

EqIA - Full Equality Impact Assessment

Policy or Service to be assessed:

The public consultation on the 'Preferred Options' for the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan Review

Service and lead officer:

Terry Sneller

Officers involved in the EqIA:

Oliver Rendle

What are you impact assessing?

Existing

New/proposed

Changing/Update/ revision

Other, please list:

Step 2: Scoping – what are you assessing?

Q1: What is the title of your project?

The public consultation on the 'Preferred Options' for the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan Review

Q2: What is the aim of your project?

The Local Plan Review will establish a vision and framework for the development of West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland, guiding decisions about development and identifying land to meet future housing and business needs to achieve sustainable growth patterns.

The Local Plan Review is currently at the 'Preferred Options' stage, which narrows down the options considered at the earlier 'Issues and Options' stage of the Local Plan Review process to provide the most appropriate options for inclusion in the final plan.

The consultation on the preferred options intends to gather thoughts from all sections of the community. This is to ensure that the Local Plan Review provides for the needs of those that will be effected by it. To achieve this, the councils intend to involve all stakeholders through an accessible consultation process that will involve a series of organised events

which provide the opportunity for people to express their views.

The consultation will run from 13th August to 8th October. Drop in sessions, providing the opportunity to discuss the preferred options with a council representative, will be held at the following venues:

- Sherborne, Digby Memorial Hall (Wed 29th August);
- Portland, St Georges Centre (Thursday 30th August);
- Dorchester, South Walks House (Friday 31st August);
- Crossways, Village Hall (Wednesday 5th September);
- Charminster, Village Hall (Thursday 6th September);
- Beaminster, Town Hall (Friday 7th September);
- Lyme Regis, Woodmead Hall (Monday 10th September);
- Weymouth, Redlands Sports Centre (Wednesday 12th September);
- Bridport, Leisure Centre (Thursday 13th September); and
- Chickerell, Willowbed Hall (Friday 14th September).

These events will be held on weekdays between 10am and 7pm with the exception of Chickerell which will run to 5:30pm due to the availability of an appropriate venue.

In addition, a Drop-in Session will be held at Preston on Wednesday 8th August, between 4-7pm.

Q3: Who does/will it have an impact on? e.g. public, visitors, staff, members, partners?

The Councils intend to give the opportunity for all sections of the community to be involved in the consultation process for the Local Plan Review, since it may potentially impact upon everyone including:

- Residents;
- Tourists and visitors;
- Land owners, developers and agents acting on their behalf;
- Businesses;
- Service providers (such as transport, health and education service providers);
- Public sector stakeholders (including Council services and statutory consultees); and
- Community and voluntary sector.

Q4: Are there any potential barriers to implementing changes to your project?

The availability of staff, consultation venues and other resources could make it difficult to make changes to the timings and location of consultation events.

However, paper copies of the consultation documents will be available at the council offices and libraries, in addition to being available online, enabling those that are unable to attend the drop in sessions to partake in the consultation. The paper copies will enable those who do not have access to the internet, which according to Dorset County Council's Topic Report (published in October 2015) represents 12% of Dorset adults, to take place in the consultation.

Q5: Who else will be involved in implementing this project?

The consultation will involve members of the Councils' Policy Development, Community Planning and Development and Development Control teams. Officers from Dorset County Council, in the flooding and highways teams, are attending the events. Planning policy officers from Purbeck have been invited to attend the Crossways consultation event where there are potential cross-boundary issues which may impact upon Purbeck residents.

Step 3: Information gathering – what do you need to know about your customers?

Q6: What data do you already have about your service users, or the people your policy or strategy will have an impact on, that is broken down by equality strand?

Ofcom statistics from 2016 show the availability of internet access to premises as follows:

UK	West Dorset	Weymouth & Portland
93%	91%	98%

Age, Gender and Population:¹

West Dorset has a population of 101,380, which consists of:

	Total	%	Dorset
All males	48,830	48.2%	48.8%
All females	52,560	51.8%	51.2%
0-15 years	15,690	15.5%	15.9%
16- 64 years	55,450	54.7%	55.8%
65+ years	30,250	29.8%	28.3%

Weymouth and Portland has a population of 65,170, which consists of:

	Total	%	Dorset
All males	32,210	49.4%	48.8%
All females	32,950	50.6%	51.2%
0-15 years	10,730	16.5%	16.0%
16-64 years	38,700	59.4%	56.1%
65+ years	15,730	24.1%	28.0%

Marital Status²

There are 44,386 households in the West Dorset area

- 34.3% are married with / without dependents
- 8.2 % are cohabiting with / without dependents
- 7% are lone parents

There are 28,535 households in the Weymouth and Portland area

- 31.4% are married with / without dependants
- 10.1% are co-habiting with / without dependants
- 9.8% are lone parents

¹ Source: 2016 Mid Year Estimates, Office for National Statistics

² Source: 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics

Race and Ethnicity³

West Dorset has a population of 101,380

- 95.7% are White British
- 4.3% are BME (black and minority ethnic population)
- 1.5% main language is not English

Weymouth & Portland has a population of 65,370

- 94.9% are White British
- 5.1% are BME (black and minority ethnic population)
- 2.1% main language is not English

Disability

- The 2011 Census showed that 20.26% of people in WDDC had a disability which affected their ability to carry out day-to-day activities. Based on the 2016 population statistics, this would indicate translate to 20,541 residents out of 101,380
- The 2011 Census showed that 21.64% of people in WPBC had a disability which affected their ability to carry out day-to-day activities. Based on the 2016 population statistics, this would indicate translate to 14,101 residents out of 65,170

Q7: Do you need any further information broken down by equality strand to inform this EqlA?

Yes No

If yes, list here and add actions to gather this data to your action plan at Step 5:

n/a

Q8: Is there any potential for direct or indirect discrimination?

Yes No Don't know

If yes, please explain how you are going to change this?

The consultation events will be organised so that all members of the community have the opportunity to participate in the consultation and express their views. This will be achieved by ensuring that the venues involved in the consultation are accessible and the information provided is in a form which provides the opportunity for the whole community to take part.

³ Source: Source: 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics

Step 4: Making a judgement about impacts

Age:

There is a significantly higher proportion of older people and a smaller proportion of younger people in West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland in comparison with England and Wales.

A range of methods will be used to respond to the consultation, catering for those across the age spectrum. Officers will be available during the consultation period for face to face discussions, and over the phone to provide help and advice in completing the consultation form, ensuring that those methods which are generally favoured by older people are provided. In addition, it will be possible to respond to the consultation by completing interactive forms, as typically used by younger people.

Laptops will be available at the consultation events to allow those who do not have access to a computer, or who are unfamiliar with using IT equipment, to complete the form with assistance from the Officers attending the event. Paper copies of the consultation documents are also available at the libraries and the council offices for those without access to the internet.

Disability:

The percentage of the population whose day to day activities are limited in West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland was above the average for England and Wales in August 2012.

The factsheets on various disability groups commissioned by the Dorset Equalities Partnership, presented on the Dorset For You website, explains that access to buildings and facilities is a particular issue affecting those with disabilities in West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland. The consultation documents will be available from the council offices, which have been risk assessed to ensure that those with physical disabilities may safely access the building and its facilities, as well as local libraries, many of which are suitable for those with physical disabilities. The majority of consultation venues have disabled access. Should an accessibility issue arise, officer's will be at hand to provide assistance and ensure that opportunities are provided for everyone to contribute to the consultation. Documents will also be available on the website enabling those who may be less mobile to access the information and comment.

Those with a hearing disability may be less familiar with the English language as a result, and therefore may not be able to easily read the Preferred Options document. Officers will also be available during the consultation period, face to face at the council offices or over the telephone to provide help and advice in completing the consultation form (Telephony with deaf capability (Type Talk) is available via the Customer Services Team). Mobile induction loops will be used at the consultation to assist those attendees with hearing difficulties.

For those with sight disabilities, large print format will be available during the consultation period upon request and guidance from council officers will be available to ensure that they are able to contribute to the consultation.

People with a learning disability may also have difficulties reading the document. Officers will be at hand to provide support by interpreting the information in a user-friendly way.

Gender re-assignment:

No impacts identified.

Race:

West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland are overall less ethnically diverse than England and Wales, with only 4.3% and 5.1% of residents within the black and minority ethnic group in West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland respectively compared to 19.5% in England and Wales. However, the Melcombe Regis ward in Weymouth has a higher percentage of less ethnically diverse residents, with 11.3% of the population in the black and minority ethnic group.

Those from minority backgrounds may be less familiar with written or spoken English. This language barrier will be overcome by providing summary translations of the Local Plan Review documents upon request, enabling all people to contribute to the consultation.

There may be cultural issues surrounding the methods of correspondence during the consultation events. For example, it would be inappropriate for members of some cultures to meet an officer of the opposite sex on their own. Consultation events will therefore have a mix of male and female officers in order to resolve this potential conflict.

Religion or belief:

The Preferred Options consultation will need to ensure that the faith demands are met. Where possible, the Council will ensure that the consultation does not clash with religious ceremonies or festivals that may prevent people from participating. None of the consultation venues have connections to any religion thus removing any potential religious barriers relating to access. The consultation will be conducted over a period of several weeks to allow maximum opportunity for participation.

The Council will also ensure that the communication methods used do not compromise religious customs. For example, some religions do not consider it appropriate for a male officer to speak to a lone woman. Therefore, the Council will be flexible in terms of the officer that conducts the face-to-face conversation.

Sex:

No impacts identified.

Sexual Orientation:

No impacts identified.

Pregnancy and Maternity:

Pregnant women, and in some instances those with babies and young children, may be less mobile and potentially less able to travel. The consultation documents will be available on the website enabling pregnant women and those with babies and young children to access the information and comment at a location and time convenient to them.

Marriage and Civil Partnerships:

No impacts identified.

Conclusion:

This assessment suggests some actions in relation to the protected characteristics of age, disability, race, religion or belief and pregnancy and maternity to ensure that the potential for discrimination during the consultation for the Preferred Options consultation for the Local Plan review is addressed.

Step 5: Action planning

Step 5: Improvement plan – what are you going to change?

Issue	Action	Performance Target (what difference will it make)	Lead Officer	Achieved
Some members of the community do not favour the use of IT to feedback their comments	A range of methods will be used to respond to the consultation, including face to face discussion during the consultation events, the telephone and using the postal system	Members of the community who are unable to use digital methods will be able to contribute to the consultation	All planning policy officers	✓
Due to cultural reasons, it may be inappropriate for some people attending the consultation events to speak with a member of the opposite sex	Both male and female officers will be available to answer questions at the consultation events	This will enable people from all cultures and backgrounds to engage with officers during the consultation events	Terry Sneller	✓
Those from black and ethnic minority backgrounds may be less familiar with written or spoken English	Summary translations of the Local Plan Review will be provided upon request	This will enable all people to contribute to the consultation and understand the Councils' Preferred Options document	Terry Sneller	✓
Religious ceremonies may prevent some members of the public from attending the consultation events	The Council will ensure that, where possible, the consultation does not clash with religious ceremonies or festivals that may prevent people from participating in the consultation	People of all religions will be able to attend the consultation events	Terry Sneller	✓
Less mobile members of the community may not be able to attend the consultation events	Provide the consultation form online and make the consultation documents available at the Council's offices to ensure that those with physical disabilities may safely access the documents. Ensure that events are held in venues which are accessible, wherever possible.	This will ensure that those who are unable to attend the event can express their views	Terry Sneller	✓

Members of the community with a sight disability may not be able to take part in the consultation.	Large print format will be available during the consultation period upon request. During the consultation events, Officers will be at hand to assist those with sight disabilities.	Those with sight disabilities will be able to take part in the consultation and attend the consultation events	Terry Sneller	✓
Members of the community with a hearing disability may not be able to take part in the consultation.	Officers will also be available during the consultation period, face to face at the council offices or over the telephone to provide help and advice in completing the consultation form (Telephony with deaf capability (Type Talk) is available via the Customer Services Team). Mobile induction loops will be used at the consultation to assist those attendees with hearing difficulties.	Those with hearing disabilities will be able to take part in the consultation and attend the consultation events	Terry Sneller	✓

EqlA approved by:

Date:

Review date:

Check with your equality officer for the EqlA signing-off process and for posting the EqlA on the web