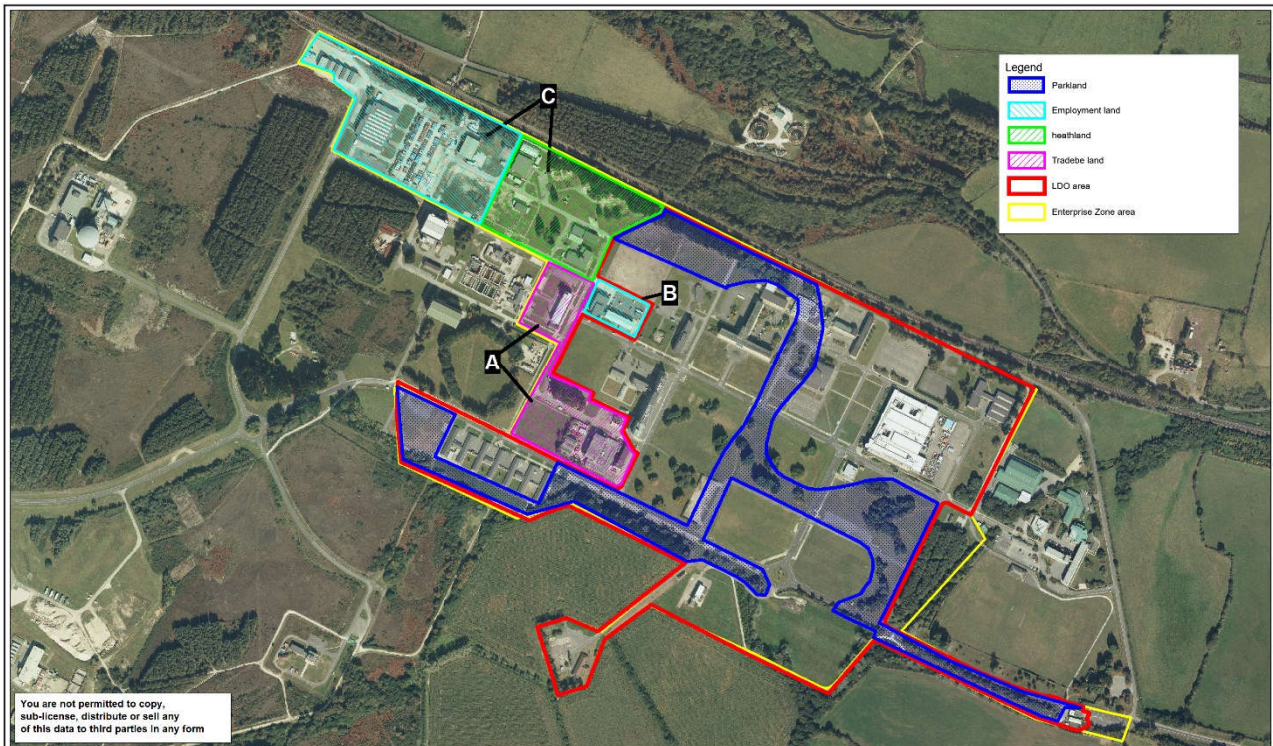


Figure 3: Map of Dorset Innovation Park's boundaries

50. The EZ extends to 50ha and the LDO covers 40ha of Dorset Innovation Park, as shown in figure 3, both in place until 2042. The LDO site is planned to expand after the decommissioning of the current Magnox site (approximately 2023) with a further 3.4ha (A & B) being developed, which already has Enterprise Zone status. This incorporates 2.9ha at (A), and 0.5ha at (B).
51. Officers consider the remaining 7.6 hectares (C) (included in the EZ but not the LDO) unsuitable for employment use and have removed its safeguarding status due to the following reasons:
- Natural England will require opening up of valley and re-creation of mire and wet heathland habitat on the eastern half of the site in the area of proposed parkland hatched light green. This will necessitate removal of a substantial amount of fill material and Fern Road which traverses the southern boundary of this plot. The only ecologically acceptable access road position would be along the northern boundary where there is an existing gravel track. The fact that this road does not link well with Dorset Innovation Park routes and will have to be constructed alongside the railway will create a significant cost to development.
  - designing an appropriate drainage scheme and the removal of residual contaminants known to be located on the site;
  - there are likely to be significant costs in redeveloping the site that could affect viability;

- the land is unavailable until 2023 and could therefore be revisited upon review of this plan;
- there is an excess of employment land in the District to meet demand (councils are required to regularly review allocations in plans to reflect demands – this includes employment land allocations which are not brought forward);
- the site has a sensitive landscape setting; and
- development at this location could have implications on neighbouring designated sites and heathland.

52. The Council has therefore adjusted its planning policies to reflect these considerations. This change has been presented in an earlier Regulation 18 options consultation in 2016.

53. However, in the event that an exceptional high value advanced engineering employment needs arises within the unallocated part of the Enterprise Zone, such a proposal would be capable of consideration through a detailed planning application process. Any proposal would need to comply with the NPPF and other policies in the Purbeck Local Plan and be expected to demonstrate evidence of an exceptional need for location on this site, including the need for access to a railway siding.

### Holton Heath Industrial Estate

54. Holton Heath Industrial Estate is a large area of employment land located on the District's eastern side. The site is closely related to the wider Poole and Bournemouth conurbation but also plays a key role in employment provision for the District.

55. There are a number of established businesses (including those specialising in advanced manufacturing) at Holton Heath Industrial Estate.

56. This site is also referenced as being of strategic importance within the Dorset SEP; noting particular opportunities in advanced manufacturing, automotive and aerospace sectors, as well as ICT and precision instruments. The majority of the site is already developed with a total site area of 35ha, leaving approximately 5.7ha of remaining available land.

## Employment land in rural areas

58. The first part of the Council's strategy for supporting economic growth in the District is focused around key sites. The second part of the strategy relates to supporting sustainable growth in rural areas.
59. The Council's approach to employment / economic related activity takes a balanced approach, which involves supporting development in suitable locations, taking account of the District's characteristics and other planning policies including those relating to protected habitats / species, designated landscapes and the green belt.
60. The NPPF sets out that local authorities should take a positive approach to 'Supporting a prosperous rural economy'. Notably, the NPPF supports growth and expansion of business, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings; and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses (paragraph 83 a) to d) of the NPPF). Also that planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport (paragraph 84 NPPF).
61. Within Purbeck District Council where settlements are defined but potential development may take place in a range of locations in the countryside, a policy approach is proposed that encourages new and expanded business and diversification of existing farms in the rural area through conversion and well-designed new buildings, where proposals avoid harm to the character of the surrounding countryside (Policy EE2: planning for employment).
62. The Council also works closely with local communities who have decided that they wish to prepare a neighbourhood plan. Bere Regis Parish Council has submitted a draft neighbourhood plan for examination. The neighbourhood plan supports their housing allocations with an expansion to their allocated employment land. It goes onto state that:
- 'Subject to meeting other planning requirements this commercial site could be suitable for provision of facilities falling under the following use classes; A3 (restaurants & cafes), A5 (hot food takeaway), B1 (business), B1a (offices), B8 (storage and distribution) and C1 (hotels).'

## Removing safeguarding from existing employment land

63. Where proposals might lead to a loss of existing employment land, the NPPF expects local authorities to take a flexible approach. Paragraph 120, in discussing the efficient use of land, notes that:
- 'Where the local planning authority considers there to be no reasonable prospect of an application coming forward for the use allocated in a plan:
- they should, as part of plan updates, reallocate the land for a more deliverable use that can help to address identified needs (or, if appropriate, de-allocate a site which is undeveloped); and
  - in the interim, prior to updating the plan, applications for alternative uses on the land should be supported, where the proposed use would contribute to meeting an unmet need for development in the area.'



64. Reflecting this, the proposed policy in the Purbeck Local Plan should allow consideration to be given to permitting applications for alternative forms of development on safeguarded employment land. This is subject to the Council being satisfied that the proposal would not result in an unacceptable loss of employment land, that the impact upon neighbouring occupiers and businesses has been considered, and that it can be demonstrated that following marketing the site is no longer required for an employment use (Policy EE2: planning for employment).
65. The Council has also considered this issue when preparing the strategy in its local plan and has calculated the number of new homes the District needs between 2018 and 2034 using government's local housing need assessment method. In addition to the land being removed from the EZ, the Council's preferred strategy is to allocate homes on sites across the District in the most sustainable locations and has worked closely with local communities in Bere Regis and Wareham as part of their work on neighbourhood plans to help deliver this strategy.
66. Wareham Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has considered the potential to deliver homes on two existing industrial estates at Westminster Road and John's Road. Both sites are safeguarded for employment uses by policies in PLP1. Taking account of the local housing need (LHN) for homes, the assessed need for further employment land and local communities' preference to deliver new homes at specific sites the Council has decided not to continue safeguarding the land at Westminster Road and John's Road for employment use. In reaching this decision the Council has also taken account of:
- The suitability of the Westminster Road site for new homes. The site is in single Council ownership (as identified in the SELAA 2016) and is a relatively large site benefitting from road access to the north and south with good accessibility to the local road network. The northern part of the site is partially occupied by the Local Waste Recycling Centre and Electricity Substation. The southern part of the site is comprised of mixed mid-20th century office and light industrial units. Redevelopment of this land with new homes, is also consistent with 'effective use' of suitable brownfield land.
  - The suitability of the John's Road site for new homes. The site is in mixed ownership, and is a very small site dominated by a single unit with several smaller units. The buildings of lower order quality date from the early to mid-20th century. The site offers an attractive location adjacent to the train station, whilst road access via Carey Approach is considered adequate it is somewhat restricted.

## Allocation of further employment land

68. The Council has decided not to present any additional sites to those already safeguarded in PLP1 for allocation.
69. Despite the interest in developing employment uses on the sites previously consulted on, the Council's housing land availability assessment indicates that there are alternative locations (which are not subject to the same planning constraints) that are capable of providing sufficient land needed to support economic growth in the District. Therefore, the Council is not persuaded of the need to allocate more employment land when the demand is already exceeded by the supply of designated employment land. The likely effects of further adding to the supply of employment land has not been explored.
70. Land owners wishing to develop land next to Holton Heath and Sandford Lane Industrial Estates may wish to consider making planning applications for new employment uses if they are satisfied that it is possible to address the other planning policy considerations relating to these sites as well as the criteria in policy 'EE2: Planning for employment' in the Purbeck Local Plan.

## Retail and leisure provision

71. The provision of retail and leisure uses across Purbeck is important for the sustainability of the District. Forming part of the wider Eastern Dorset market area, the towns and villages of Purbeck have a specific role in meeting the day to day needs of residents and are an important source of employment and economic growth for the District.

## Poole and Purbeck Town Centres, Retail and Leisure Study 2014

72. The retail environment has been through a period of particular uncertainty in recent years. The nature of town centres has also transformed with changing shopping patterns and practices. Flexibility is therefore an important part of the Council's development strategy to help ensure that the District's town centres successfully adapt and accommodate future changes.

73. Purbeck District Council and the Borough of Poole jointly commissioned Peter Brett Associates (PBA) to undertake the Poole and Purbeck Town Centres, Retail and Leisure Study, 2014. The study was commissioned to help the Councils understand and define the retail needs, qualitative requirements and overall health and character of town centres within Poole and Purbeck, assessing:

- the locally independent retail offer and the diversity of retailing and leisure provision;
- the distribution of uses and whether different areas are characterised by distinctive retail/leisure identities;
- ways for the towns to fulfil retail and leisure potential, including whether any additional floorspace is required; and
- types of new uses that could contribute to town vibrancy and importantly increase footfall in the town centre.

74. The Council also undertakes monitoring of the retail environment in Purbeck and prepares a report which provides detailed information on retail delivery in each of the District's town and local centres.

75. Assessments of retail spending and floorspace requirements are frequently split between comparison and convenience goods. Comparison shops provide items such as clothing, technology and furniture; and convenience shops provide predominantly grocery shopping and spending on items that meet day to day needs.

## Spatial context and patterns of retail spending

76. Based upon current patterns of retail spending, the study area identified by PBA covered a wide area encompassing all of Purbeck District Council and Poole Borough Council, as well as portions of East Dorset, North Dorset, West Dorset and Bournemouth. Figure 3 below outlines the overall extent of this study area and 14 survey zones.

Figure 4: Study area and survey zones of the 2014 retail and leisure study

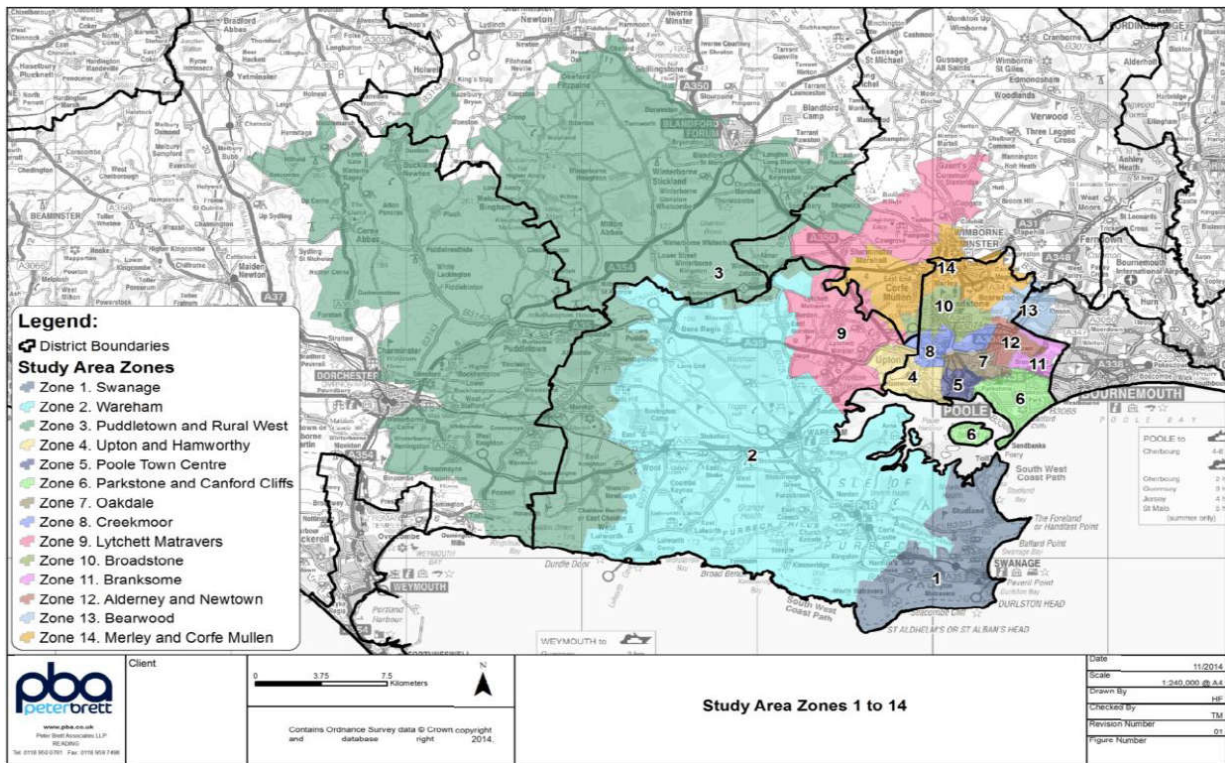


Table 3: Patterns of comparison and convenience expenditure for survey areas in Purbeck

Zone	Summary of patterns of spending	
	Comparison goods	Convenience goods
Zone 1: Swanage	<p>Principal destination - Poole town centre</p> <p>Residents in zone 1 generate £30.8m in comparison expenditure.</p> <p>24% is spent within zone 1.</p> <p>2% is spent in Wareham town centre.</p> <p>34% is spent in Poole town centre.</p> <p>74% in total is retained within the study area with 26% leakage to locations</p>	<p>Principal destination - Co-op, Swanage.</p> <p>Residents in zone 1 generate £23.1m in convenience expenditure.</p> <p>67% is spent within zone 1.</p> <p>96% is retained within the study area.</p>

Zone	Summary of patterns of spending	
	Comparison goods	Convenience goods
	elsewhere. 11% to Bournemouth.	
Zone 2: Wareham	<p>Principal destination - Poole town centre</p> <p>Residents in zone 2 generate £62.2m in comparison expenditure.</p> <p>5% is retained within zone 2.</p> <p>1% is spent in Wareham town centre.</p> <p>35% is spent in Poole town centre.</p> <p>73% is retained within the study area with 27% leakage to locations elsewhere. 9% is leaked to Dorchester.</p>	<p>Principal destination - Sainsbury's, Wareham.</p> <p>Residents in zone 2 generate £41.4 m in convenience expenditure.</p> <p>30% is retained within zone 2.</p> <p>86% is retained within the study area.</p>
Zone 3: Puddletown and rural west	<p>Principal destination - Dorchester town centre</p> <p>Residents in zone 3 generate £87.5m in comparison expenditure.</p> <p>&lt;1% is retained within zone 3.</p> <p>19% is spent in Poole town centre.</p> <p>However, 65% is leaked to locations outside the study area. Dorchester is the most popular attracting 33% of the spending.</p>	<p>Principal destination - Tesco at Blandford Forum.</p> <p>Residents in zone 3 generate a total £56.3m in convenience expenditure.</p> <p>36% is retained within zone 3.</p> <p>53% is retained within the study area. 47% is leaked to locations outside the study area. Dorchester is the most popular attracting 10% of the spending.</p>

Zone	Summary of patterns of spending	
	Comparison goods	Convenience goods
Zone 4: Upton & Hamworthy	<p>Principal destination - Poole town centre</p> <p>Residents in zone 4 generate £58.5m in comparison expenditure.</p> <p>&lt;1% is retained within zone 4.</p> <p>42% is spent in Poole town centre.</p> <p>89% is retained within the study area with 11% leakage to locations outside the study area.</p> <p>Bournemouth is the most popular attracting 4%.</p>	<p>Principal destination - Tesco Extra, Fleets Corner in Poole.</p> <p>Residents in zone 4 generate a total of £39.3m in convenience expenditure.</p> <p>23% is retained within zone 4.</p> <p>97% is retained within the study area.</p>
Zone 9: Lytchett Mattravers	<p>Principal destination - Poole town centre</p> <p>Residents in zone 9 generate £29m in comparison expenditure.</p> <p>1% is retained within zone 1.</p> <p>44% is spent in Poole town centre.</p> <p>70% is retained within the study area with 30% leakage to locations outside the study area. Wimborne is the most popular attracting 9%.</p>	<p>Principal destination - Tesco Extra, Fleets Corner in Poole.</p> <p>Residents in zone 9 generate a total of £17.3m in convenience expenditure.</p> <p>16% is retained within zone 9.</p> <p>88% Is retained within the study area.</p>

Source: Taken from Poole and Purbeck Retail and Leisure Study, PBA, 2014

77. As illustrated from Figure 3 and Table 6, Zone 1: Swanage and Zone 2: Wareham are entirely within Purbeck District Council’s area. Zone 3 is largely restricted to the far western side of the District; the majority of the zone relates to West and North Dorset and whilst it does not include any notable settlements in Purbeck the major potential development at Moreton / Redbridge Pit is within this zone. Zone 9 is divided between Purbeck and East Dorset and forms an outer suburb to Poole. This zones includes Upton, located immediately adjacent to the Poole/Bournemouth conurbation and the most urban area of Purbeck.
78. From the patterns of spending identified, the most notable factor is the primary role of Poole Town Centre as a focus for retail activities, particularly for Upton. Spending retention over the entire study area is high however for Purbeck District itself it is relatively low due to the rural nature and specific role of the towns of Wareham and Swanage; they are important but relatively small centres that serve local needs and the needs of visitors and employees to the area.

### Existing retail provision

79. The existing town centres of Wareham and Swanage in Purbeck and the other locations including Corfe Castle and Wool are generally considered to provide a diverse range of retail opportunities for residents and visitors with good quality stores and a high proportion of independent traders helping to maintain the overall vitality and viability of the centres.
80. Key indicators such as overall levels of vacancy within the town centres help illustrate the relative strength, as illustrated in table 4.

Table 4: Vacant units in the town centres of Swanage and Wareham

	% Vacant units	Difference to UK average
Swanage	3.87%	-8.62%
Wareham	3.50%	-8.99%
UK average	12.49%	n/a

Source: Retail and Leisure Study 2014, PBA

81. The most recent retail centres health check concluded that:
- Swanage – The number of convenience retailers in Swanage is marginally over the national average. In terms of comparison goods, the provision in Swanage appears considerably over the national average. Looking closer at what types of comparison retailer are prevalent in Swanage shows that clothing retailers are actually under represented (comprising of 8.3% rather than the national average of 10.2%). In contrast, retailers categorized as ‘booksellers, arts/crafts, stationers’ are three times more prevalent in Swanage, with units described as, ‘gifts, china, glass

and leather goods', five times more prevalent. This is linked to areas where there is significant tourism.

- Wareham – The number of convenience retailers is seen as higher than the UK average. The number of comparison units also appears higher in Wareham than the national average. As with Swanage, Wareham town centre is under represented by clothing retailers, which make up only 3% of the total floorspace. Charity shops have a notable presence in the town (7.8%) which is almost twice the national average (4.27%). Aside from charity shops, the remainder of the comparison offer is described as fairly balanced. Figures for service units are almost identical to the national figure, helped by a number of restaurants in the town centre.
- Corfe Castle – The study identifies the centre as a location that is particularly popular with tourists visiting the village. The range of uses within the centre reflects the clear focus towards tourism, with a number of pubs, tea rooms, hotels and other attractions such as the model village. As the centre is relatively small it is envisaged that for larger convenience or comparison requirements the residents are likely to visit larger centres of Wareham, Swanage and Poole. Similarly, given the size of the centre, and range of offer, it is unlikely that residents from other locations will use Corfe for their convenience and comparison spend.
- Wool – The retail offer in Wool is split into two clusters. The majority are found on the Dorchester Road towards the west of the settlement comprised mainly of residential units interspersed with retailers. Including some convenience retailers along with a number of service retailers such as hairdressers and estate agents. The second cluster of retail units covers a smaller area including a number of smaller convenience retailers and a local pub. As the units are predominantly focussed on meeting local needs it is unlikely that the area would attract shoppers from outside the immediate area.

### Retail hierarchy

82. The retail study provides a series of recommendations concerning the hierarchy of centres in Purbeck and Poole, informed by analysis of the availability of services and facilities in each centres and overall spend. The overall retail hierarchy set out within the study identifies the following:

- a. Town centres:
  - Poole town centre
  - Swanage town centre (Purbeck District Council)
  - Wareham town centre (Purbeck District Council)
- b. Local Centres:
  - Upper Parkstone
  - Ashley Cross
  - Broadstone
  - Corfe Castle (Purbeck District Council)
  - Wool (Purbeck District Council)



83. The hierarchy of centres reflected in the Purbeck Local Plan, is as follows:
- c. Towns
    - Swanage, Wareham and Upton
  - d. Key Service Villages
    - Bere Regis, Corfe Castle, Lytchett Matravers and Wool
84. Upton as a potential centre is not highlighted within the 2014 retail study. However, the town is the largest urban area in Purbeck where further enhancement of the retail offer would be supported. As a significant town within Purbeck the delivery of retail uses within the town would be supported as a positive contribution to the overall sustainability of the locality.
85. Moreton Station / Redbridge Pit is not recognised within the study. However retail provision should be encouraged at Moreton Station / Redbridge Pit that is of an appropriate scale and type relative to the housing allocation, and which will support the new local community that will be living there.
86. The key service villages of Corfe Castle and Wool are identified in the Poole and Purbeck Retail and Leisure Study (2014) as local centres. This reflects the function of these locations as focal points for their wider communities to secure basic services and facilities, and the benefits that additional, proportionate retail and service growth in these locations would bring about for overall sustainability of the communities.
87. Bere Regis and Lytchett Matravers are not highlighted within the study as potential centres. However, reflective of the settlement hierarchy for Purbeck, each of these centres play an important role in delivering services for the local communities. The local centres of Bovington, Sandford, designated as local centres in PLP1, are also not recognised within the study and are not thought to play an important role in the sustainability of these areas, therefore they have been removed as local centres to allow more flexibility to these areas.

### Retail needs over the plan period

88. The overall quantum of need for town centre uses is considered in terms of quantitative and qualitative need.

#### Quantitative need

89. The most recent figures for comparison and convenience floorspace are set out in the retail study (2014). The assessment of retail requirements set out within that assessment are based upon the 2012 based sub-national population projections. The SHMA update 2018 has illustrated that for Purbeck the revised 2016 based projections have had a minimal impact upon population growth in the District. Across the study area as a whole the following floorspace needs were identified in the 2014 study.
90. Comparison goods: between 15,000 and 19,000 sq.m net additional comparison goods floorspace by 2024, increasing to between 36,000 sq.m net and 40,000 sq.m net by 2031.

91. Convenience goods: between 1,000 and 2,000 sq.m net by 2024, increasing to 3,000 – 4,000 sq.m net by 2031.
92. The retail study notes that there is limited opportunity to expand either of the main centres of Swanage and Wareham for comparison goods floorspace and this is also true of Upton.
93. However as the majority of floorspace in the study area is currently located in Poole town centre, and it is not anticipated that Upton, Swanage or Wareham will substantially increase their market share, only a modest level of comparison floorspace in Purbeck is sought.
94. Comparison goods in Purbeck: Swanage and Wareham town centres 750 sq.m – 950 sq.m net combined.
95. In respect of convenience provision, the study concluded that there is a gap in provision in both Swanage and Wareham town centres and recommended that the need identified in the study area should be met within Purbeck.
96. Convenience goods in Purbeck: Swanage and Wareham town centres 1,200 sq.m – 1,800 sq.m combined.
97. The study also notes that in areas of housing growth the requirement for retail provision to meet the needs of those larger communities should be considered.

### **Meeting the quantitative need**

98. Swanage Local Plan 2017-2027 allocates 2130sqm of retail floorspace to Swanage town centre. 1,000sqm of comparison goods and 1,100sqm of convenience goods.
99. This provision contributes to the overall needs identified above. As such, there is a residual requirement to be identified within the Local Plan for:
  - Up to 700sq.m of convenience retail floorspace.
100. This overall scale of provision is considered to be readily deliverable within the towns of Wareham and Upton and local centres of Wool, Bere Regis, Corfe Castle and Lytchett Matravers. This would include the potential for specific additional convenience floorspace expected to be delivered as part of the proposed large housing developments at Wool and Moreton Station / Redbridge Pit. Consequently no allocations have been made over and above the provision identified through the adopted Swanage Local Plan.
101. Bere Regis Neighbourhood Plan proposes to remove their local centre and rely on a community facility and services policy to safeguard existing facilities and services. This plan has not yet been examined and the Council will therefore reconsider whether it is necessary to include Bere Regis in the local centre hierarchy once the plan is made.

### **Town centre sequential test and local impact assessment**

102. The NPPF is clear in its requirement for the sequential test to be applied and an impact assessment to be undertaken when considering applications for main town centres uses that are not in an existing centre and not consistent with an up-to-date local plan.

103. The retail and leisure study recommends that established NPPF tests for a sequential test and impact assessment should be included in policy, (as set out in paragraphs 86 and 89 of the NPPF), and that an additional local threshold for impact assessments should be defined.
104. In relation to the identification of an alternative threshold, the retail study concluded that current unit sizes in the identified town centres of Swanage and Wareham average around 120 sq.m gross. Given this, developments of more than circa 200 sq.m could potentially cause a significant adverse impact in centres within Purbeck, depending on the occupier and location. Developments of floor space above the average unit site are likely to be attractive to the market and could potentially have an impact on town centres. Using the NPPF default means such developments would not need an impact assessment. Based upon the recommendation of the Poole and Purbeck Retail and Leisure Study, it is proposed that the Purbeck Local Plan includes:
- A local retail impact assessment threshold of 200 sq.m for development of main town centres uses that fall outside defined centres.
105. The recommended strategies for centres provided within the retail study, reflecting the overall limited needs for additional comparison or convenience provision in the area, is to focus upon supporting independent stores, both new and long established outlets, as opposed to trying to attract national multiples. This should range from direct support for marketing, promotion and branding, as well as protection of the centre through planning policy.
106. Integral to ensuring opportunities are maintained for local independent businesses to find suitable space and operate within Purbeck's centres, is providing appropriate policy to control other uses within the District's centres.
107. Reflecting this, an approach to policy is advised that the Council:
- Would generally protect against the loss of existing retail uses in use classes A1, A2, and A3 or the loss of D1 or D2 activities that can be key to extending the length of time visitors and shoppers spend in the town centre;
  - Require that alternative uses demonstrate they would not harm the vitality and viability of the centres, and
  - Introduce a marketing test to ensure it is demonstrated that there is no market interest to acquire or invest in the site for retail or leisure uses.

## Tourism

109. Tourism and related revenue is key to the South West region's economy and an integral part of economic activity in Purbeck. The District's attractive towns, villages and designated landscapes make the area popular with visitors but also sensitive to the pressures that tourist activities can cause. National policy requires the support of a prosperous rural economy by enabling 'sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside' (NPPF, para 83c). It is important that tourist related development takes place in a sustainable manner so as to ensure positive benefits whilst avoiding adverse impacts on the local environment or existing infrastructure.
110. Tourism related activities form a major element of overall employment and it is estimated that tourism provides for 21% of all employment within the District and contributes approximately £230 million to the local economy. Such spending arises annually through visitor expenditure from day trips and longer stay accommodation.
111. As highlighted above in the analysis of centres in the District, the role of tourism has a major impact upon the overall diversity and vitality of Purbeck's towns and villages and as a result supports the wider sustainability of the area as a place to live and work.
112. Supporting the District's tourism economy and enabling sensitive growth in tourism are therefore key priorities for Purbeck District Council. The Purbeck Economic Development Strategy highlights tourism as a key sector for the District and is identified as one of seven sectors in the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for engagement; this led to the preparation of a Dorset Destination Management Plan (DMP) 2014-2018.
113. The DMP is a shared statement of the intention to sustainably grow the tourism market in Dorset as a means for increasing prosperity and creating new employment opportunities for residents. The DMP recognises a number of key priorities that are of relevance generally to planning for tourism development, including:
- Regaining and increasing market share – increasing numbers of staying visitors.
  - Increasing year round visitor spending and its retention in Dorset.
  - Unleashing the potency of Dorset as a destination brand.
  - Effectively linking the urban, rural and coastal experience.
114. A key opportunity highlighted within the DMP is to strengthen awareness and links between Bournemouth and Poole, the other seaside and market towns, the Jurassic Coast and the wider countryside. As a rural District immediately west of Bournemouth and Poole, Purbeck is particularly well placed with its own unique identity providing the setting for the market town of Wareham, seaside town of Swanage and the World Heritage Site Jurassic Coastline.
115. The District is therefore in a strong position to further build on its already successful tourism sector but it will be important over the Plan period to ensure any growth is sustainable and sensitive to the District's outstanding natural landscape and biodiversity value.

As such, a positive framework for additional tourist accommodation is advocated, whilst existing tourist accommodation should be protected from loss where it is reasonable to do so.