

Local Development Framework
Shaping the future of North Dorset

The New Plan for North Dorset

Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report

March 2010



North Dorset District Council

**Core Strategy and
Development Management Policies
Development Plan Document**

**Initial
Sustainability Appraisal
Report**

March 2010

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1.0 Contents

2.0 Non Technical Summary5

3.0 Introduction..... 13

 Stages of the SA process 14

 The Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD 17

4.0 Stage A: Scoping and the SA Framework20

 The Current Situation 20

 Key Issues for Sustainability and North Dorset 21

 Social Progress that Recognises the Needs of Everyone 21

 Effective Protection of the Environment 22

 Prudent use of Natural Resources 22

 Maintenance of Sustainable Levels of Economic Growth and
Employment 23

 The Sustainability Appraisal Framework 23

5.0 The SA Methodology and the DPD Vision and Objectives 29

 Appraisal Methodology 30

 Appraisal of the DPD Vision 31

 Appraisal of the DPD Objectives 33

6.0 Appraisal of the DPD 36

 Addressing Issues and Challenges 39

 Gypsies and Travellers..... 54

 Settlement and Area Based Policies 54

 Blandford..... 55

 Gillingham 56

 Shaftesbury 59

 Sturminster Newton..... 60

 Stalbridge and the larger villages 61

 The Countryside 62

7.0 Analysis of the Preferred Policy Options 63

 Appraisal of the Plan as a Whole 64

 Potential impacts on SEA Topics 75

8.0	Sustainability Appraisal Recommendations.....	80
	General comments	80
	General sustainability comments.....	81
	Climate change – adaptation.....	81
	Climate change - mitigation	83
	Housing	83
	Design	84
	Built heritage	84
	Landscape.....	84
	Biodiversity and habitats	85
	Cycling and walking.....	85
	Natural resources	85
	Countryside	86
	Policy by policy.....	87
9.0	Monitoring arrangements.....	98
10.0	Consultation on the Initial SA Report.....	108
11.0	Glossary	110
12.0	Bibliography.....	113
	Appendix A: The DPD Vision and SA Framework.....	114
	Appendix B: The DPD Objectives and SA Framework.....	116
	Appendix C: Core Policy Option Matrices	122
	Appendix D: Area based Policy Matrices	291

The SEA Directive has several specific requirements. This table details where the relevant information can be found.

SEA Directive requirement (as specified in <i>Annex I</i> of the SEA Directive)	Location (in this report or in the Scoping Report)
a. an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Section 3.0 ▪ SA Scoping Report Appendix A to E
b. the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Section 4.0 ▪ SA Scoping Report Appendix C and D
c. the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Section 6.0
d. any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to areas of particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Section 5.0 ▪ SA Scoping Report Appendix C and D
e. the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Section 5.0 ▪ SA Scoping Report Appendix C and D
f. the likely significant effects ¹ on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Section 7.0
g. the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Section 8.0
h. an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Section 6.0 ▪ Appendix C
i. a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Section 9.0
j. a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Section 2.0

¹ These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects.

2.0 Non Technical Summary

- 2.1. Sustainability Appraisal seeks to ensure that sustainable development is the central goal of plans that promote development.

What is Sustainable Development?

- 2.2. Sustainable development has been defined as "*Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*" To this end, development in an area should be planned with the four main sustainability aims in mind:
- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
 - effective protection of the environment;
 - the prudent use of natural resources; and
 - sustainable levels of economic growth and employment
- 2.3. The aim of any plan that promotes development is therefore to guide development to the most appropriate locations to meet social and economic goals whilst minimising the impact on the environment and resource consumption.

The Sustainability Appraisal

- 2.4. European legislation under Directive (2001/42/EEC) (known as the SEA Directive) requires all plans that enable development to take place to undergo assessment for their environmental impacts in a *Strategic Environmental Assessment* (SEA). This process requires the systematic assessment of the policies and proposals in a plan to ensure that significant environmental effects that might arise from their implementation are identified, and that these effects, where negative are either avoided or action is taken to reduce the negative effect.
- 2.5. *Sustainability Appraisal* of a plan is required by the Government in order to ensure that the policies within it help to deliver sustainable development. SA has been devised to incorporate the requirements of the European SEA Directive but broadens the assessment to include social and economic considerations in addition to potential environmental effects.
- 2.6. The plan that this Sustainability Appraisal relates to is the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (the DPD) prepared for North Dorset District.
- 2.7. The DPD will guide development in the District over the period to 2026. It sets the long-term vision and strategic objectives for guiding development in North Dorset and policies to manage development to achieve greater sustainability. It seeks to meet the needs of the residents and businesses in the area whilst protecting the District's high quality environment.

The Appraisal Process

- 2.8. The purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal is to identify the contribution the DPD will make to achieving more sustainable developments. The Appraisal process includes several reporting stages as indicated in the following diagram (Figure 2.1). The initial stage is the production of a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (produced in June 2009) followed by an Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report (which this Non-technical Summary relates to) and then finally a Final Sustainability Appraisal Report to accompany the final version of the DPD prior to its adoption.
- 2.9. The appraisal of the DPD has been carried out in parallel to its preparation and is an ongoing and iterative process. The Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report therefore contains a number of recommendations as to how the strategy and policies in the DPD could be amended to make them more sustainable.
- 2.10. The **Scoping Report** details the existing character of the District including identification of key sustainability issues. The main issues identified were:

Social Progress that Recognises the Needs of Everyone

Housing: High house prices, low wages, low affordability

- Need to provide adequate housing and affordable housing to meet needs

Population: Population growth due to in migration, ageing population, relatively small working aged population (relative to England and Wales)

- Need to provide for the ageing population

Health: Relatively healthy population, relatively high levels of diseases associated with age and poor lifestyles

- Promote active lifestyles, offer opportunities to participate in exercise

Crime: Low crime rate, more concern about crime than actual crime

- Design environments in which people feel safe, encourage community spirit

Access and Deprivation: Poor accessibility to services due to rurality, pockets of rural deprivation and areas of deprivation within towns

- Provide essential services in tandem with housing development, address deficiencies

Equality: Predominantly White British, Christian population, low proportion of disabled people, balanced gender distribution, ageing population

- Provide for the diverse needs of the population

Effective Protection of the Environment

Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna: Protect and enhance habitats and species by increasing connectivity and enhancing wildlife corridors, recognition of the wider importance of biodiversity

- Protect designated sites and restore habitats when opportunities arise

Climate Change and Flooding: Avoid flood risk from all sources in new developments, adaptation to the unavoidable effects of climate change

- Reduce risk to property by avoiding areas that are most likely to be affected by climate change, exploit opportunities that arise within environmental limits

Cultural Heritage, Landscape and Archaeology: Distinctive landscape areas within North Dorset, highly valued historic and rural heritage, highly valued settlement characters

- Preserve and promote the rich heritage of North Dorset

Pollution: Prevent pollution of rivers, air and land, seek to improve underperforming areas

- Protect high quality environment

Prudent use of Natural Resources

Waste: Minimise waste and increase levels of recycling

- Promote recycling and reuse of resources and land

Natural Resources, Water and Soil: Reduce pressure on undeveloped land through efficient use of land, protect important resources from development

- Promote development on previously developed land, manage natural resources effectively

Energy Consumption and Energy Efficiency: Reduction in energy usage, promotion of non fossil fuel based energy resources, reduction in CO₂ emissions

- Promote energy efficient construction, promote renewable energy resources

Maintenance of Sustainable Levels of Economic Growth and Employment

The Economy: Low paid workforce, prevalence of small firms, manufacturing, retail, defence and education are important sectors

- Enhance competitiveness of firms so they can grow, increase earnings

Transport: Poor public transport network results in high car ownership and poor accessibility

- Improve accessibility locally and to the national transport network
- Reduce the need to travel

Education, Training and Skills: High levels of educational achievement, significant level of people with poor literacy

- Improve educational attainment of the most disadvantaged and improve access to high quality educational establishments

- 2.11. These issues were used to produce a “checklist” for assessing the DPD. This checklist is called a sustainability framework and seeks to define what measures may help achieve greater levels of sustainability in the District.
- 2.12. The sustainability framework includes 16 objectives each focused on particular aspects of sustainability. These included objectives related to social issues such as housing affordability and to economic issues such as jobs and skills but with the primary focus within the framework being on the protection of the environment.

Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone

- 1 Provide housing, including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community
- 2 Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services
- 3 Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles
- 4 Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life
- 5 Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments

Effective protection of the environment

- 6 Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise
- 7 Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity

- 8 Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the District's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise
- 9 Recognise the importance of the District's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value

Prudent use of natural resources

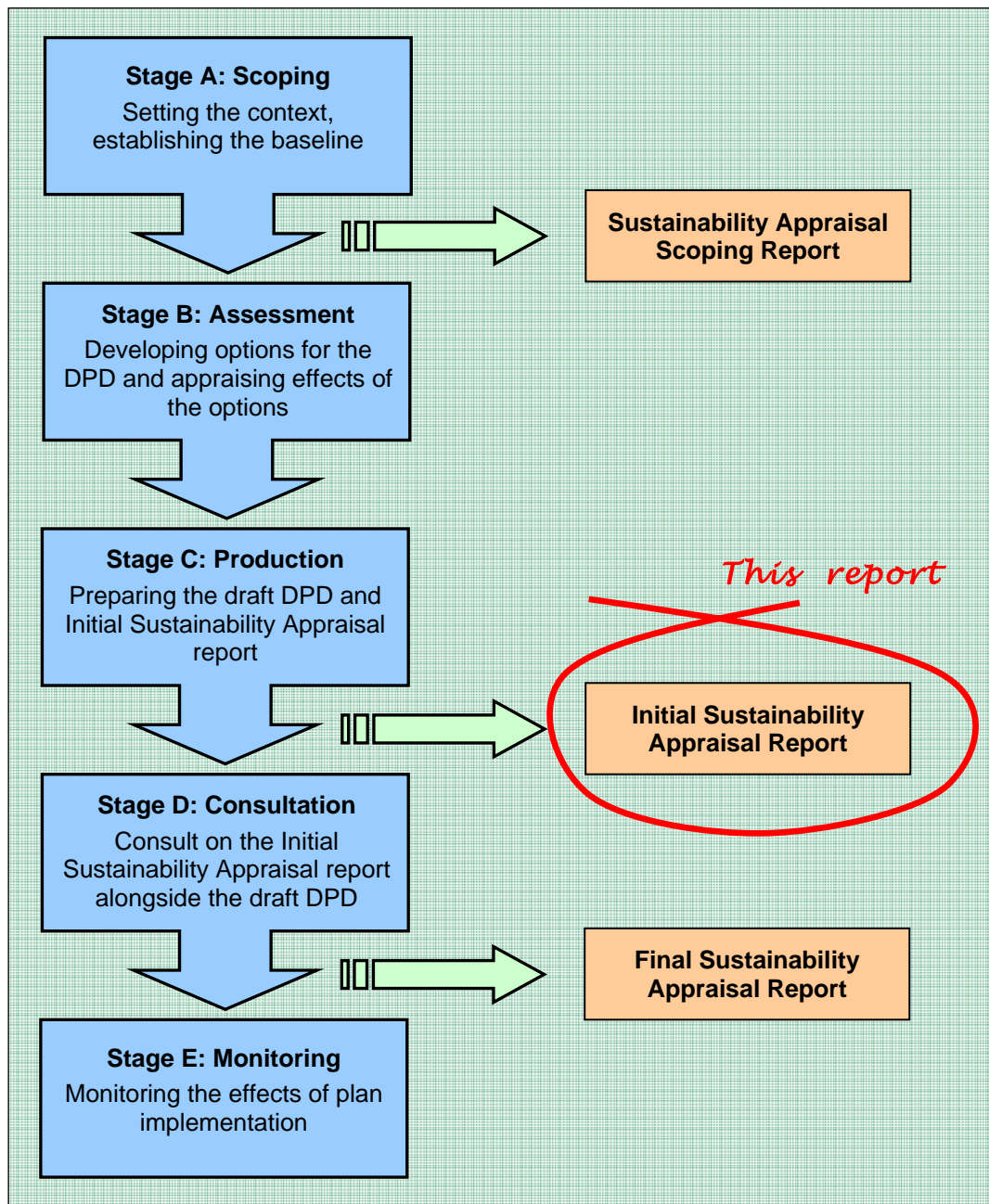
- 10 Reduce impacts on the environment
- 11 Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources
- 12 Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production

Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment

- 13 Improve the competitiveness of the District's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy
- 14 Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel
- 15 Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow
- 16 Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential

- 2.13. The Scoping Report was open for views on its content to be expressed with comments received at that time incorporated into the Sustainability Appraisal process.
- 2.14. The **Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report** details the results of the appraisal of the draft DPD. A key part of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report consists of the assessment of options for achieving the objectives of the DPD. This is the current stage of the Sustainability Appraisal of the DPD and this Non-technical Summary relates to the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report.
- 2.15. The **Final Sustainability Appraisal Report** is the next stage of the Sustainability Appraisal and will be produced to accompany the final version of the DPD. This report will assess any changes made to the DPD policies as a result of the earlier stage of Sustainability Appraisal and as a result of comments received during consultation on the DPD. It will assess the potential impacts of implementing the DPD as a whole.

Figure 2.1: Stages of the Sustainability Appraisal Process



The Appraisal of the DPD

- 2.16. The objectives of the DPD were checked for consistency with the sustainability framework to ensure that the overall aims of the DPD were not at odds with the local definition of sustainable development. The results of this are discussed in Section 5.0 of this report.
- 2.17. The options considered for achieving the objectives of the DPD were assessed against the 16 objectives of the sustainability framework. The results of this assessment were then incorporated into the formation of policies which will be used to guide development.
- 2.18. Once the preferred policies had been formulated, they were again appraised to assess the potential effects on the objectives in the

sustainability framework. In addition, the cumulative potential effect of the whole plan was assessed. As a result of these two assessments, several recommendations were made. The full findings and recommendations are included in Section 7.0 and 8.0 of this report respectively.

- 2.19. Due to the iterative nature of the way this Sustainability Appraisal has been undertaken, some of the earlier recommendations for changes to the DPD have already been made. Where this is the case, the changes have been indicated in Section 8.0 of this report.
- 2.20. The main potentially negative effects that have been predicted through appraisal are on habitats and biodiversity, landscape and climate change mitigation. These are all environmental objectives and therefore there is predicted to be a negative environmental impact as a result of the plan implementation. However this can be expected as the DPD makes provision for development on greenfield land.
- 2.21. The impact on biodiversity and habitats and on landscape generally relates to the loss of greenfield land and therefore the potential loss of hedgerows, trees and the impact of development on the site. It is important that any development reduces its impact through the inclusion of green space and landscaping to soften its impact and provide new habitats for wildlife. In addition, habitat restoration should be sought wherever possible.
- 2.22. Mitigation of climate change relates to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through measures to improve the energy efficiency of buildings and to promote energy production from renewable sources. If the DPD was to set out stricter targets and encouraged developers and homeowners to install such measures into buildings, greenhouse gas emissions per person could be reduced.
- 2.23. Due to the unknown extent of the impacts of Climate change, it is an important issue in North Dorset, especially in relation to development. Reduction of emissions is important to reduce the overall extent of the change and adapting to the effects of climate change is important to reduce the risk to the District's residents.

The Next Stage

- 2.24. Now that the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report has been produced to accompany the draft DPD, views on the appraisal results are sought as well as any comments on the content of the draft DPD. This consultation period will run from the 15th March 2010 to the 30th April 2010.
- 2.25. Once the consultation period is over, the appraisal will be updated to reflect any changes that are made to the DPD as it moves towards the submission version. These changes could include those made as a direct result of the appraisal of the DPD but also as a result of comments received during the consultation period. This appraisal and any changes that have been made to the DPD will be reported on in

the Final Sustainability Appraisal Report that will accompany the submission version of the DPD

3.0 Introduction

3.1. The role of the planning system is to facilitate and promote sustainable patterns of development. To achieve sustainable patterns of development, planning documents that set the strategy for future development, need to consider the potential environmental, social and economic impacts of the strategy implementation and the interrelationship between these factors.

3.2. The “Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive” (2001/42/EC) or “SEA Directive” as it is known, seeks to

“to provide a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development”

It involves a formal assessment of the potential significant environmental effects of implementing the plan and undertaking a Strategic Environmental Assessment has been mandatory for all development plan documents since 2004.

3.3. The SEA process is iterative and should be integrated into the plan making process. It requires the preparation of an Environmental Report which documents the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the draft plan; consultation on this Environmental Report along side the draft plan and; incorporation of the results of the consultation and the conclusions of the Environmental Report into the decision making process.

3.4. The final outcome of the SEA process should be an Environmental Statement that shows how the considerations of the significant environmental effects of plan implementation have been taken into account in the preparation of the final plan.

3.5. However, sustainable development is widely accepted to encompass social and economic considerations in addition to environmental concerns and therefore SEA could be considered to be too narrow to truly promote sustainable development.

3.6. There are however instances where social, economic and environmental concerns are not mutually compatible for example the construction of housing to meet need and the preservation of land for its biodiversity or landscape value. Trade-offs are inevitably needed to achieve the wider definition of sustainable development.

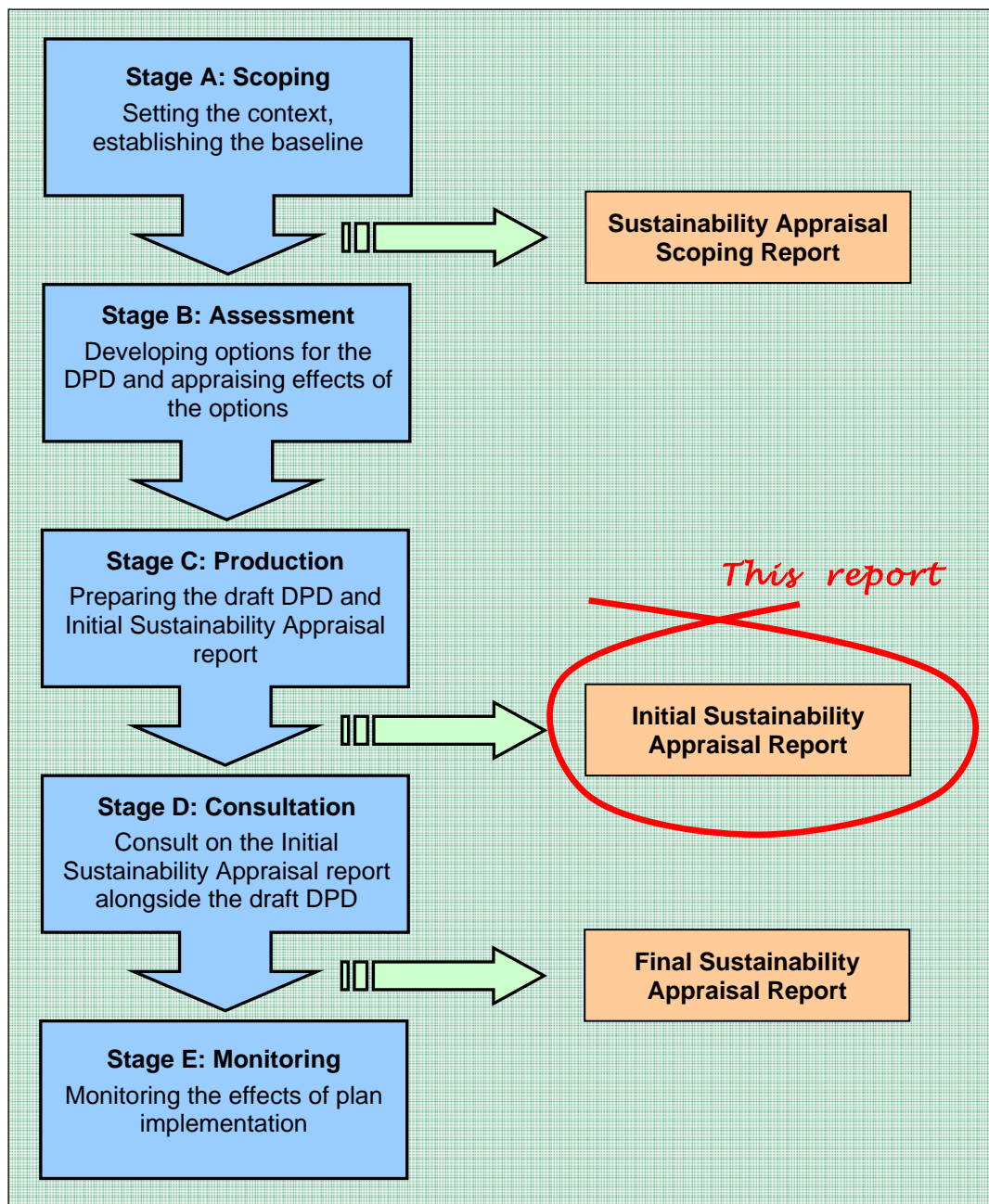
3.7. As stated earlier, the over-riding objective of the SEA Directive is to provide a high level of protection of the environment. In some cases for example relating to climate change and greenhouse gas emissions, no action is clearly not a sustainable option however for others such as landscape, effects could be mitigated through sensitive design and appropriate screening of the development. It is therefore important to be aware of the trade-offs that may be needed and at what point the harm caused by development outweighs the benefits.

- 3.8. Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is required for all development plan documents (DPDs) under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004. The aim of the SA is to incorporate environmental, social and economic considerations into DPD preparation and has been devised to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive. The SEA and SA processes are therefore very similar with both the SA and the SEA assessments being undertaken at the strategic level enabling the cumulative impacts of multiple developments to be considered. The result is that development should be directed to the most sustainable location and that any potential adverse effects be identified and mitigated or avoided.
- 3.9. This assessment follows the procedure required by the SA process and has been prepared in line with the current Government guidance contained in “*A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive*” (ODPM, 2005 a) and “*Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents*” (ODPM, 2005 b). Regard has also been had to other guidance and good practice that has emerged since these documents were produced. By following these pieces of guidance the SA aims to meet the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the requirements of the SEA Directive.
- 3.10. Care was needed during the SA process to ensure that the specific requirements of the SEA Directive were fulfilled and that the high level of environmental protection provided by the SEA Directive was not diluted by the social and economic considerations required by SA.

Stages of the SA process

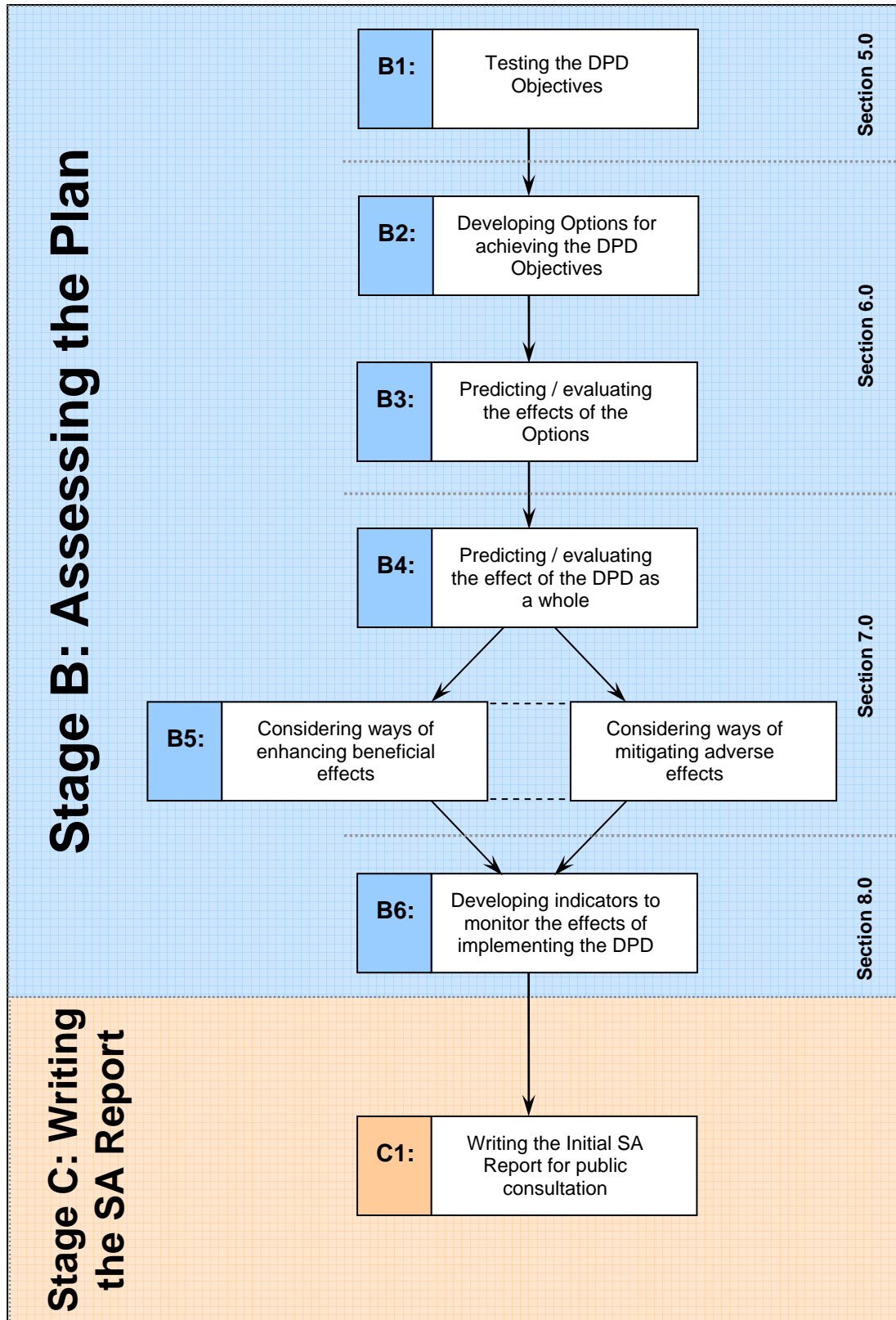
- 3.11. The SA process is iterative and therefore involves several stages which run in parallel to the preparation of the DPD. At several points through the preparation of the DPD, reports are produced and consulted on, with the results of the consultation process being taken into account in the DPD preparation. The final SA report needs to state how the SA process has influenced the DPD and explain the reasons for choosing the options included in the final adopted plan. Figure 3.1 details the main stages of the process and highlights at which points reports are produced.
- 3.12. The initial stage of the SA process is the production of the SA Scoping Report. This sets the context for the DPD and provides the baseline and a framework against which the assessment of the effects of implementation of the DPD is made. This report is prepared in the early stages of the DPD preparation process and North Dorset District Council published its draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for consultation in April 2009. The full final Scoping Report, produced in July 2009, is available from the Council’s web site and is summarised in Section 4.0 of this report.

Figure 3.1: Stages of the Sustainability Appraisal Process



3.13. This report is the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report and has been produced in tandem with the draft DPD, detailing the results of the appraisal of the draft DPD. The appraisal itself was split into 6 sub stages, the results of which have been used to form the basis for this report. Figure 3.2 details these stages and identifies where in this report the results of each stage have been discussed.

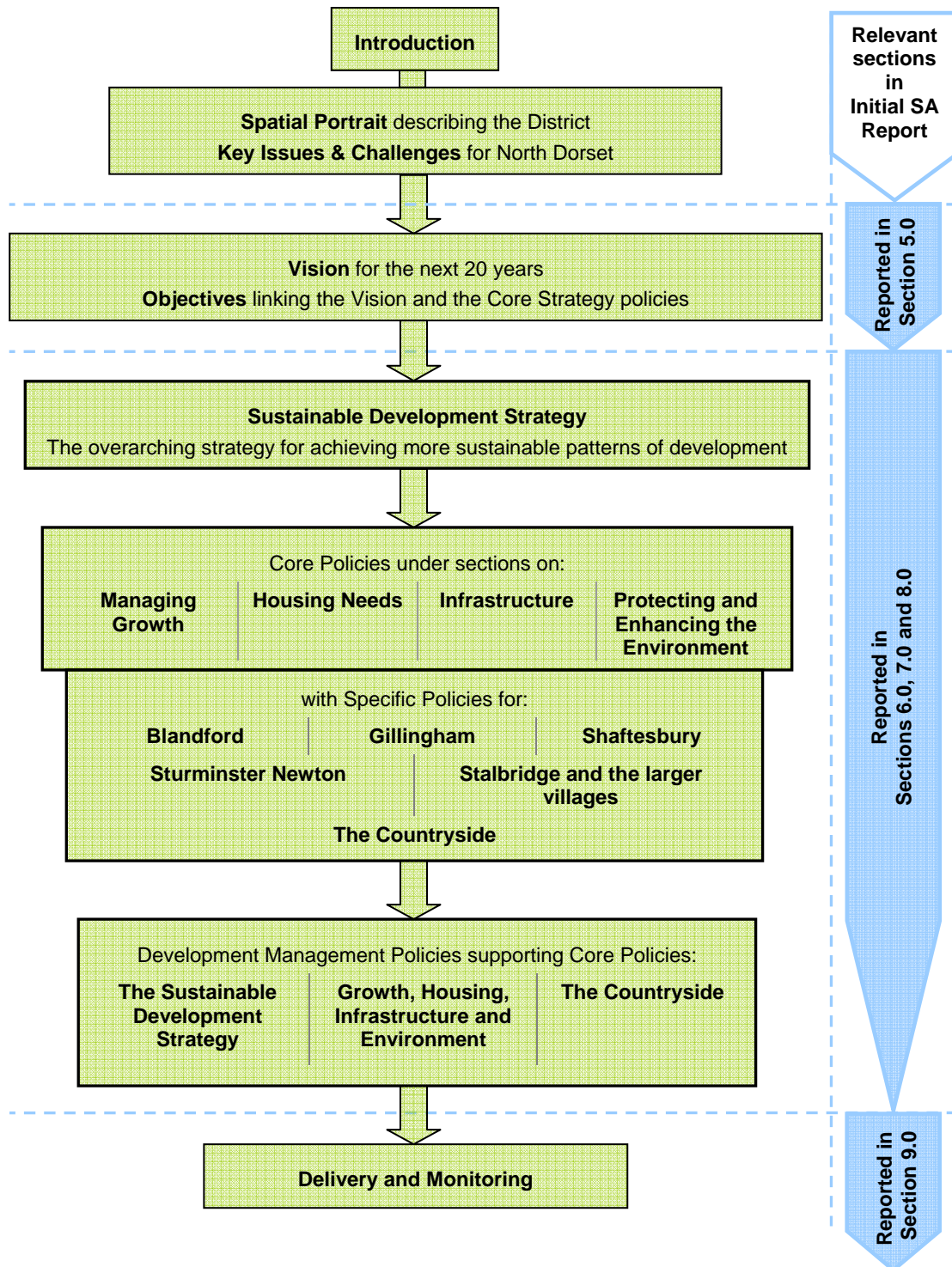
Figure 3.2: The Stages and Reporting of the DPD appraisal



The Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD

- 3.14. In 2004 the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act came into force changing the structure and content of development plans. Under this new system of spatial plans, the focus is away from just the regulation of development and towards shaping the future of an area. The changes introduced the Local Development Framework (LDF) which contains a series of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).
- 3.15. The first of these Development Plan Documents (DPDs) to be produced in North Dorset will be the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD. The central part of this document, the Core Strategy, will set out the Vision, Objectives and Strategy to guide where development will take place up until 2026. It will establish the broad location and scale of future development within the District. A further section, the Development Management Policies section, will contain more detailed policies for managing development to ensure that it contributes to achieving the Core Strategy objectives and take actions to reduce the negative effects of the development taking place.
- 3.16. Environmentally, little or no development is likely to result in the most sustainable outcome. However this would not be the most sustainable when using the wider definition of sustainability mentioned earlier and encompassed by SA.
- 3.17. The level of development is assessed at the regional level and these “top-down” targets and policies are not open to question even if they do not represent the most sustainable approach locally unless compelling evidence can be produced to suggest otherwise. For this reason, the DPD has the objective of delivering the development required to meet need whilst reducing the negative effects and enhancing any positive effects within the confines of higher level (regional) policy.
- 3.18. The SA process requires the results of the assessment of a DPD to be reported in a Sustainability Appraisal Report. This Sustainability Appraisal Report is subject to a consultation period where views on the results of the appraisal are sought.
- 3.19. The SA Report includes comparisons of the options considered as part of the draft DPD preparation process and the option that is considered to be the most sustainable when considered against the SA Objectives Framework.
- 3.20. The structure of the draft DPD is shown in Figure 3.3 with appraisal undertaken of the Vision and Objectives, the Sustainable Development Strategy and the Core Policies. The Delivery and Monitoring section of the draft DPD will be influenced by the monitoring arrangements outlined as part of the SA.

Figure 3.3: Structure of the draft DPD and Initial SA Report



3.21. This report is the initial SA Report detailing the results of the appraisal of the draft Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD and has been structured in the same way as the draft DPD to enable the appraisal of each section to be easily identified. It will be subject to a consultation period in parallel with the draft DPD.

- 3.22. The last stage of a Sustainability Appraisal is the production of the Final Sustainability Appraisal Report alongside the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD submission document. This is a detailed appraisal report setting out the potential sustainability implications of the policies and proposals in the submission document together with any mitigation proposals and the arrangements for monitoring potential significant effects of the DPD implementation.

4.0 Stage A: Scoping and the SA Framework

- 4.1. The first stage of the Sustainability Appraisal process is to establish the context of the appraisal by identifying its scope. This scoping stage involves establishing the policy framework within which the appraisal is taking place and in which the DPD will be implemented. It also involves collecting information on the current “baseline” situation of the area covered by the DPD and how this has changed over time.
- 4.2. The information gathered during these initial stages of the appraisal process are reported in a Scoping Report. The scoping stage for the appraisal of the DPD was undertaken in early 2009 with a final Scoping Report being published in August 2009 after a 6 week period of consultation. The full Scoping Report is available from the Council’s web site² with the main points summarised here.
- 4.3. Baseline data was collected around a number of topics along with a review of policy documents pertinent to each topic. This topic based approach enabled easy identification of particular sustainability issues that are relevant for North Dorset. It also enables easy updating of the information as and when new strategies or information are produced, without requiring a full review of the scoping exercise.
- 4.4. The topics were grouped under four broad subject areas. These four subject areas are considered to cover the majority of issues related to sustainability and therefore ensure that important topics are not missed.

The Current Situation

- 4.5. North Dorset has experienced high levels of population growth, mainly due to inward migration, and this is predicted to continue. The population is mainly located in the four main towns (Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton) and this is likely to continue with future supply of new housing being focused in these locations. Consequently the demand for land in and around the main towns will result in pressure to develop greenfield sites and this in turn may have an impact on the character and appearance of the landscape.
- 4.6. North Dorset has a highly valued landscape, although only just over a third of the district is designated as an AONB and less than 2% has an International or National wildlife designation (SPA, SAC, Ramsar, SSSI). The demand for housing growth may also result in pressure on the biodiversity, flora and fauna of unprotected areas.
- 4.7. The heritage of the District is embedded in the agricultural sector with the rural economy being an important part of many communities. The

² http://www.north-dorset.gov.uk/index/living/building_planning/planning_policy/sustainability_appraisal.htm

main natural resource in the District is its high quality agricultural land and this is under pressure from greenfield development.

- 4.8. Impacts due to climate change on the landscape and in particular on the AONB include a change in species and communities that make up habitats due to seasonal droughts and flood events; the loss of isolated parkland trees and veteran trees due to high winds; soil erosion and silt and nutrients being washed into streams and rivers due to an increase in winter rainfall.
- 4.9. Modern farming practices have in turn had an impact on the natural environment with river quality being affected by eutrophication. Large areas of the District are within Nitrate Vulnerable Zones to control the use of nitrates and the impact this has on water quality.
- 4.10. The River Stour and its many tributaries run through the District. As a result a large amount of the Districts land area is at risk of flooding. There is also the potential for groundwater flooding on the chalk downs where groundwater levels rise and cause localised flooding. The instances of flooding are likely to increase in frequency and intensity as a result of climate change and this will have a direct impact on the location of potential housing growth in the District.

Key Issues for Sustainability and North Dorset

Social Progress that Recognises the Needs of Everyone

Housing: High house prices, low wages, low affordability

- Need to provide adequate housing and affordable housing to meet needs

Population: Population growth due to in migration, ageing population, relatively small working aged population (relative to England and Wales)

- Need to provide for the ageing population

Health: Relatively healthy population, relatively high levels of diseases associated with age and poor lifestyles

- Promote active lifestyles, offer opportunities to participate in exercise

Crime: Low crime rate, more concern about crime than actual crime

- Design environments in which people feel safe, encourage community spirit

Access and Deprivation: Poor accessibility to services due to rurality, pockets of rural deprivation and areas of deprivation within towns

- Provide essential services in tandem with housing development, address deficiencies

Equality: Predominantly White British, Christian population, low proportion of disabled people, balanced gender distribution, ageing population

- Provide for the diverse needs of the population

Effective Protection of the Environment

Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna: Protect and enhance habitats and species by increasing connectivity and enhancing wildlife corridors, recognition of the wider importance of biodiversity

- Protect designated sites and restore habitats when opportunities arise

Climate Change and Flooding: Avoid flood risk from all sources in new developments, adaptation to the unavoidable effects of climate change

- Reduce risk to property by avoiding areas that are most likely to be affected by climate change, exploit opportunities that arise within environmental limits

Cultural Heritage, Landscape and Archaeology: Distinctive landscape areas within North Dorset, highly valued historic and rural heritage, highly valued settlement characters

- Preserve and promote the rich heritage of North Dorset

Pollution: Prevent pollution of rivers, air and land, seek to improve underperforming areas

- Protect high quality environment

Prudent use of Natural Resources

Waste: Minimise waste and increase levels of recycling

- Promote recycling and reuse of resources and land

Natural Resources, Water and Soil: Reduce pressure on undeveloped land through efficient use of land, protect important resources from development

- Promote development on previously developed land, manage natural resources effectively

Energy Consumption and Energy Efficiency: Reduction in energy usage, promotion of non fossil fuel based energy resources, reduction in CO₂ emissions

- Promote energy efficient construction, promote renewable energy resources

Maintenance of Sustainable Levels of Economic Growth and Employment

The Economy: Low paid workforce, prevalence of small firms, manufacturing, retail, defence and education are important sectors

- Enhance competitiveness of firms so they can grow, increase earnings

Transport: Poor public transport network results in high car ownership and poor accessibility

- Improve accessibility locally and to the national transport network
- Reduce the need to travel

Education, Training and Skills: High levels of educational achievement, significant level of people with poor literacy

- Improve educational attainment of the most disadvantaged and improve access to high quality educational establishments

The Sustainability Appraisal Framework

- 4.11. These key issues for North Dorset were used to develop a framework of objectives to guide development to aid in improving the sustainability of the District. This framework (as shown in Table 4.1) formed the basis of the appraisal of the DPD.
- 4.12. The framework is “Objectives Based” and therefore the SA Objectives describe where we want to be in the future to achieve a more sustainable district and therefore aims to promote more sustainable patterns of development. It gives a series of ambitions for the area rather than focusing on current problems and finding solutions to them.
- 4.13. To this end the SA Objectives aim to highlight opportunities where the plan can mitigate the environmental effects of development rather than improve the environmental situation overall. It is therefore assumed that the construction of 7000 dwellings and supporting infrastructure, as required to be in conformity with regional policy, will have a negative environmental effect and hence mitigation of these effects is required through other policies and requirements for development.
- 4.14. The aim of the DPD and the SA is therefore to reduce the extent of this negative effect. Certain parts of the District will inevitably experience significant negative environmental effects however the aim is that the remainder of the District will be no worse off and wherever possible, better off through the application of appropriate mitigation measures and policies of restraint. The overall aim is therefore to support social and economic objectives whilst helping the Core Strategy to be less environmentally harmful.

Table 4.1: The Final North Dorset SA Framework

SA Objective	Assessment Principles	
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1 Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	Quantity and quality of housing, size and type of housing, tenure split
	2 Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	Coordinated provision of housing, employment, community and cultural facilities and where necessary encourage deficits to be made up. Shops, GPs, green infrastructure, schools, etc
	3 Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	Recreation, cycling and walking, healthy diets, fuel poverty, income inequality, access to green infrastructure, cultural participation
	4 Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	Age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, disability, community cohesion, culture (material/activity and value based), population change
	5 Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	Crime, road safety, urban heat, noise, green infrastructure, historic environment, culture (material/activity and value based)

Table 4.1: The Final North Dorset SA Framework (continued)

SA Objective		Assessment Principles
Effective protection of the environment	6 Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	Climate Change adaptation, Flooding (from all sources), heat, drought, extreme weather events, opportunities for new crops, biofuels, green technologies, renewable energy, SuDS
	7 Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	Species and habitats of international and local importance; protection, management, enhancement and connectivity of green infrastructure, River network
	8 Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the District’s heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	Design, archaeology, listed buildings, settlement character, heritage led regeneration and tourism, local building materials
	9 Recognise the importance of the District’s distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	Quality of life, tourism, recreation and access to green infrastructure, education, farming practices, setting of towns. Conserving and enhancing landscapes, woodlands, hedgerows, historic environment

SA Objective		Assessment Principles
Prudent use of natural resources	10 Reduce impacts on the environment	Climate Change mitigation, greenhouse gas emissions, air, water, soil pollution, diffuse pollution
	11 Reduce pressure on the district’s natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	Reuse of previously developed land and buildings, primary won aggregates, recycling, soil conservation
	12 Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	Renewable energy, micro and community energy, energy efficiency, reduction in consumption, water efficiency, sustainable construction, fuel poverty

Table 4.1: The Final North Dorset SA Framework (continued)

SA Objective	Assessment Principles
13 Improve the competitiveness of the District's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	Public transport provision, access to strategic transport network, home working, ICT
14 Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	Reducing need to travel, provision of accessible services, cycling, walking, public transport, vibrant town centres
15 Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	Small scale business units, business sector clusters, farm diversification, traditional building skills, green technologies
16 Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	Jobs, skills, public transport, up-skilling the workforce, economic competitiveness, valued and productive workforce, access to further and higher education

- 4.15. As stated earlier, the content of the DPD is constrained by National and Regional policy and targets for growth. This growth will have a negative impact on the environment some of which could be mitigated through the inclusion of policies in the DPD. An example could be the increase in greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the increased number of dwellings built and unless all new dwellings are built to at least the standard required for Level 5 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, the level of greenhouse gas emissions from the dwelling stock will increase.
- 4.16. Planning Policy Statement 12 – Local Spatial Planning³ indicates that to deviate from the policies in place at a higher level (national or regional) Core Strategies must be founded on a robust and credible evidence base. The practical problems associated with collecting such local evidence to support higher environmental targets and hence mitigate some of the negative effects of development, are considered to be significant. This does not however move away from the fact that higher environmental targets would offer greater environmental benefits.

³ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps12lsp>

- 4.17. This is a widely accepted concern that climate change indicates the limit of sustainable greenhouse gas emissions has potentially been reached or is close to being reached. It is therefore important to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases to minimise harmful climatic change.
- 4.18. Clearly defining limits, such as the acceptable level of greenhouse gas emissions, is difficult especially as it is often too late to take action once a limit has been identified. A recent report by the Sustainable Development Commission⁴ stated that “If everyone in the world consumed at the average rate we do in the UK, we would require three planets”. The WWF suggest in a similar way that each UK Citizen requires on average over 5 hectares⁵ of land to sustain current consumption levels. Our consumption rates are therefore clearly not sustainable as we only have one planet on which to live.
- 4.19. Important issues effecting how close we get to environmental limits include the levels of resource consumption and the impacts of this consumption on the environment. Planning can help tackle these issues and the SA can help to identify areas where the impact can be minimised.
- 4.20. In addition, due to the interrelationship between environmental processes and systems (for example impacts on biodiversity due to low flows in a river system as a result of over abstraction upstream) means that mitigating environmental harm should be given high priority. Bearing this in mind, defining limits where possible or avoiding harming sensitive environments through a precautionary approach is likely to be the most environmentally sustainable action.
- 4.21. However, the limited scope of the planning system reduces the impact that can be made through the Core Strategy. There are other actions that are outside of the remit of planning that may have a greater affect for example the fitting of water meters to help reduce water consumption or fiscal measures to influence behaviour. This does not mean that action through Core Strategy should not be used as there are a range of potential measures open to planning to reduce environmental impacts.
- 4.22. Table 4.2 shows some potential mitigation measures to address specific problems that may occur as a result of development. The list is not intended to be exhaustive but gives some examples of what could be incorporated into a development to reduce the impact on the environment.

⁴ I will if you will – Towards sustainable consumption (Sustainable Development Commission, 2006) <http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications.php?id=367#>

⁵ Living Planet Report 2008, (WWF, 2008)

http://www.wwf.org.uk/what_we_do/changing_the_way_we_live/?uNewsID=2294

Table 4.2: Examples of mitigation

Possible negative effect	Potential mitigation measures
Biodiversity decline	Protect habitats from development; restore habitats where possible; retain hedgerows and trees within developments; include open space within developments
Soil pollution	Require pollution prevention measures in developments; require SuDS to control diffuse pollution
Water abstraction	Require SuDS to allow groundwater recharge; require water efficiency measures in all developments
Flood risk	Require SuDS to manage surface water; avoid areas vulnerable to flooding; require flood defences to protect vulnerable developments
Air pollution	Require pollution prevention measures in developments, reduce the need to travel by making everyday needs including public transport, accessible
Climate change	Improve energy efficiency of buildings through high levels of insulation etc; require renewable energy production in developments; reduce the need to travel by making everyday needs including public transport accessible
Landscape degradation	Avoid areas of high landscape value; screen developments within the landscape; design developments to minimise impact on landscape
Architectural heritage	Require good design; conservation of important buildings; protection of listed buildings; use conservation area appraisals to highlight areas at risk and take action; promote heritage led regeneration;
Archaeological heritage	Require archaeological survey of development sites

5.0 The SA Methodology and the DPD Vision and Objectives

- 5.1. The purpose of the SA is to take a long term view of the expected social, economic and environmental effects of implementing the DPD, including over a longer time horizon than the DPD itself. It should therefore check that the Vision, Objectives and Policies within the Core Strategy are in line with the sustainability objectives relevant to the District and therefore influence the content of the Core Strategy.
- 5.2. The appraisal of a Core Strategy is undertaken at various points during its preparation resulting in an iterative process. The results of each stage of the appraisal can then be incorporated into the next stage of production thus ensuring that sustainability considerations are integral to the preparation of the DPD
- 5.3. One important aspect of the SA is the inclusion of international, national and regional concerns especially related to important environmental assets.
- 5.4. Within North Dorset, there are two sites which are designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). They are Fontmell and Melbury Downs and Rooksmoor.

Fontmell and Melbury Downs is an inland site which supports consistently large populations of **early gentian (*Gentianella anglica*)**. The site includes large areas of species-rich chalk grassland.

Rooksmoor contains a particularly large population of **marsh fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*)** in the southern part of its range in England. It is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom for this species.

- 5.5. Just outside of North Dorset but within 5 kilometres are areas protected by International designations. These include:
 - Holnest (SAC)
 - Cerne and Sydling Downs (SAC)
 - Dorset Heaths (SAC/SPA/Ramsar)
 - River Avon (SAC), Avon Valley (SPA/Ramsar)

Potential impacts from development within the District which may harm these internationally designated important habitats include:

- Whether the increase in population would lead to increase in recreation on the Fontmell and Melbury Downs (SAC), the Dorset Heaths (SAC/SPA/Ramsar) especially Wareham Forest, the Cerne and Sydling Downs (SAC) and other sites further afield;
- Whether water abstraction and discharge from new housing will impact on the River Avon (SAC);
- Whether increased traffic and therefore increased air pollution due to development in Blandford and Shaftesbury will adversely impact on the Fontmell and Melbury Downs (SAC);

- Whether road improvements would be required as a result of development in Blandford and Shaftesbury and whether this would impact on the Fontmell and Melbury Downs (SAC);
 - Whether increased traffic and associated air pollution would impact on the Rooksmoor (SAC).
- 5.6. A Habitats Regulations Assessment will look in detail at the potential impacts on these internationally important designated habitats that may occur as a result of the implementation of the DPD. The SA will highlight where there is a potential impact due to development but will not go into detail. The SA will however be able to identify where potential impacts of development on locally important wildlife sites (such as Local Nature Reserves) may occur or where there is potential for habitat restoration which could be prevented from happening by development.

Appraisal Methodology

- 5.7. The main international, Community and Member State level plans and programmes for environmental protection are outlined in Appendix C and Appendix D of the Scoping Report. The relevant objectives of these plans have been incorporated into the objectives of the SA Framework and in the associated assessment principles. In addition, to cover the wider definition of sustainability, other social and economic objectives were included.
- 5.8. Each of the policies and proposals that make up the Core Strategy were appraised against the SA framework to assess their potential impacts against each of the objectives within this framework. By considering the international and national environmental protection objectives when formulating this framework, the environmental objectives will be taken into account in the decision making process. Where more local circumstances come into play, such as when considering potential directions for growth of towns, further information such as the local environmental situation have been taken into account.
- 5.9. Assessments of the social and economic impacts of the policies and proposals in the Core Strategy were also considered in a similar way to the environmental objectives. Where locally specific proposals were included in the Core Strategy additional information, such as distance to basic facilities has been incorporated into the appraisal.
- 5.10. As part of the Core Strategy preparation, several options were considered as to how to meet the overarching objectives. For this Initial SA Report, each of these options were assessed against the SA framework using a matrix. These assessments gave the estimated relative magnitude and direction of the potential effects of each policy against each of the objectives in the SA framework. It also enables comparison of related policy options against each other, highlighting the most sustainable option as defined by the North Dorset SA framework.

- 5.11. The next stage of the SA will be to consider the results of the consultation on the SA. The changes recommended and the mitigation measures proposed as a result of the SA will then need to be considered in the production of the revised DPD. A Final SA Report will then be produced detailing what changes were made to the DPD and giving a final appraisal of the DPD as a whole.
- 5.12. Assessments were made using the expert judgement of professional planning officers. Although it was likely that a more accurate appraisal would have resulted from assessments based on modelling and quantification, the resources needed achieve this were considered prohibitive. Given the resource restrictions, the method used was considered the most appropriate.
- 5.13. Using just a matrix to assess the policy options gives a pseudo-scientific picture to the assessment. Although the assessment does directly compare two options against a set of criteria, it was felt that a discussion of the options, detailing the potential impacts and assumptions made, was the best approach to report the appraisal. The matrices do however offer a useful visual picture of the appraisal results and hence have been included in Appendix C.

Appraisal of the DPD Vision

- 5.14. The Core Strategy and other elements of the LDF have the goal of achieving sustainable development. This is also the objective of the Sustainability Appraisal and therefore the objectives that form the SA framework should be compatible with the vision for the future development of settlements in North Dorset. Therefore an important aspect of the SA is to check that the DPD Vision is in accordance with the sustainability principles as defined in the SA framework. This will help to clarify the DPD vision and identify priorities for the DPD.
- 5.15. The Vision for how North Dorset should develop over the next twenty years forms the central theme of the DPD:

In 20 years time North Dorset will:

- 1. be a District that has played a positive role in addressing the causes and effects of climate change;*
- 2. have more sustainable forms of development that are adequately served by infrastructure (including sustainable transport solutions) and made best use of natural resources (including previously developed land);*
- 3. have expanded thriving market towns collectively providing homes, jobs and high level services for those living within them and within the communities they serve;*
- 4. have sustainable smaller rural communities providing local services which enable day to day needs to be met locally;*
- 5. have a protected and enhanced locally distinctive built and natural environment that retains the qualities that make the*

District's urban and rural areas even more attractive and desirable place to live, work and visit;

- 6. have more housing, and in particular more affordable housing, that better meets the diverse needs of the District;*
- 7. be a District that has: advanced towards more cohesive communities; that has recognised the needs of the older population; and where the life chances for children and young people have been enhanced;*
- 8. have a robust and prosperous economy (including sustainable tourism) with high quality jobs and skills focused in locations that best support the District's growing population; and*
- 9. have a range of community, leisure, cultural and recreation facilities in locations that are accessible to the local population.*

- 5.16. The results of the appraisal of the DPD Vision are shown in Appendix A. Although the majority of the elements of the vision are compatible with the SA objectives, there are a few instances where this is not the case. These are primarily centred on the parts of the vision which are promoting development and the SA objectives which seek to protect the environment.
- 5.17. The main area where conflicts arise is around part 6 of the Vision – *“have more housing, and in particular more affordable housing, that better meets the diverse needs of the District”* and the environmental protection objectives of the SA framework (in particular SA objectives 7 to 11). This part of the Vision is looking to provide high levels of housing across North Dorset and therefore runs the risk of causing harm to the environment. Unless carefully managed, high levels of development could adversely impact habitats and therefore harm biodiversity. There could also, among other things, be a significant negative impact on the landscape and the setting of the towns and villages in North Dorset. However, the need for housing and in particular affordable housing is important in North Dorset and therefore needs to be addressed in the Vision and throughout the DPD. This is where it is important that housing developments are planned carefully to meet needs and are in a sustainable location away from areas where the impact would be greatest.
- 5.18. There is thought to be a potential conflict between part 3 of the Vision – *expanded, thriving market towns* and the SA objectives to *protect and enhance habitats (7), protect heritage assets and townscapes (8) and landscape protection (9)*. The result of expanding the main towns of North Dorset could result in a loss of biodiversity through greenfield development. This development also has the potential to negatively impact the landscapes around these towns and therefore effect the setting of the towns. There is also a potential positive impact that could be realised if development within the towns is managed to respect their individual character and the heritage within them.

- 5.19. Further conflict could again be between the environmental protection objectives of the SA framework and Part 8 of the Vision – *to have a robust and prosperous economy*. This is because the conditions needed for a robust and prosperous economy will include development including the provision of infrastructure such as roads. The environmental protection policies in the DPD will need to ensure that development for whatever purpose will have minimal impact on the environment, especially on particularly valuable environmental and cultural assets.
- 5.20. A possible conflict may exist between the SA objective – *to improve economic competitiveness of the district* and part 5 of the Vision – *to have a protected and enhanced locally distinctive built and natural environment*. This is primarily for the same reasons detailed in the previous paragraph.
- 5.21. Areas where the Vision and the SA objectives are clearly compatible are where the parts of the Vision and the SA objectives are attempting to achieve the same end, such as providing housing to meet the needs of the community. Less obvious links include the link between SA objective 12 – *promote energy and resource efficiency* and Vision part 6 – *to supply more housing*. This relates to the potential to raise the awareness of energy efficiency measures that can be incorporated into houses and the realisation amongst residents of the benefits of an efficient house.
- 5.22. The DPD will need to be aware of potential negative impacts and include appropriate policies to avoid or mitigate them if they arise. There may also be potential positive effects of the plan which could be enhanced to increase their effect hence offer greater sustainability benefits.

Appraisal of the DPD Objectives

- 5.23. The DPD Vision is sub divided into five Objectives and a number of sub-objectives which have the aim of achieving the Vision. These are:

Objective 1 - Thriving Market Towns

The objective is to support the role and function of the market towns of Blandford (Forum and St. Mary), Gillingham and Shaftesbury as the main service centres for the District

Objective 2 - Sustainable Rural Communities

The objective is to create a network of sustainable smaller rural communities where local services enable day to day needs to be met locally

Objective 3 - Protecting and Managing the Environment

To better manage and protect the environment of North Dorset

Objective 4 - Meeting the District's Housing Needs

The objective is to deliver more housing, including more affordable housing that better meets the diverse needs of the District

Objective 5 - Improving the Quality of Life

The objective is to improve the quality of life of North Dorset's residents, particularly the older population, and enhance the life chances of the young

- 5.24. Each of the sub-objectives associated with these broader objectives were assessed to check that they were in accordance with the sustainability principles in the SA framework. The results of this are included in Appendix B and discussed in more detail here.
- 5.25. The DPD Objectives of creating Thriving Market Towns as the main service centres in the District and creating a network of Sustainable Rural Communities are generally compatible with the sustainability principles however as this will result in development taking place at these centres, there are some areas where the sub-objectives conflict with the SA objectives.
- 5.26. The main areas of conflict relate to the SA objectives which seek to offer protection of the environment. These primarily conflict with the sub-objectives which promote employment, housing and other forms of development at these centres. This is because development on greenfield land and hence a loss of biodiversity, loss of settlement character and negative landscape impact is likely to result.
- 5.27. The DPD Objectives are clearly in accordance with the SA objective to create balanced communities and all sub-objectives associated with the DPD Objectives are considered to be compatible except the Objective 2d which makes provision for some development in the countryside. This objective does however seek to restrain development in the countryside overall.
- 5.28. The sub-objectives associated with Objective 3 - Protecting and Managing the Environment are all generally compatible with the SA objectives with the exception of the sub-objective which seeks to ensure that the wildlife, landscape and heritage of the district are protected. This is incompatible with the SA objectives which allow for development such as the provision of housing or the provision of infrastructure for the economy.
- 5.29. The main conflict that occurs with Objective 4 - Meeting the District's Housing Needs is the allowance that is made for affordable housing in rural areas. In particular this is in conflict with the SA objectives of creating balanced communities and reducing the need to travel.
- 5.30. Although the sub-objective only applies in exceptional circumstances it is still likely to go against the SA objectives mentioned by virtue of the increased need to travel which would result for the residents of the housing. The impact could be reduced by restricting such development to locations with reasonable levels of services.
- 5.31. Objective 5 - Improving the Quality of Life has few links with the SA objectives although there are three points where conflict occurs and these all relate to the sub-objective of enhancing and providing new transport infrastructure through development contributions. It is thought that this may restrict the amount of developer funding available to

provide affordable housing and therefore could be in conflict with SA objective 1. It is also likely to result in a biodiversity and landscape impact due to the development proposed and increased emissions from resulting transport.

- 5.32. When looking at the overall compatibility of the DPD Objectives with the sustainability principles defined by the SA framework, there are a few SA objectives which consistently seem to raise issues about compatibility. These are primarily where environmental protection is promoted by the SA objectives and where the DPD objectives promote development.
- 5.33. This is an inevitable conflict as the whole purpose of the DPD is to manage the growth and the development associated with such growth as set in the higher level Regional and National Strategies. The role of the DPD is to minimise the impacts of this development, guiding it to the most appropriate locations to deliver sustainable development.
- 5.34. It is therefore important that the SA identifies where Environmental, Social or Economic considerations consistently lose out to others. Where this is thought to be the case, the SA should promote changes to the DPD and the inclusion of mitigation measures to minimise negative impacts and enhance positive ones.

6.0 Appraisal of the DPD Options

- 6.1. The key issues identified as part of the Scoping Stage were used to produce the SA framework for assessing the plan. In addition, the Issues and Challenges for North Dorset and for the Core Strategy were identified and helped to formulate the Vision and Objectives for the Core Strategy (Table 6.1).
- 6.2. A series of policy options were identified for fulfilling the Vision and Objectives. These were centred on the Issues and Challenges and were appraised against the SA framework using a matrix approach. Each option was appraised by more than one officer from within the Council and the outcome was discussed to reach an agreed assessment result.
- 6.3. The options considered and the results of the appraisal are discussed in brief below with the detailed matrix for each option being included in Appendix C. Where it has not been possible to make a clear judgement about the impact of an option on one of the SA objectives, this is shown in the matrices (? = unknown or uncertain impact). Where this is the case and the potential impacts are thought to be significant for the option being taken forward in the draft DPD, further analysis may need to be undertaken to assess the potential impact. The need for further analysis is highlighted in the discussion accompanying each policy matrix.
- 6.4. The whole district is likely to be affected through the implementation of the policies in the Core Strategy however the towns of Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton are the areas which are most likely to be significantly affected and hence the latter part of this section details the current situation in these areas. The appraisal of the options considered is also summarised in this section with the full detailed policy appraisal matrix being included in Appendix D.

Table 6.1: Issues and Challenges for the Core Strategy

Issue	Challenge
To address the causes and effects of climate change	To deliver higher standards of sustainable construction
	To encourage greater use of renewable energy
	To ensure that the risks of climate change (such as flooding) are minimised
To deliver more sustainable forms of development	To encourage the prudent use of resources - previously developed land
	To encourage the prudent use of resources - water
	To develop a more sustainable transport network
	To achieve higher levels of self containment in settlements
To deliver more sustainable patterns of development	Sustainable main market towns (Policy B Settlements)
	Sustainable small towns & villages (Policy C Settlements)
	Sustainable countryside
The need to conserve and enhance AONB and to foster the social and economic well-being of their communities	To ensure that decisions taken locally have regard both to the generic national and regional policies and to the specific objectives and policies for each AONB, as set out in their respective Management Plans
The protection of internationally important wildlife sites	To ensure N2K sites are not harmed, either directly or indirectly, by development proposed in the LDF
Safeguarding the environment	To deliver growth that does not harm key environmental features
	To encourage high quality design that respects the environment
	To safeguard amenity
Addressing the lack of affordable housing	To provide sufficient housing
	To provide sufficient affordable housing
	To provide a type, design and mix to meet the diverse needs of the District

Table 6.1: Issues and Challenges for the Core Strategy (continued)

Issue	Challenge
Tackling the causes and effects of an increasing generational imbalance	To improve the quality of life of residents by helping to meet the needs of the older population
	To enhance the life chances of the young
Stimulating a low-growth economy	To develop a more competitive economy that reflects wider sub-regional aims
	To develop a more competitive economy that recognises the particular economic characteristics of the District and brings greater prosperity to residents
Improving access to services	To ensure that levels of service provision (both in the towns and rural area) are maintained and where possible improved
	To encourage better public transport that meets the needs of local communities

- 6.5. Prediction of potential effects should include an estimate of the possible changes to the environmental baseline that may occur as a result of the implementation of a policy option. Where possible the relative magnitude and direction of the potential effects has been estimated.
- 6.6. Several assumptions were made for each assessment. Some of these assumptions were general assumptions which relate to all the assessments and some were specific to certain policies. The policy specific assumptions are detailed with each policy discussion.
- 6.7. The general assumptions made for each assessment included:
- A short term effect of development is localised disruption due to the construction works taking place. However, the longer term effect of development can be positive or negative depending on the detail of the development.
 - Locating development in the larger towns would be more sustainable than locating development in smaller settlements due to accessibility to jobs, shops, healthcare, education and other everyday services. This is primarily because these services and facilities require a “critical mass” to make them viable and this is more likely to be achieved at existing centres of population.
 - Development would generally have a negative impact on the environment (landscape, biodiversity etc). The level of impact depends on a range of factors including the sensitivity of the receiving environment and the mitigation measures put in place to offset negative effects.
 - A large amount of development in one or two places is considered to be more sustainable and in particular have less of an

environmental impact, than a more dispersed approach. This again relates to critical mass and the ability to provide services including open space, to serve the development.

- e. When considering the impacts of one option, all other variables are fixed. An example of this is that options for the percentage of affordable housing to be delivered on each site does not effect the overall quantum of housing to be delivered.
- f. With several of the SA objectives, the impact of a policy is considered to be neutral under the “do nothing” scenario unless proactive measures are put in place to protect or enhance the situation. An example would be where development is restricted in a settlement, the impact on biodiversity would be neutral unless proposals included measures to protect, restore or enhance habitats.

Addressing Issues and Challenges

- 6.8. The following list details the issues and challenges that have been identified as important in the Core Strategy production. The aim therefore of the Core Strategy is to address these issues and challenges and the role of the SA is to ensure that this is done in the most sustainable way.
- 6.9. To assess this, the options considered for each policy, aimed at addressing the issues and challenges, have been assessed against the SA framework to identify the most sustainable option. The results of these appraisals are detailed in Appendix C and in brief below.
- 6.10. The policies and options identified for each issue and challenge are not exhaustive. There may be additional policies and options for the policies which may help to fulfil the issues and challenges. The aim of this part of the appraisal is to identify the main policies which are aimed at tackling each issue and challenge and to highlight the main issues relating to sustainability for each.

Issue	Challenge	Options considered
To address the causes and effects of climate change	To deliver higher standards of sustainable construction	Implement Code for Sustainable Homes standards in new dwellings ahead of the national/regional timetables or adopt the regional timetable. CP 1
	To encourage greater use of renewable energy	Adopt a higher requirement for renewable energy than that detailed in regional policy. CP 1
	To ensure that the risks of climate change (such as flooding) are minimised	No options considered, avoiding risk (eg flooding) is fundamental to the plan therefore SuDS are required. CP 2

- 6.11. Clearly adopting higher requirements for sustainable construction and renewable energy installation as part of new developments will help to reduce the causes and effects of climate change. The additional cost to be ahead of the national and regional targets could be considered to be too high for the council to commit funds to. However over the period to 2016, when zero carbon homes standard is compulsory, half of the 7000 new dwellings proposed for North Dorset will already have been built and not to the optimal feasible energy standards. As these dwellings are likely to have a life of approximately 100 years, building them to the highest standard possible is important to efforts to tackle climate change. For every year ahead of the national timetable that can be achieved, an additional 350 new dwellings will be built with lower greenhouse gas emissions, each of which will have a potential life of 100 years.
- 6.12. The economies of scale that often exist on larger sites may make achieving higher standards more viable. For this reason it may be worth having a site size threshold for achieving a higher level on the Code for Sustainable Homes. In addition, larger sites may be able to incorporate higher levels of Renewable Energy.

Issue	Challenge	Options considered
To deliver more sustainable forms of development	To encourage the prudent use of resources – previously developed land	Options considered include the adoption of: a high target for development on pdl; a target based on pdl availability; or a less restrictive target so that the supply of housing is not constrained. In addition, the density of development is reflected in the amount of land required for development. CP 5, CP 8
	To encourage the prudent use of resources – water	No options considered as requirements as set out in Code for Sustainable Homes and SuDS for groundwater recharge are covered above. CP 2
	To develop a more sustainable transport network	A package of measures have been devised based around four themes of Demand Management, Highway Network, Public Transport and Walking and Cycling. Options considered were whether these measures should be supported. In addition the management of parking through standards for new residential developments or develop a comprehensive strategy for all parking across the District were considered. CP 11
	To achieve higher levels of self containment in settlements	The proportion of residential and employment development that will be in the main towns and the level of retail and town centre uses provided will impact significantly on the self containment of settlements. In addition the level of social infrastructure provision (schools, GPs, village halls etc) will help increase self containment. CP 4, CP 6, CP 7, CP 11, CP 12, CP 13

- 6.13. The concept of “more sustainable forms of development” relates to reducing the impacts of development on natural resources through their efficient use. To this end, encouraging a high level of development on previously developed land will reduce the pressure on greenfield sites for development and encourage regeneration and redevelopment of the existing urban areas. However, setting the percentage too high will result in a restricted supply of developable land, restricting the delivery of housing. Primarily for this reason, the most appropriate and sustainable approach is to base targets for development on previously developed land on the availability of suitable sites.
- 6.14. The density of development is an additional tool that can be used to reduced pressure on greenfield land. However setting density targets too rigidly will result in developments out of character with their context and therefore a flexible approach is likely to be most suitable.
- 6.15. Reduction in water consumption and the prudent management of the water resource can best be achieved through two main approaches; the inclusion of water efficiency measures in developments to reduce consumption and the inclusion of SuDS to enable greater levels of groundwater recharge.
- 6.16. Higher levels of self containment in settlements are achieved through provision of housing, employment and facilities in tandem with residential development. Planning for a higher level of retail growth and providing a high percentage of all employment development in the main settlements is likely aid in achieving greater self containment especially if it is provided along with a reasonable level of residential development.
- 6.17. In an earlier version of the Core Strategy, separate policies were drafted to manage the delivery of GPs, Schools and community venues. These policies were similar in content and therefore could be combined into one single policy to guide the location of this social infrastructure. Where detailed information was available about specific need in settlements, this could be outlined in the settlement based policies. This streamlined approach would improve the clarity of the DPD and give a coherent strategy for delivery of future social infrastructure.

The Infrastructure policies have been combined into three broad policies on Grey Infrastructure, Social Infrastructure and Green infrastructure as a result of the SA analysis. The detail specific to settlements has been incorporated into the settlement policies.

Issue	Challenge	Options considered
To deliver more sustainable patterns of development	Sustainable main market towns	This is covered by many policies which seek to focus the majority of development on the larger settlements within North Dorset. The main policy which seeks to achieve this is the Spatial Strategy. Options considered focused on which settlements fall within each of the three categories based on an assessment of the population and level of service provision in each. CP 3 In addition, the percentage split of residential and economic development between the main towns, the small towns & villages and the countryside will be important in helping create sustainable settlements. CP 4, CP 5, CP 6
	Sustainable small towns & villages	
	Sustainable countryside	

- 6.18. Sustainable patterns of development are delivered through the creation of more sustainable settlements. The majority of the policies in the Core Strategy seek to focus development primarily on the larger centres and only allow for small scale development in smaller settlements to meet the needs of that settlement.
- 6.19. The strategy developed to focus development in the District identifies which settlements are the most suitable for further growth based on population and the level of services. The main market towns were identified as Blandford, Gillingham and Shaftesbury. The small towns and larger villages were identified as Sturminster Newton, Stalbridge, Marnhull, Shillingstone, Charlton Marshall, Child Okeford, Motcombe, Milborne St. Andrew, Pimperne, Iwerne Minster, Bourton, Okeford Fitzpaine, Milton Abbas, Winterborne Whitechurch, Hazelbury Bryan, Winterborne Kingston, Stourpaine, Winterborne Stickland, East Stour and Fontmell Magna. Below these villages the level of service provision is poor and therefore development will reduce the effectiveness of focusing on the more sustainable settlements and increase the problems of rural inaccessibility.
- 6.20. Options considered the balance between the level of housing growth and employment growth in the different types of settlements and concluded that a more sustainable approach is to focus a higher proportion of employment development than residential development in the larger centres rather than allowing a dispersed approach. This is primarily because

individuals can visit shops/banks/libraries in the well served larger centres during work breaks and after work, thereby combining multiple errands into one single journey. This approach is likely to be the most sustainable approach to meeting the challenge of creating more sustainable settlements across the whole District.

Issue	Challenge	Options considered
The need to conserve and enhance AONB and to foster the social and economic well-being of their communities	To ensure that decisions taken locally have regard both to the generic national and regional policies and to the specific objectives and policies for each AONB, as set out in their respective Management Plans	The protection of the AONB and the actions outlined in their management plans accord with the objectives of the Core Strategy. Core Policy 14 seeks to offer protection to the AONB and offers support to the objectives of their respective management plans. No options were therefore considered. CP 14
The protection of internationally important wildlife sites	To ensure N2K sites are not harmed, either directly or indirectly, by development proposed in the LDF	The protection of internationally important wildlife sites is a statutory responsibility of the Local Authority. The only option is therefore to protect these sites from the impact of development. CP 14
Safeguarding the environment	To deliver growth that does not harm key environmental features	In addition to the AONB and the internationally designated wildlife sites, other environmental features such as parks, gardens and non-listed buildings of local value are recognised as important to the attractiveness of the area. CP14
	To encourage high quality design that respects the environment	
	To safeguard amenity	To safeguard amenity and to encourage environmentally aware design, the inclusion of open space in developments is important. The options considered were if this open space provision should be coordinated and protected through the development of a Green Infrastructure Strategy. CP13 The density of new developments can be used to reduce the demand for greenfield land however developments need to respect the character of the area whilst still making the best use of land. CP 8

- 6.21. Core Policy 14 seeks to protect and enhance environmental features and therefore covers many of the issues and challenges above. Many of the environmental features mentioned are covered by international and national legislation and other plans such as the AONB Management Plans. For this reason there are no realistic options to consider as the consequences of not protecting sites are severe, undesirable and contrary to the objectives of the sustainability appraisal and the Core Strategy.
- 6.22. Although many sites are covered by these pieces of legislation, there are several important areas that are not covered but where considerations of their importance are used when determining planning applications. The only area where this type of judgement is not made is in relation to locally important parks and gardens and locally significant buildings. National policy relating to heritage assets is currently being reviewed and it is thought that this mismatch in protection will be addressed. In the mean time, these locally important assets are to be protected by the policy.
- 6.23. The implications of reducing pressure for greenfield development through a target for reuse of previously developed land have been discussed earlier. However the provision of open space within developments is an issue directly related to environmental protection.
- 6.24. Protecting open space and coordinating its provision through a Green Infrastructure strategy can enable enhanced benefits to be realised. This is because Green Infrastructure offers multiple benefits including improved access through provision of cycle paths and footpaths; the provision of sports pitches; and the educational benefits derived from the inclusion of wildlife areas within towns. If provision is not coordinated, a network of sites cannot be provided and therefore the most efficient option is the production of a Green Infrastructure strategy.

Issue	Challenge	Options considered
Addressing the lack of affordable housing	To provide sufficient housing	The required quantum of housing to meet need is 7000 dwellings over the period from 2006 to 2026. Options considered are to supply less than this level, to meet this target or to provide more than this target. CP 4
	To provide sufficient affordable housing	Affordable housing is often provided on the back of private developments. Options considered the percentage of housing that should be affordable and the threshold above which affordable units should be provided. In addition, the settlements where rural exceptions developments for 100% affordable housing would be permitted were considered. CP 9, CP 10
	To provide a type, design and mix to meet the diverse needs of the District	The mix and type of housing is important in meeting needs and addressing the issues that face the District such as a low growth economy. A broad range of housing types and tenures is therefore important but also one which seeks to encourage economically active people to move to the District. Options considered therefore focused on the appropriate emphasis for the split between dwelling sizes. CP 8

6.25. The lack of housing that people in the District can afford clearly does not lead to sustainable communities or to sustainable levels of economic growth. This lack of affordable housing can be tackled through provision of adequate levels of housing and through the provision of affordable housing. However, the level of housing provision will have an impact on the environment and the economy and therefore needs to be closely managed.

- 6.26. The main impacts of building more than the 7000 regional housing provision is that more land will need to be developed and increased levels of in migration for non economic reasons are likely to occur. This will have an impact on biodiversity, landscape and the built heritage of the District. In addition, the energy consumption of and hence greenhouse gas emissions from the new dwellings will be significant unless they are built to high standards or the energy consumed is produced from renewable sources. If more than the 7000 dwellings are to be built to help meet the backlog of demand, the increased impact of these dwellings should be mitigated through increased renewable energy and sustainable construction requirements.
- 6.27. The greatest opportunity for the provision of affordable housing is currently through seeking a proportion of affordable housing on development sites. To maximise this provision, an idea of the viability of schemes is required and the percentage of affordable homes being sought on a site should reflect this. In North Dorset it was found that the rural areas have high levels of viability and that the towns have lower levels of viability. The level of housing provision in the rural areas will be restricted as part of the overall spatial strategy and therefore the percentage of affordable housing needs to reflect the viability of sites in the towns. In addition, due to the variance between the towns, a flexible approach to affordable housing needs to be deployed to ensure that delivery of all housing tenures is maintained. If too high a percentage is sought, the overall supply of housing will be harmed which will also harm the delivery of affordable housing. A flat figure of 40% could therefore be used as the starting point in all negotiations for affordable housing, although the actual level of provision should depend on individual site viability considerations.
- 6.28. Housing need exists across the whole District including in the rural areas away from the larger settlements. The strategy guiding development in the District focuses housing provision on the larger settlements where the accessibility to services is above a reasonable level. If affordable housing developments were permitted in all settlements, regardless of the levels of service provision, the benefits of the subsidised housing would be eroded by the increased costs associated with living in isolated locations. However placing tight restrictions on the location of rural affordable housing sites will restrict the provision of housing to meet needs and therefore some provision needs to be made. For this reason, rural affordable housing provision should be focused on settlements with reasonable levels of services but not allowed in isolated rural locations.
- 6.29. The provision of the correct type and mix of housing across the District should be informed by evidence so that the needs of all groups whether elderly, families or single people, can be met. The main identified affordable housing need rising from the current population of the district is for 3 bed dwellings. However, in the future this is likely to change and may be for smaller units and will need to be assessed on a regular basis to ensure that needs are being met. Building a degree of flexibility into the policy may be necessary so that changes in need over time can be accommodated.

6.30. However, to support the Districts economy, a labour force is needed, primarily to address the imbalance in the demographic profile of the District. The mix of housing can help to achieve this through the provision of appropriate housing. However, due to North Dorset’s attractive environment large numbers of in-migrants are moving to the area for quality of life reasons rather than for work. Not meeting their housing needs may be considered inappropriate. When considering the wider definition of sustainability as defined by the SA framework, greater benefits can be achieved through the delivery of a housing mix to meet the needs of the economy.

Issue	Challenge	Options considered
Tackling the causes and effects of an increasing generational imbalance	To improve the quality of life of residents by helping to meet the needs of the older population	No options specifically address the challenge of meeting the needs of the elderly as meeting needs of all sections of the community including the elderly is an important part of the Core Strategy. In relation to housing, it is covered by Core Policy 8 relating to Lifetime Homes, and care home provision and in relation to healthcare, Core Policy 12. CP 8, CP12
	To enhance the life chances of the young	Enhancing the life chances of the young can be achieved through improving access to jobs and training and also through the provision of housing to meet their needs. This can be influenced by the level of job growth in the district and the location of this development. Options therefore relate to the level of support that should be given to a further education college within the district, the provision and type of affordable housing and the quantum and location of employment developments. CP 6, CP 8, CP 9, CP 17

6.31. The provision of suitable accommodation for the elderly and frail residents of the District is important in achieving sustainable development. Lifetime homes aim to do this by providing homes that can be adapted to the needs of the resident as they

may evolve over a lifetime. This includes extra wide door frames to enable wheelchair access and the ability to install a bathroom on ground floor level. Lifetime homes enable a level of independent living and requiring housing to be developed to this standard will enable the needs of the elderly, frail and disabled to be met. Where a level of care is needed which prevents fully independent living, care homes can be provided. This policy aims to enable care homes to be provided and ensures that the level of open space etc is provided to the appropriate standard.

- 6.32. In addition to enabling the elderly to live in their own homes and for these homes to be adapted to meet their needs, there is a need for healthcare facilities to be provided in accessible locations. This includes the provision of GP surgeries, the retention of the two community hospitals and improved access to these and to general hospitals outside of the District.
- 6.33. Improving the skills levels of the population will help in delivering the economic objectives of the District as well as improving the life chances of the young. In addition this is impacted on by the provision of affordable housing to meet the needs of those who cannot afford to get on the housing ladder. The provision of affordable housing has been detailed earlier.
- 6.34. Reserving land for the expansion of further education facilities in Shaftesbury would offer a number of benefits in terms of the economy however; it may result in a vacant undeveloped site within the town, harming its attractiveness and tourism potential. As the further education college may not be constructed, it may be better to support the provision of further education opportunities through the allocation of a site on the edge of a town rather than leaving an undeveloped site in the middle of the town. The proposed town centre site does however have a number of other uses which could still be developed if the further education development does not take place. The implications of these not being developed are likely to be negative for community cohesion within the town and reduce the ability to enhance the attractiveness of the town centre.
- 6.35. The provision of jobs in the District will have an impact on encouraging school leavers and recent graduates to stay in or return to the District through improved job prospects. If sufficient jobs are not provided, out commuting to nearby centres or out migration for improved job prospects may result. The pressure for out commuting also results from the lack of appropriate and affordable housing. Delivering housing to meet the needs of the young such as 1 or 2 bed flats, will encourage individuals to stay in the District and not leave to find work.

Issue	Challenge	Options considered
Stimulating a low-growth economy	To develop a more competitive economy that reflects wider sub-regional aims	The conditions for economic growth include the availability of land for economic developments and the provision of the necessary infrastructure to support this development. Also the supply of sufficient economically active, highly skilled people will help businesses grow. Options considered centred on the level of job growth being planned for, the amount of land that is needed to enable this growth to take place and the mix of housing types that are to be provided. CP 6, CP 8, CP11
	To develop a more competitive economy that recognises the particular economic characteristics of the District and brings greater prosperity to residents	

- 6.36. Although sustainability has its roots in environmental protection and the SEA Directive’s aim is to offer a high level of environmental protection, it is widely acknowledged that sustainability encompasses more than just environmental concerns. Economic development is also necessary to support individuals and to enable measures to reduce environmental impact to be funded. It is however important that economic development is undertaken within environmental limits and in appropriate locations.
- 6.37. The level of development is important in reducing its impact. If too much development takes place, the impact locally will be greater and more long distance in-commuting is likely to occur. If too little development takes place, the result will be greater levels of out-commuting resulting in greater impact on the environment. The most sustainable level of job growth is likely to be one that meets demand whilst reducing the levels of in and out commuting, achieving greater self containment. This is likely to be the mid range of the options considered (approximately 3300 jobs).
- 6.38. In terms of the amount of land that needs to be provided, provision needs to be sufficient to accommodate the level of job provision. This is difficult to predict as different uses have different land requirements for example a warehouse for a distribution centre requires a large piece of land but is likely to only provide employment for a small number of people where as an office block can accommodate a large number of people on a relatively small plot of land. Sufficient land therefore

needs to be made available but its location is the most important factor in reducing the impact of its development. The supply of land should therefore be reviewed on a regular basis.

- 6.39. Due to the potential for growth at Gillingham, there may be a need to provide an additional strategic employment allocation to enable the employment led growth of the town. If this is not delivered, housing growth at the town may result in levels of out commuting and therefore be unsustainable. Development on such a site should be of high quality and offer large numbers of jobs for the increased population of the town. It therefore is important that if the strategic site is allocated that environmental mitigation measures are put in place to reduce the environmental impact of the extra level of development.
- 6.40. Several of the policies in the Core Strategy seek to direct development to the most sustainable locations and to minimise the impact on the environment. Core Policy 8 seeks to focus economic development on the main towns. The proportion of economic development that should be located at the towns is important to reducing impacts from the development that needs to take place. If a greater proportion is focused on a town, people travelling from nearby settlements can combine travel to work with use of the town centre facilities such as banks and shops. This backs up their traditional role as “hubs” for the surrounding villages and rural areas and offers greater support for the services and facilities located in the towns. A more dispersed approach is likely to reduce this benefit and detract from the role of the towns as hubs.
- 6.41. The economic benefits of the mix of residential units to be provided are covered above however the provision of infrastructure to support economic development is important. The location of development is likely to offer the greatest benefits in terms of reducing the need to travel but on top of this, sustainable travel options need to be provided. This will help to reduce congestion on roads and therefore enable the transportation of goods to be achieved more efficiently. This is one of the benefits that can be capitalised upon if additional growth at Gillingham is realised as Gillingham is the only town in the district that has direct access to the rail network.
- 6.42. One potential impact of increased growth and the increased traffic levels that go with this is a potential decrease in road safety. Increased traffic, especially in rural areas generally causes more accidents and therefore road safety measures, such as improving a dangerous junction, may be needed.

Issue	Challenge	Options considered
Improving access to services	To ensure that levels of service provision (both in the towns and rural area) are maintained and where possible improved	Access to services is a particular issue in rural areas and North Dorset is no exception to this. Permitting development away from well served centres makes the problem worse and new facilities are often not viable in these locations. Clustering the provision of new facilities and residential development at existing centres improves accessibility. In addition the location of rural exception developments could be restricted to the more accessible centres thereby reducing living costs and the need to travel. CP 3, CP 4, CP 10, CP 11, CP12, CP 13
	To encourage better public transport that meets the needs of local communities	The options considered relate to support for the package of measures designed at improving public transport. CP 11

- 6.43. The provision of additional facilities is the most obvious way of improving access to them. However, for services and facilities to be viable, a reasonable number of people need to use them. An example could be that a village shop may be viable in a large village but not viable in a small hamlet. Therefore by focusing the majority of future development at well served centres, support can be given to existing facilities and new ones can be encouraged to start thereby improving accessibility in that area.
- 6.44. If rural exceptions schemes were permitted in all rural settlements, access to facilities will be difficult in the most isolated places. This would not help tackle the accessibility issue and would potentially disadvantage the individuals who live there. Focusing rural exceptions on the better served centres will help to reduce the potential high cost of living associated with rural isolation.

Gypsies and Travellers

- 6.45. The needs of one particular community not covered in detail in the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD is that of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People. This has not been covered in detail in the DPD and therefore is not covered in this Initial SA Report because a separate DPD is to be produced which will cover the issues in more detail. This subsequent DPD will be subject to Sustainability Appraisal and will therefore be reported on in a separate SA report.
- 6.46. The policy included in the Development Management section of the DPD provides a framework for assessing proposals for Gypsy and Traveller sites. The policy does not seek to restrict such developments but provides a framework for assessing the potential impacts of sites proposed prior to the Gypsy and Traveller DPD being produced.

Settlement and Area Based Policies

- 6.47. The strategy within the South West RSS directs the majority of development towards the larger urban areas and therefore these are likely to experience a large amount of change due to development. In North Dorset these areas are the four main towns of Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton.
- 6.48. The above issues and challenges are also addressed in the policies for the specific settlements. For these policies, the options are generally concerned with the direction for expansion and supporting infrastructure to enable the creation of sustainable settlements.
- 6.49. The appraisal of the broad direction of growth undertaken here is intended to cover the issues generally, looking at environmental constraints and other concerns. It does not look at particular site boundaries and therefore does not look at the site level impacts that may occur as a result of development. This site specific comparison of development opportunities will be undertaken in the Sustainability Appraisal of the subsequent Site Allocations DPD. For this, more detailed information (such as biodiversity assessments) will be needed on the constraints and environmental capacity of sites.
- 6.50. Generally if growth at one of the main towns does not take place, the development that is allocated to that town will have to be distributed elsewhere in the District. The approach taken so far, as detailed under the appraisal of Core Policy 4, is considered to be the most appropriate distribution of housing given environmental constraints and the level of housing need in each town. If the distribution was changed, there may be potential environmental impacts and infrastructure requirements that would need to be reappraised.
- 6.51. The appraisal of the options considered for the settlement based policies is summarised below with the full appraisal matrices included

in Appendix C. In addition the appraisal of the overall policies for each area, incorporating matrices, are included in Appendix D.

Blandford

- 6.52. Blandford comprises the main town of Blandford Forum to the north of the River Stour and the smaller settlement of Blandford St Mary to the south. The town centre is one of the most complete Georgian town centres in the country, centred around the Market Place. Much of the land around Blandford is constrained by the Dorset and Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB and the floodplain of the River Stour although much of this area is already protected by a flood defence scheme. The by-pass visually contains the town in the wider landscape.
- 6.53. Any development that takes place at Blandford will need to have minimal impact on the biodiversity associated with the River Stour and the woodlands to the south of the town. This relates to the potential impact on water quality in the Stour and to the SSSI at Bryanston which is designated for its importance as a habitat for Greater Horseshoe Bats⁶.
- 6.54. The site at Bryanston is the only known breeding site for the greater horseshoe bats in Dorset and the colony is one of only 7 remaining in Britain. The bats hunt in terrain with poor tree cover such as hillsides, cliff faces and in gardens. The current factors that are believed to be causing decline include:
- Reductions in insect prey abundance, especially loss of old pasture due to high intensity agricultural systems
 - Loss, destruction and disturbance of roosting and hibernation sites
 - Loss of insect-rich feeding habitats and flyways, due to loss of wetlands and hedgerows and the conversion of permanent pasture to other arable

It is therefore important that habitats and hunting grounds are conserved and restored where possible to protect this nationally important species.

- 6.55. Options considered for the town included not expanding the town; expanding the town to the north east; or expanding the town to the south west.
- 6.56. The option of not expanding the town would reduce the impact of development on the local environment but would not meet the housing or employment needs of the town. This is likely to result in long

⁶ English Nature SSSI information

http://www.english-nature.org.uk/special/sssi/sssi_details.cfm?sssi_id=1002561

distance commuting and housing becoming less affordable. It will also not support the improvement of services and facilities in the town.

- 6.57. Extending the town to the north east may result in increased risk of flooding to the town centre of Blandford as a result of surface water draining into the small tributary of the Stour which runs through the town centre. It would have a significant impact on the landscape around the town and the setting of the AONB through the “leap-frogging” of the bypass and would result in loss of agricultural land and associated biodiversity. The site is also further away from the cluster of services that exist in the town centre and therefore would make sustainable travel choices such as cycling and walking more difficult and less attractive.
- 6.58. Extending the town to the south west may have an impact on biodiversity due to the nearby population of Greater Horseshoe Bats. The area to the south east is also close to the Stour river corridor and woodland near Bryanston. These are likely to be areas of high biodiversity and also offer opportunities for habitat restoration. Development in this area will also have an impact on the landscape including the Dorset AONB, the boundary of which is drawn close to the edge of the existing built up area. The impact is however likely to be contained by virtue of the hills and woodland setting and the backdrop of the existing built-up area of the town.
- 6.59. The area is located in close proximity to the centre of town and therefore offers opportunities for creating useable cycle and walking routes into the town. This is also likely to improve the accessibility of neighbouring areas and therefore offer secondary benefits.
- 6.60. The preferred option is to extend the town to the south west. However there are a number of concerns about this expansion which need to be taken into account and incorporated into any development that does take place. These include inclusion of adequate Green Infrastructure to link the developments with the town centre and the creation of habitats to offset any impact that may result from development. Due to the sloping nature of the area and the proximity of the River Stour, here is a need to ensure that flood risk is not increased as a result of the development.
- 6.61. Although this is considered to be the most appropriate option with the information gathered to date, further information will need to be collected to ensure that this situation is correct for example ensuring that biodiversity impacts are minimal. Mitigation measures will need to be put in place and opportunities such as habitat restoration will need to be secured.

Gillingham

- 6.62. Gillingham is relatively unconstrained environmentally with the exception of the floodplains associated with the three rivers running through the town. However, King’s Court Hill Fort (a Scheduled Ancient

Monument) and its setting are important in the wider landscape. There are a number of important buildings within the town centre although the character of this area has been harmed by some unsympathetic development. The town centre also has a limited range of retail outlets and does not meet the needs of the town for comparison shopping.

- 6.63. Due to the unconstrained nature of the town, its good public transport links and its potential to accommodate additional growth, Gillingham is likely to experience a high level of growth over the plan period. For this reason several options were considered for accommodating this growth and delivering enhanced infrastructure including town centre enhancements to meet the needs of the town.
- 6.64. Options considered were to limit growth up to 2016 to sites inside the current settlement boundary or to allow some greenfield expansion and after this period, whether expansion of the town should be to the south and south east or to the north west.
- 6.65. If development at the town was to be confined to the existing town boundary, the delivery of housing at an appropriate rate may be compromised. For this reason it is thought that small scale greenfield extensions to the town are needed before 2016. It is important that these extensions do not harm the delivery of the town centre regeneration. The regeneration of the town centre should be a priority.
- 6.66. After 2016 the development rate will be increased to deliver the growth of the town. The rate of residential development will however need to be matched by employment and infrastructure development to increase the self containment of the town and limit in or out commuting.
- 6.67. Locating development to the south and south east of the town would offer benefits due to the proximity to the town centre, the main employment sites in the town and the railway station. The development would also offer the opportunity to ease traffic congestion at the bridge where the B3081 crosses the railway line through the provision of a southern link road.
- 6.68. Development to the northwest of the town would necessitate the inclusion of a local centre due to its distance from the centre of the town. It is also likely to increase congestion at the B3081/railway line crossing point as the majority of the town's employment sites are located on the southern side of the town. Development in this area would also be likely to increase local trips on the A303, reducing its effectiveness as a regionally important route.
- 6.69. With the preferred approach to the town being the extension to the south and south east, it is important that walking and cycling links across the railway line are improved. This will help to improve access to the town centre from the new development sites and improve access from the northern part of the town to the southern employment sites. In addition, the flood zones associated with the rivers that run through the town need to be avoided. They offer the opportunity for open space

provision and wildlife corridors to improve biodiversity and to reduce landscape impacts.

- 6.70. To support the expansion of the town and encourage the growth to happen in a balanced way, jobs will need to be created and the town centre will need to be enhanced. Options considered for regeneration include focusing on the existing town centre and the Station Road area or whether a broader approach to integrate the disparate town centre functions into a more cohesive centre. To encourage employment led growth the option of allocating an additional strategic employment site was also considered.
- 6.71. The economy of Gillingham is centred on the main industrial estates to the south and to the north of the town. The town centre offers limited retail opportunities and is fragmented between several different uses in poorly connected locations. Enhancement of the town centre is therefore important to support the growth of the town and offer an additional focus for non B class uses such as accountants and lawyers.
- 6.72. If the regeneration of the town centre is only focused on the Station Road area, it may detract from the remainder of the current town centre by creating more attractive locations for businesses to move into. It would also draw footfall away from the western end of the High Street.
- 6.73. The coordinated approach to town centre regeneration would enable the links between the different town centre nodes to be improved. Links could be created between the schools, leisure centre and railway station through the main shopping streets. This would improve the vitality of the town centre and enable greater use of the railway station as a sustainable transport hub.
- 6.74. The town is planned to grow significantly over the period to 2026 through the development of housing on the southern and south eastern extension sites. To enable this growth to take place in a sustainable way, the development needs to be supported by a comparable number of jobs. If the residential development was not delivered in parallel with jobs, significant levels of out commuting would result as people would have to travel to find work.
- 6.75. Although there is a reasonable amount of employment land available on the existing employment sites within the town they are of a general industrial nature. The designation of an additional strategic employment site would offer the opportunity to attract businesses that would demand a high quality environment, helping to diversify the economy of the town. The rate of delivery of jobs would be encouraged through provision of the additional land which would hopefully encourage larger employers to locate on the site. The availability of suitable large sites is one factor that would encourage developers to move to an area.
- 6.76. If an additional large site was not allocated for employment uses, the increase in job numbers would have to be delivered on existing employment sites. This may be difficult to achieve due to the size of

available sites and would not help to attract a wider range of companies to move to the town.

- 6.77. Any strategic site would need to be reserved for larger suitable employers rather than permitting the piecemeal development as the number and quality of the jobs are likely to be greater with such employers. In addition, the site should be developed as a sustainable employment site incorporating green technology and cycle/foot links to the rest of the town. This would help to attract companies that wish to demonstrate their commitment to environmental performance.
- 6.78. The level of growth planned for the town is likely to have an impact on the wider area for example through increased traffic on the roads. To mitigate this, the implementation of a package of minor road improvements was considered along with measures to manage the demand for car based travel. These include enhancement of the railway station to create a transport interchange and the enhancement of cycling and walking links in the town. The options considered were to implement this package of measures or to continue with the current situation.
- 6.79. The aim of this package of measures is to minimise the amount of traffic in and around the town and to minimise the impact on the strategic road network arising from local trips. The road improvements may help to reduce the local problems of traffic and increase safety at specific locations but they are likely to do little to reduce the overall quantity of traffic on the roads. The secondary effect of road improvements is likely to be faster journey times which encourages people to travel further and therefore actually increases the amount of traffic on the roads.
- 6.80. Promotion of public transport through better access and better integration of different modes is likely to help increase its usage. Improved cycling and walking routes in the town will encourage people to walk to the town centre and children to walk to school. However these routes need to be safe and away from busy roads where possible and will need to be combined with the town centre enhancements. Increased permeability of the town for non car based travel will need to be the main goal especially in relation to the barriers of the railway line and Le Neubourg Way.
- 6.81. On balance, as a package of measures, the improvements in local roads are likely to improve safety in specific locations and the non car based transport measures are likely to help reduce traffic in the town. This approach is therefore likely to offer several sustainability benefits if the road developments are planned to minimise their impact on for example, landscape and biodiversity.

Shaftesbury

- 6.82. Shaftesbury occupies a hilltop location, with steep slopes to the north, west and south constraining growth. Due to this hilltop location, the

town centre has a unique character with many steeply sloping streets. The flatter areas to the east and north east are not physically constrained due to landscape, but are limited by the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB and the County Boundary. To the north of the town are areas designated as SNCI.

- 6.83. Options considered were to constrain the town within the current settlement boundary or to allow further expansion on greenfield land to the east and north east of the town. In addition, the redevelopment of the cattle market site within the town for retail and community uses (including a community hub) has been proposed. Options considered the implications of the different uses not being provided if this development did not go ahead in this form.
- 6.84. The key issues for accommodating development at Shaftesbury are the impacts on the landscape and heritage of the town due to its hilltop location and historic core. If development of the town is restricted, infilling and further intensification of the town may result, harming the character of the town and potentially impacting on the slopes. However, if expansion of the town is allowed on greenfield sites, the landscape setting of the town could be harmed.
- 6.85. Limited greenfield expansion away from the slopes (to the east of the town) is likely to be the most sustainable option. All developments will have to minimise their impact on resources especially water resources to minimise the impact on the River Avon SAC.
- 6.86. The development of a community hub in the centre of the town including a community hall, further education facilities, a youth centre and some retail would offer benefits to the town. The site to the east of the town centre is the preferred location for such a facility due to its accessibility and the potential to enhance the town centre. It is however important that community facilities are delivered on the site adjacent to the town centre rather than waiting for all the potential uses to be confirmed before development takes place.
- 6.87. If the hub development does not take place in the town centre, it may be possible for some community uses to be provided on other sites such as the land to the east of the town. This may however cause a divide in the town with the east of the town using the new community hall and the older part of the town using the existing hall. In addition, the provision of further education facilities on another site would be in a less accessible location or it maybe not be provided at all.

Sturminster Newton

- 6.88. Sturminster Newton comprises the main town of “Sturminster” on the northern side of the River Stour and the smaller village of “Newton” to the south. The town has a historic core and several more modern areas of development on the northern side. Land to the south and west of the town are constrained due to flooding and landscape constraints. Land to the east of the town is constrained by the Manston Road which

forms a long-term defensible boundaries constraining development and reducing impacts on the landscape. Land to the south and east of Elm Close is a site of archaeological importance and is also in close proximity to the town's sewage treatment works.

- 6.89. In addition to the above parameters, the development site in the centre of the town (known as Land North of the Livestock Market) is adjacent to the Butts Pond Meadows SNCI. This habitat includes populations of protected Great Crested Newts and Badgers. The provision of wildlife corridors and other measures to accommodate wildlife concerns are essential and will need to be incorporated into any development proposals.
- 6.90. Options considered were to allow further regeneration of the town centre and confine growth to this or to allow further small scale expansion on greenfield land in addition to the town centre regeneration schemes.
- 6.91. Development of the sites within the existing settlement boundary including the regeneration of the town centre, will offer many benefits in terms of the enhancement of the town. Additional retail and community uses will be provided to meet the needs of the town and derelict or underused sites can be regenerated. In addition, connections between the north of the town and the town centre and also connections between the town and its neighbouring rural areas can be improved.
- 6.92. Additional development on greenfield sites outside of the current settlement boundary will help the delivery of housing to meet the needs of the town. Development of such sites would enable the housing delivery rate to be maintained at an appropriate level over the plan period and the delivery of other benefits, such as allotments and other open space, in addition to the housing.
- 6.93. Greenfield development sites are likely to be needed to meet the housing need of the town over the plan period. Therefore in all sites, it is important that the rural character of the town and the aspirations under its Cittaslow status, are considered. These considerations include the impact of development on the landscape and on the character of the town.

Stalbridge and the larger villages

- 6.94. In addition to development at the main towns, limited development will be distributed to Stalbridge and the larger villages within the District. These settlements act as local service centres, supporting the larger centres. The villages and the scale of development at them has already been established and appraised under Core Policies 3 and 4. The options therefore considered for these settlements is whether growth should be distributed based purely on capacity within existing settlement boundaries or whether small scale greenfield developments are appropriate, meeting more closely local needs

- 6.95. The issues about placing development in the larger rural settlements primarily relate to access to services and impact of development on the character of the settlement and landscape. There is however a need for housing to be provided in the larger villages to help support their role as local service centres and to meet the needs of the existing residents.
- 6.96. Infilling within the current settlement boundaries can help to deliver the housing needed however the impact of such development can harm the character of a settlement through over intensification and increased urbanisation. In many cases it may be more appropriate to allocate a greenfield site in an appropriate location. This would relieve pressure on infill sites and allow considerations of settlement character to be taken into account. The potential impact on biodiversity and landscape should be considered in relation to the development of any greenfield site.
- 6.97. In addition to locating additional housing and economic growth at the most sustainable centres in the District, locating social infrastructure at them will also help to support their role as hubs serving their surrounding areas. In addition, the provision of public transport and safe cycling and walking routes to these service hubs will improve accessibility further. The difficulty with public transport provision in a rural area is however that again viability depends on the level of use. If public transport is not well used, public subsidy is needed.

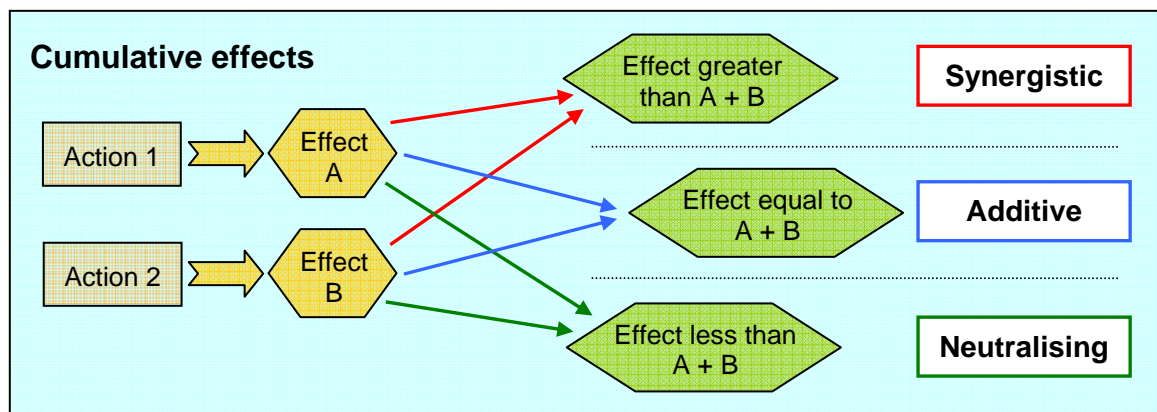
The Countryside

- 6.98. The overall strategy for the Countryside is one of restraint, only permitting development where a rural location is essential or to meet essential rural needs. This policy of restraint should help to preserve the countryside whilst still enabling some limited activity to support the uses that require a countryside location. If development was not restricted in the countryside, the characteristics that make it so valuable would be threatened and the quality would be harmed.

7.0 Analysis of the Preferred Policy Options

- 7.1. The SEA Directive indicates that the assessment of the DPD should include the evaluation of the interrelationship between significant effects on the environment including secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects (Figure 7.1). Secondary effects are impacts that are not directly related to the action being undertaken and which occur away from the original action. An example could be the increase in water abstraction as a result of development and the resultant loss in biodiversity in a nearby river.

Figure 7.1: Cumulative Effects



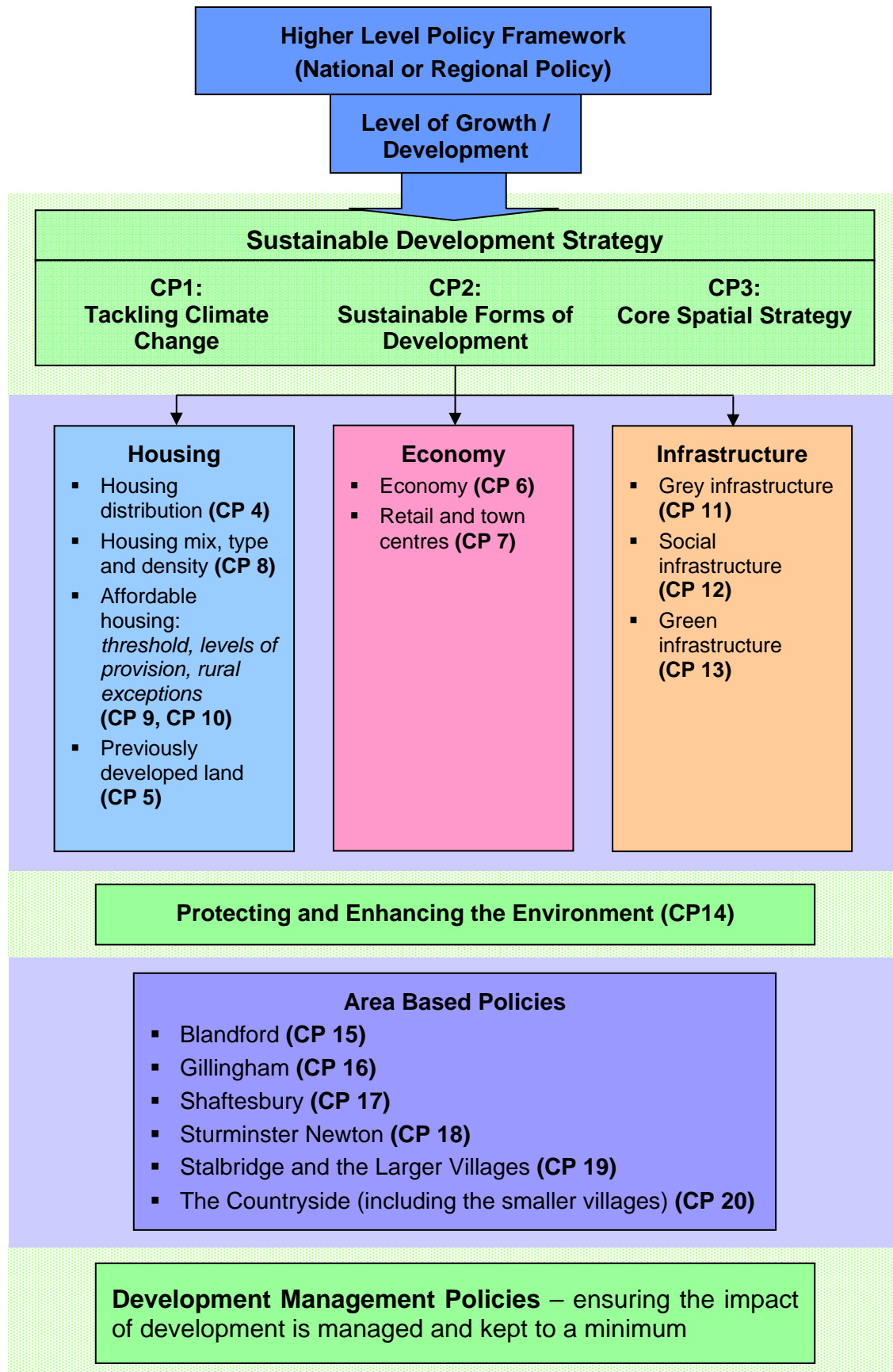
- 7.2. Cumulative effects are a result of incremental changes occurring from more than one action and the interactions between these changes. These are similar to secondary effects but relate to the magnitude of the effect produced.
- Additive effects are equivalent in magnitude to the simple addition of the two impacts. For example the additional parking spaces needed in a street if housing is built on a parking area.
 - Synergistic impacts are greater than that of the addition of the two composite effects. An example could be the loss of a species from an area due to the continued fragmentation of its habitat.
 - Neutralising effects produce a lesser effect than the sum of the individual actions that produce the effects in the first place. Examples include the increase in biodiversity resulting from habitat creation provided to offset the impact of housing development
- 7.3. The assessment should also be comprehensive looking at the possible duration of the predicted effects. An example could be where a short-term negative effect, such as the works needed to create a new local nature reserve as part of a development, could result in a long-term positive effect in increasing biodiversity in an area. Such a scheme should therefore be looked upon favourably by looking beyond the short-term.

- 7.4. The geographical scale of potential effects is also important. It could be that the negative effect of one option is significant but localised whereas the effect of another option is widespread. In this case, the localised impact is likely to be less significant overall than the more widespread impact.
- 7.5. In addition to the impact of actions taken, there will be a need for trade-offs between different competing objectives. It is important to understand what level of trade-off is acceptable between objectives. For example, is it acceptable to build on greenfield land to supply housing for local residents? Is it acceptable to allow housing development in the floodplain to meet local need?
- 7.6. Clearly the trade-off of developing on the floodplain is not acceptable as it exposes the future residents of the housing to risk from flooding. However, there will be a need to develop on greenfield land so that housing can be delivered. Such a trade-off is likely to be acceptable as long as the impact is reduced through consideration of the landscape impact, the biodiversity in an area, etc. The DPD therefore needs to include policies to mitigate the impact of such development.
- 7.7. Section 4.0 highlights some of the mitigation measures that are available to planning. These are designed to reduce the harmful effects of actions taken through the Core Strategy or to maximise potential positive effects. It is important that mitigation to reduce negative effects have a high likelihood of being implemented alongside the Core Strategy. If an additional policy is proposed, it will be essential that all of the policies in the DPD are considered together so that mitigation through policy is effective.
- 7.8. Site specific mitigation measures may well be needed such as the creation of a nature reserve to offset the biodiversity lost through development. It is essential that these types of mitigation are deliverable and full proposals for this need to be detailed in the subsequent Site Allocations DPD.

Appraisal of the Plan as a Whole

- 7.9. The Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD includes several overarching policies that set out the strategy for delivering development in a sustainable way. There are then policies specifically geared to delivering housing, economic development and the supporting infrastructure. In addition there are policies that seek to reduce the impact of the development that needs to take place.
- 7.10. The draft Policy Framework shown in Figure 7.2 indicates how the policies in the DPD fit together. The policy areas shown in green in this diagram (including the Development Management Policies) generally do not deliver development but seek to manage and offset the impact of the other policies. These therefore effectively act as mitigation policies.

Figure 7.2: Draft Policy Framework



- 7.11. To assess the potential impact of the plan, Core Policies 1 through to 14 have been assessed together with the town polices (CP 15, 16, 17 and 18) assessed separately. This enables the potential cumulative impacts of the strategy for delivering development to be assessed at the district wide scale. The impact of the settlement based policies has been covered in the previous section on a policy by policy basis.
- 7.12. Analysis of the options undertaken in the previous section has identified the most sustainable policy option when assessed against the SA framework. In most cases the policy options considered to be most sustainable have formed the preferred option and have been developed into a draft policy. The exceptions to this are Core Policy 1, Core Policy 4 and Core Policy 6 and the reasons why are detailed below. It is however a conclusion of the Sustainability Appraisal that the sustainability of the DPD could be improved by taking on the recommendations for these policies.
- 7.13. The option considered to be the most sustainable for *Core Policy 1* is to adopt higher requirements for sustainable construction and the provision of renewable energy. This would offer the biggest gains in reducing per capita greenhouse gas emissions and is a particular issue in North Dorset as per capita domestic CO₂ emissions for the District are above the UK and Regional average⁷. In addition, the rural nature of the District means that heating costs are generally greater due to the lack of mains gas in rural settlements as fuel oil (the only option in some areas) is more costly than mains gas. This can lead to increased instances of fuel poverty.
- 7.14. Although the energy and greenhouse gas savings of achieving the higher requirements of the Code for Sustainable Homes ahead of schedule are potentially large, the time and resources needed to collect evidence to support higher targets may result in the DPD being delayed and therefore developments occurring in less sustainable locations. It would however still be beneficial pushing for higher levels of energy efficiency as dwellings have an approximate lifetime of 100 years.
- 7.15. More substantial benefits may be gained through requiring a higher proportion of a development's energy requirement to be supplied through renewable sources and should be something pursued especially for example in large greenfield developments where space is available to incorporate renewably fuelled district heat and power schemes.
- 7.16. *Core Policy 4* relates to the distribution of housing between the main towns (Blandford, Gillingham and Shaftesbury) and the remainder of the District. Previously delivery against the Local Plan strategy has been for approximately a 60:40 split between the urban and rural

⁷ Local Authority Carbon Dioxide Emissions 2007

http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/statistics/climate_change/climate_change.aspx

areas. The three options considered were to have a rural focus, to have an urban focus or to have a more balanced approach somewhere in between these two extremes (about 70% in the three main towns and 30% in the villages). When assessing against the SA framework, the urban focus was considered to be the most sustainable however only marginally more so than having a more balanced approach.

- 7.17. Due to the fact that the difference between the two options was only marginal and the fact that over 50% of the population of the District live in the rural areas (outside of the three main towns), it was decided to opt for the balanced approach to housing distribution. This is thought to offer additional support to the facilities in the larger villages and therefore should help to make them more sustainable in the long run.
- 7.18. *Core Policy 6* outlines the distribution of employment development and on the basis of the Workspace Strategy seeks to allocate 70% of land at the three main towns. This approach would align the location of employment development with that of housing development however it is not possible to identify who will work at an employment site and therefore it would be better to focus a greater proportion of employment development at the main towns to support their roles as service centres. This approach is likely to result in travel to the towns from the rural areas for work. However, once at work many people use their breaks and lunchtimes to visit shops, banks etc. combining multiple trips into one trip for work.
- 7.19. If a more rural focus was permitted, additional trips to the towns would be needed to visit shops, banks etc. increasing the impact of development and increasing the need to travel. In addition, to use the businesses developed in a rural location, individuals would have to travel away from the service centres, decreasing the viability of these centres further and encouraging reliance on the car. The focus on the towns is considered to encourage a more efficient use of an individual's time.
- 7.20. To improve the sustainability of this policy it is recommended that a greater focus be placed on the main towns, away from the more rural areas to strengthen the towns' roles as service hubs, serving the rural areas that surround them.

Since this recommendation was made, and in the light of the results of the detailed study into the expansion of Gillingham, an additional employment site has been identified at Gillingham. This additional site would shift the balance to near 80% at the three main towns. Although this shift puts the emphasis on the main towns, the actual amount of land available for development at smaller centres remains the same and therefore does not fully solve the issue. It is important that when an employer looks to set up business in the District, that it is directed towards a site in one of the three main towns as a priority rather than to a site in a smaller settlement. This additional land is as a result of an earlier assessment of the plan and indicates the iterative nature of the SA.

- 7.21. The appraisal against the SA objectives of the Core Policies incorporating the preferred options was undertaken using a matrix. This matrix is shown in Figure 7.3 and highlights the potential overall impact of the Core Policies when assessed as a whole.
- 7.22. The impact of Core Policy 1 on the environment (SA objective 10) is negative as it does the minimum in terms of renewable energy and energy efficiency. To score positively, the policy would need to go beyond the national and regional targets and encourage greater energy efficiency. The inclusion of higher targets would therefore reduce the impact on the environment beyond that which will happen under national policy.
- 7.23. The impact of Core Policy 2 is to ensure that developments incorporate measures to reduce their impact on the environment. This also offers social and economic benefits and therefore the policy scores positively against most of the SA objectives. Core Policy 3 will be to focus development in the most sustainable locations and therefore again it scores positive for the majority of the SA objectives.
- 7.24. The policies which promote development (Core Policies 4, 6 and 10) score negatively against several of the environmental SA objectives. This is because the act of development generally has a negative impact on the environment and this is reflected in the matrix. The impact can however be reduced through mitigation measures and careful selection of sites and other policies in the DPD seek to do this.
- 7.25. Several potentially negative environmental impacts also result from Core Policies 11 and 12 due to the potential impacts resulting from infrastructure developments. However, there are limited road improvements proposed and those that are included are related to minor junction improvements primarily to enhance road safety. It is however important that road improvements only take place if the impact of development not taking place is greater than that of development occurring. When developments do happen, it is important that adequate mitigation of the impacts is incorporated into the development proposals.
- 7.26. The negative impact on “meeting local needs locally” associated with rural exception sites relates to the lack of facilities in rural locations. The policy helps to meet local housing needs at the location where they arise but makes it more difficult for the residents of these new dwellings to meet their everyday needs locally, necessitating travel by car.
- 7.27. Affordable housing scores positively for promoting energy efficiency as affordable homes are required to be built to higher standards than market homes. It may be that when a developer builds these homes that the market homes built on site will also be built to the higher standards as it is likely to be easier to build homes to one standard rather than developing two.

Figure 7.3: Core Policy Matrix – All Policies

SA Objectives		Policy 1	Policy 2	Policy 3	Policy 4	Policy 5	Policy 6	Policy 7	Policy 8	Policy 9	Policy 10	Policy 11	Policy 12	Policy 13	Policy 14	
		Tackling Climate Change	Delivering Sustainable Forms of Development	Core Spatial Strategy	Housing Distribution	Managing Housing Land Supply	Economy	Retail and Other Town Centre Uses	Housing Mix, Type and Density	Affordable Housing	Affordable Housing: Rural Exception Schemes	Grey Infrastructure	Social Infrastructure	Green Infrastructure	Protecting and Enhancing the Environment	
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing that is affordable and that meets the needs of the community	o	o	+	++	-	o	o	++	++	o	o	o	-	
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	o	++	++	++	++	+	++	+	+	o	+	++	+	-
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	+	+	o	+	o	+	+	+	++	+	+	+	++	+
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	o	o	+	+	o	o	+	+	++	+	+	+	+	o
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed developments	+	++	o	o	o	o	o	+	o	o	o	o	+	+

Figure 7.3: Core Policy Matrix – All Policies (continued)

SA Objectives			Policy 1	Policy 2	Policy 3	Policy 4	Policy 5	Policy 6	Policy 7	Policy 8	Policy 9	Policy 10	Policy 11	Policy 12	Policy 13	Policy 14
			Tackling Climate Change	Delivering Sustainable Forms of Development	Core Spatial Strategy	Housing Distribution	Managing Housing land Supply	Economy	Retail and Other Town Centre Uses	Housing Mix, Type and Density	Affordable Housing	Affordable Housing: Rural Exception Schemes	Grey Infrastructure	Social Infrastructure	Green Infrastructure	Protecting and Enhancing the Environment
Effective protection of the environment	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	+	+	0	0	0	0	?	0	0	0	0	0	+	+
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	0	0	0	-	0	-	0	0	0	-	-	-	++	++
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes	0	+	?	+	0	+	-	-	0	-	-	?	+	++
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond the aesthetic value	0	0	0	-	0	-	0	0	0	-	-	-	+	++

Figure 7.3: Core Policy Matrix – All Policies (continued)

SA Objectives			Policy 1	Policy 2	Policy 3	Policy 4	Policy 5	Policy 6	Policy 7	Policy 8	Policy 9	Policy 10	Policy 11	Policy 12	Policy 13	Policy 14
			Tackling Climate Change	Delivering Sustainable Forms of Development	Core Spatial Strategy	Housing Distribution	Managing Housing Land Supply	Economy	Retail and Other Town Centre Uses	Housing Mix, Type and Density	Affordable Housing	Affordable Housing: Rural Exception Schemes	Grey Infrastructure	Social Infrastructure	Green Infrastructure	Protecting and Enhancing the Environment
Prudent use of natural resources	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	-	+	+	-	+	-	0	0	0	-	+	-	+	+
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	+	+	0	-	+	-	++	+	0	?	?	0	+	+
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0

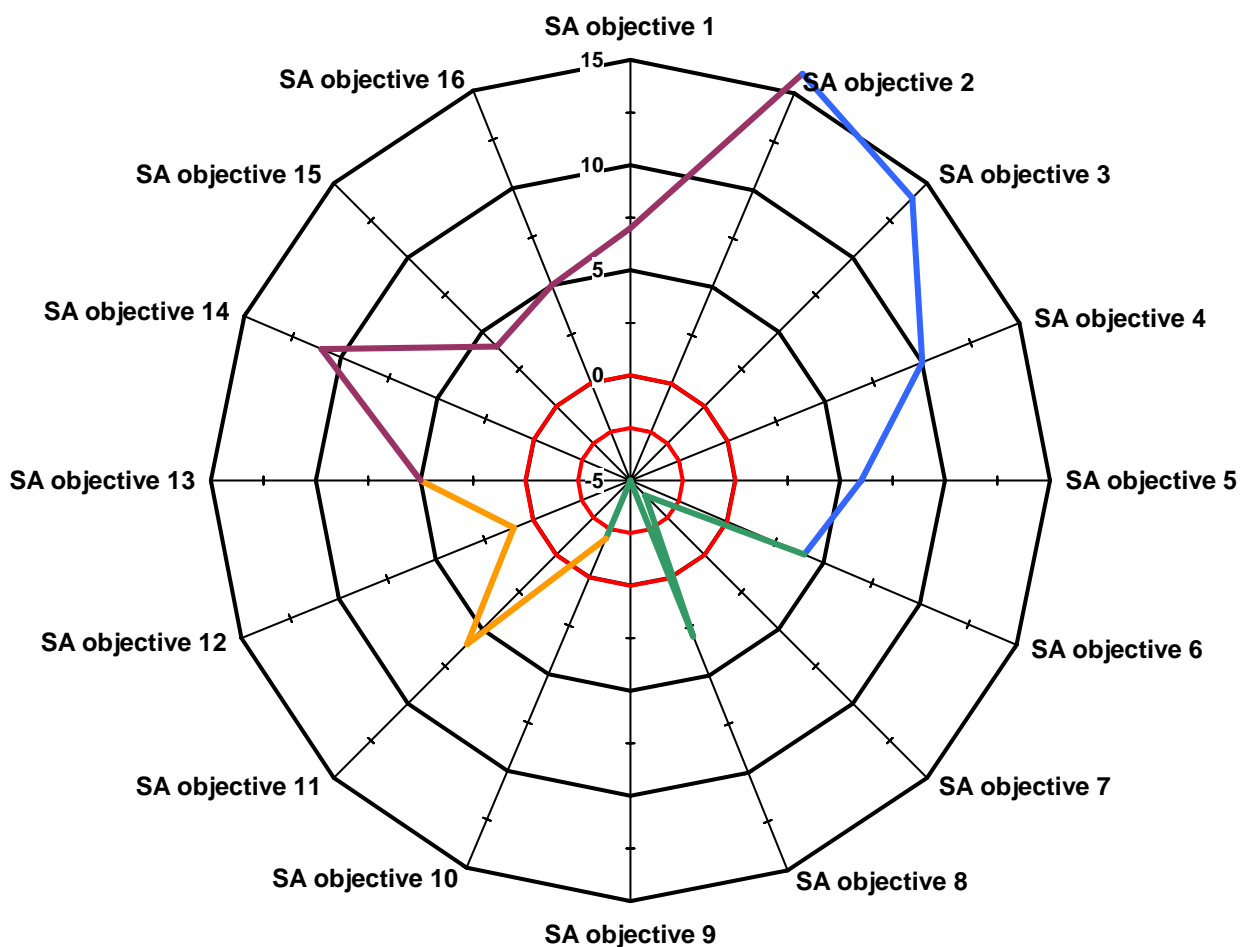
Figure 7.3: Core Policy Matrix – All Policies (continued)

SA Objectives		Policy 1	Policy 2	Policy 3	Policy 4	Policy 5	Policy 6	Policy 7	Policy 8	Policy 9	Policy 10	Policy 11	Policy 12	Policy 13	Policy 14
		Tackling Climate Change	Delivering Sustainable Forms of Development	Core Spatial Strategy	Housing Distribution	Managing Housing Land Supply	Economy	Retail and Other Town Centre Uses	Housing Mix, Type and Density	Affordable Housing	Affordable Housing: Rural Exception Schemes	Grey Infrastructure	Social Infrastructure	Green Infrastructure	Protecting and Enhancing the Environment
Maintenance of sustainable levels of economic growth and employment	13	o	+	o	o	o	+	+	o	o	o	++	+	o	-
	14	o	++	+	+	+	+	++	o	o	-	++	+	+	o
	15	o	o	+	o	o	+	+	o	o	o	+	o	o	o
	16	o	o	o	o	o	o	++	++	o	o	o	+	o	o

7.28. When looking across SA objectives it can be seen that there are several SA objectives that consistently loose out when the potential impacts of policies are assessed. Figure 7.4 highlights this.

7.29. This cumulative impact will need mitigation measures put in place to minimise negative impacts and where possible enable positive effects to be enhanced. It should however be noted that the options considered (with the three exceptions highlighted above) are thought to be the most sustainable within the higher level policy framework in which the DPD has been prepared.

Figure 7.4: Cumulative Impact on SA Objectives



7.30. The creation of balanced communities (SA objective 2) is clearly positively impacted on by the Core Policies. This is the main aim of the DPD and therefore this can be expected. Many of the Core Policies reinforce each other on this issue such as the provision of social infrastructure in areas where residential development will be taking place.

7.31. The Core Spatial Strategy is the overarching policy to guide the location of all developments and therefore it is essential that this approach is adhered to. This strategy also helps to reduce the need to

travel through enabling local needs to be met locally and hence this SA objective also scores highly in the appraisal.

- 7.32. The secondary effects of supplying social infrastructure, housing and employment in a coordinated manner are likely to be positive in terms of social inclusion and community cohesion and in terms of the health of the population. This relates to the improved accessibility of essential facilities which will result and this is generally thought to improve community cohesion.
- 7.33. Although SA objective 11 - to conserve natural resources scores positively, the preferred policy options will not necessarily conserve natural resources as the act of development puts pressure on them. However, locating the majority of development in existing urban areas will reduce the need for additional supporting infrastructure and therefore resource use. It is therefore seen as the most sustainable option for the location of the majority of development.
- 7.34. Cumulatively SA objectives 7, 9 and 10 all score negatively. Objective 7 relates to habitats and biodiversity, objective 9 relates to landscapes and objective 10 relates to mitigating climate change. These are all environmental objectives and therefore the environment is consistently losing out in policy assessments. This negative environmental impact can be expected when development takes place especially in a rural area such as North Dorset.
- 7.35. The negative impact on biodiversity and habitats is generally related to the potential loss of habitats as a result of development. To reduce this negative impact, it will be important to ensure that development sites are carefully selected and that biodiversity and habitats are incorporated into developments through green infrastructure provision. It will also be important that habitat features such as trees, hedgerows and buffer strips are not harmed by developments. Where possible habitats should be restored to offset any loss that results from development.
- 7.36. The impact on habitats is closely related to landscape impact and therefore many measures to protect habitats are likely to result in landscape benefits. Incorporation of trees and other green infrastructure into development will help them to merge into the rural landscape and careful site selection to avoid sensitive landscapes will also help.
- 7.37. The mitigation of climate change (SA objective 10) also scored negatively in the assessment and this was the most negative impact overall. This is closely related to the promotion of energy and resource efficiency (SA objective 12). Measures that could be taken to mitigate climate change relate to reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. The increase in population will result in an overall increase in greenhouse gas emissions however through energy efficiency measures and renewable energy technology, the per capita emissions can be reduced.

- 7.38. If higher standards and targets were incorporated into Core Policy 1 the impact on the environment would be reduced and this is one of the main recommendations of this SA report. In addition, the mitigation of climate change should be incorporated into each policy so that all policies seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions rather than just relying on Core Policy 1.
- 7.39. The full recommendations resulting from the appraisal of the plan are detailed in Section 8.0. It is thought that if these are all implemented, the impact of the DPD on these environmental SA objectives, and therefore on the environment as a whole, will be less.

Potential impacts on SEA Topics

- 7.40. In the SA Scoping Report, which forms the basis for this assessment, each of the SA objectives was linked to a specific topic detailed in the SEA Directive. This enables the potential impact on these SEA topics to be considered through the assessed potential impacts on the SA objectives. Therefore where an SA objective scores positively, the SEA topic is likely to be enhanced but where the SA objective scores negatively, the SEA topic is likely to be harmed as a result of the Core Strategy being implemented.

- 7.41. The SEA topic associated with each SA objective is detailed in Table 7.1. These topics are those detailed in the SEA Directive however, as part of this SA clarity was needed to enable potential impacts to be considered. An interpretation of the SEA topics was used as follows:

Biodiversity	Incorporating considerations of Flora and Fauna and the potential impacts on international, national and locally designated sites.
Population	Incorporating crime, diversity and education and training
Human Health	Including the impact of housing, access to services and deprivation on human health
(Fauna	<i>Included under biodiversity)</i>
(Flora	<i>Included under biodiversity)</i>
Soil	Includes considerations of soil pollution and loss of productive soils
Water	incorporating flooding, water efficiency and water pollution
Air	including air pollution from traffic and industry
Climatic Factors	Including energy consumption and energy efficiency in relation to climate change
Material Assets	Including the use of natural resources and waste
Landscape	considerations of the impact of development on the landscape
Cultural Heritage	including architectural and archaeological heritage and the impact on the built and ancient environment

Table 7.1: The SA objectives and SEA Directive topics

SA Objective		SEA Topics
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>		
1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	Population, Human health
2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	Population, Human health
3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	Human health, Population
4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	Cultural heritage, Population, Human health
5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	Population, Human health, Cultural heritage
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>		
6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	Climatic factors, Biodiversity, Fauna, Flora, Water
7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	Biodiversity, Fauna, Flora, Landscape
8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes	Material assets, Landscape, Cultural heritage
9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	Landscape, Material assets, Biodiversity, Flora, Fauna, Cultural heritage, Soil, Human health

Table 7.1: The SA objectives and SEA Directive topics (continued)

SA Objective		SEA Topics
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>		
10	Reduce impacts on the environment	Biodiversity, Fauna, Flora, Soil, Water, Air, Climatic factors
11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	Soil, Material assets
12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	Water, Air, Climatic factors
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>		
13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	<i>None</i>
14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	Population, Climatic factors
15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	Population, Material assets
16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	Population, Human health

7.42. Although the impact on these particular topics can be assessed using this method, many of the topics are interrelated and therefore unpicking the impacts of the plan can be very difficult. The main points assessed from the appraisal of the plan are detailed below however due to the interrelationship between the topics, monitoring the impact of plan implementation is essential to ensure that action is taken if the impacts are not what are expected. If this is the case, action should be taken to minimise negative impacts and enhance positive ones.

7.43. The implementation of the policies in the DPD would see significant amounts of development take place in the District. This development is likely to have an impact on the District's environment and this has the potential to be significant if not managed well.

- 7.44. Assessment of the cumulative effects of the plan indicates that there is potential for an impact on biodiversity, flora and fauna. This is primarily due to the development that is promoted and the fact that this will mainly be on greenfield land. It will therefore be important that the impact of development on biodiversity is considered from the outset when identifying land for development. In addition, at the design stage of a development, space will need to be made available for biodiversity through the provision of Green Infrastructure as required by Core Policy 13 and where possible, habitat restoration should be encouraged.
- 7.45. Developments on greenfield land are also likely to have an impact on the landscape in which they sit. Again green infrastructure in the form of trees, hedgerows and open space are essential to soften the impact of developments on the landscape.
- 7.46. Material assets and cultural heritage in the form of listed buildings, conservation areas and the character of settlements can also be harmed by development. The preparation of town and village design statements will help to protect settlements from harmful, poorly designed development and preserve settlement character.
- 7.47. It is also important that the values that people hold relative to where they live are not diluted due to development. An example may be the values and traditions associated with a village green. If development was permitted on the green then these values would be permanently lost, harming community cohesion.
- 7.48. The impact of development can also be through the pollution and over exploitation of natural resources. This can harm biodiversity, human health and worsen climate change and therefore it is essential that these impacts are minimised. The water efficiency and energy efficiency of all buildings need to be optimised to reduce water abstraction and the need for additional energy production, especially from non renewable sources.
- 7.49. The pollution and permanent loss of productive soils as a result of development also needs to be minimised. This can be through diffuse pollution from rainwater run-off or through point pollution from industry. SuDS and other measures will need to be incorporated to ensure that pollution is minimised and that the most productive soils are safeguarded, only being developed if no other more suitable sites are available.
- 7.50. Although the impact on some specific topics from some aspects of the plan could be negative, in general it is considered that the plan will have a positive outcome in most areas. An example would be where the cultural heritage and material assets associated with a listed building could be harmed by development but due to the protection of these offered by Core Policy 14, the impact is likely to be minimal if felt at all.

- 7.51. Another example would be the positive moves made to reducing the impact on air quality and on greenhouse gas emissions through reducing the need to travel set against the need to ensure that all buildings are built to the highest energy efficiency standards and incorporate renewable energy production. The strategy currently does not encourage developments to go the extra mile on energy efficiency nor on renewable energy production and therefore this aspect of the strategy does not help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions beyond the minimum required nationally.
- 7.52. The assessment of the plan indicates that the impact on the District's population and the health of this population will be positive due to the provision of housing and employment. Provision of housing will help meet the needs of the growing population of the district enabling them to live in suitable, decent housing. This will improve their health especially their mental health. In addition, the strategy promotes cycling, walking and the provision of green space within developments with the aim of creating attractive places to live with easy access to facilities via alternative to the car. This will also encourage more healthy lifestyles through increased activity.

8.0 Sustainability Appraisal Recommendations

- 8.1. As a result of appraising the Core Strategy, several areas have been identified where changes could be made to improve the sustainability of the plan, reducing negative impacts or enhancing positive ones. In addition there are opportunities that arise out of the act of development that should be capitalised upon to bring about benefits to North Dorset.
- 8.2. The recommendations therefore arising out of the SA of the Core Strategy are detailed below. Some of these recommendations have already been implemented due to the iterative nature of the way the SA has been undertaken. Where this is the case, it has been indicated below.

General comments

- 8.3. Due to the fact that policies are centred on themes and that each seeks to minimise the impacts from development it is important to ensure that all policies are considered and enforced effectively as a package and not individual policies.
- 8.4. Policies need to be more proactive setting out aspirations for the area and seek to encourage developments that “go the extra mile” whilst also setting minimum standards.
- 8.5. There is a need to ensure that companion strategies and plans (Site Allocations DPD, Green Infrastructure and Gillingham town centre regeneration) are prepared and adopted as soon after Core Strategy is adopted as possible to maximise benefits.
- 8.6. The main aim has to be to ensure that economic and residential developments progress at a similar rate and are supported by the necessary infrastructure. Therefore there is a need to ensure that infrastructure is delivered to support the residential and employment growth that will take place. Developer contributions will be required to enable this to happen and this is essential to achieving sustainable development
- 8.7. There is a need to ensure that benefits of development are capitalised upon. For example opportunities for improving the permeability of towns (through walking and cycling routes), SuDS and Renewable Energy to serve wider areas (district heating on industrial estates for example) etc. This also relates to efforts to minimise harmful effects and maximise positive ones either through the location of development or through other measures such as green infrastructure, incorporated into developments.
- 8.8. Implications of growth include increased traffic on roads. This could result in a decline in air quality, an increase in traffic congestion and a decrease in road safety. There is a need therefore to have a package of measures to offset these impacts. Examples include promotion of cycling and walking and public transport, locating development in best served locations to reduce distance travelled, improvements to

junctions, management of parking etc. There is therefore a need to ensure that the environmental impact of any road improvements is minimised and only permitted if gains outweigh the loss. Mitigation against such impacts should always be incorporated into a scheme.

General sustainability comments

- 8.9. Development will generally bring about social and economic benefits but is likely to be negative environmentally. Therefore there is a need to take action and be proactive with regard to the environment to prevent degradation of environmental quality and interference with environmental processes. For example the cumulative effect of every house being built to a high energy efficient standard and renewable energy being installed will reduce greenhouse gas emissions overall, reducing the potential change in global temperature related to climate change.
- 8.10. It is therefore essential that all developments (residential, employment and commercial) meet the requirements as set out in a package of measures (sustainability criteria) to mitigate impacts of development. For example SuDS, sustainable construction, energy efficient buildings, passive ventilation, renewable energy, design, green infrastructure provision as these can also offer benefits to the wider area. A list similar to this should be incorporated into Core Policy 2.

Climate change – adaptation

- 8.11. The Core Strategy needs to highlight the three adaptation issues of flooding, water stress and heat stress in the challenges section of the introduction to set the scene in relation to the need to adapt to inevitable climatic change. These should then be incorporated into Core Policies 1 and 2.
- 8.12. The impacts of climate change on the natural environment of North Dorset were highlighted in the recent Natural England report as summarised in the SA Scoping report. Potential impacts include:
- *Due to seasonal drought and flood events a change in species and communities that make up habitats will occur;*
 - *Due to high winds, veteran trees and isolated parkland trees will be lost;*
 - *Due to an increase in winter rainfall soil erosion will result in silt and nutrients being washed in streams and rivers;*
 - *Due to weather extremes the amount, distribution and type of access and recreation in the area will be affected and that an increase in visitor numbers will have negative impacts on wildlife and landscapes.*
- Potentially, the landscape of the Character Area could be significantly impacted by climate change and it is possible that by*

the end of 21st century, the area will resemble that of the southern Mediterranean at present.

- 8.13. There is a need to ensure that flooding from all sources is avoided by all developments (unless benefits outweigh risks substantially as highlighted in Planning Policy Statement 25⁸) and that SuDS are incorporated into all schemes to avoid making situation worse either further downstream or to neighbouring areas. Careful site selection is therefore important.

This recommendation for the inclusion of SuDS in all new development schemes has now been incorporated into Core Policy 2 and Core Policy 11.

- 8.14. There is a need to ensure that town centre developments are not vulnerable to flooding especially as there are areas adjacent to existing town centres which could accommodate town centre growth and that are not vulnerable to flooding.

- 8.15. Urban heat can be tackled through passive cooling measures such as shading and ventilation rather than active cooling such as air conditioning. If developments are designed poorly without taking this into account, the result will be increased reliance on active cooling measures which increase greenhouse gas emissions. Core Policies 1 and 2 should therefore include some mention of the need for developments to tackle increased heat due to raised summer temperatures⁹ and the urban heat island effect by incorporating measures such as:

- Shading from sun (such as wider eaves and external blinds on sunny side of buildings)
- Controllable ventilation during the day (so that if air is cooler outside, ventilation can be used but if it is hotter outside, it can be prevented from warming the building. It can also be used at night to release heat stored during the day)
- Increased thermal mass of a building (through using heavier building materials or through insulation resulting in reduced extreme temperatures)
- Improving the air tightness of a building (reduces unwanted draughts)

⁸ Planning Policy Statement 25 – Development and Flood Risk

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps25floodrisk>

⁹ Beating the heat: Keeping UK buildings cool in a warming climate, 2005

http://www.ukcip.org.uk/index.php?id=322&option=com_content&task=view

Climate change - mitigation

- 8.16. Climate change needs to be a consideration in all policies in the Core Strategy and not just in the climate change policy. Examples include housing policy where mitigation and adaptation are important, economy where energy efficiency and reducing impact on environment are important. This approach ensures that tackling Climate Change is part of the whole strategy rather than being a single policy which is weighed up against all the other policies.
- 8.17. Due to the need for urgent action in cutting greenhouse gas emissions and the amount of time it takes to produce a Core Strategy, it is important that higher renewable energy targets are incorporated into policy now rather than waiting for a revision of the plan. In addition, renewable energy is not actively promoted in policy. It is important to have a Development Management Policy on Renewable Energy installations so that amenity impacts of renewable energy developments are minimised. The Core Policy should be strengthened to be more proactive and a Development Management Policy should be included to “manage” proposals as they arise.

A Development Management Policy has been incorporated into the plan to manage the impact of renewable energy schemes although the Core Policy has not been made more proactive.

- 8.18. High density developments (eg 1 and 2 bed flats) offer economies of scale for connection to a district heating supply (ie a block of flats can be heated centrally cheaper than the equivalent number of detached houses due to the loss of heat through pipes). It is therefore highlighting this as an example of where energy efficiency measures can be incorporated into schemes to reduce the amount (not proportion) of energy needed from renewable sources.

Housing

- 8.19. The mix of housing will help create balanced and inclusive communities however affordable units should be “pepper-potted” across estates to prevent the creation of mono-tenure “ghettos”.

The Policy has since been amended to ensure that affordable housing is “tenure blind” and “pepper-potted” across larger sites.

- 8.20. Thresholds and percentages need to be met in order to deliver the required amount of affordable housing on a development site. However, where schemes can be demonstrated as not being viable, lower percentages may be appropriate to ensure that housing and wider infrastructure benefits are realised (a site by site approach may be necessary).

Design

- 8.21. Several of the Core Policies highlighted the need for good design to reduce the impact of development on the landscape, townscape and on heritage assets. It is also important to climate change adaptation and offers health benefits. A Development Management policy on design should be incorporated to set out the important aspects to North Dorset of the design of developments.
- 8.22. It is important that a design policy sets out how developments should function and integrate into the settlements with which they are associated. This long term view should include infrastructure provision on developments such as green infrastructure and access to, for example community halls.
- 8.23. A design policy should apply to all developments including residential (all tenures), public, commercial and employment developments and in all locations. In town centres good design can encourage regeneration and the inclusion of green space can encourage biodiversity, outdoor leisure and recreation, creating vibrant town centres.
- 8.24. Where development takes place, having a flexible density approach to reflect the character of the area is important. If a rigid density policy is in place, the character is likely to be adversely harmed. Village and Town Design Statements are a good community derived tool for identifying areas of special character and the density / design approach appropriate for certain areas within settlements.

A Development Management Policy on Design has been incorporated into the Plan

Built heritage

- 8.25. All developments should integrate with the existing built form and also within the wider landscape. The regeneration sites in the towns offer opportunities to achieve this through heritage led regeneration. The regeneration sites should ensure that wider benefits are realised and that they do not just deliver housing. Regeneration should deliver employment opportunities, improved facilities and a general improvement to the built environment.

Landscape

- 8.26. Developments should minimise landscape impact through good design and retention of trees and hedges. In addition, planting of species capable of adapting to climate change should be incorporated into developments to help screen them in the landscape.

A Development Management Policy protecting important landscape features such as trees and hedgerows and encouraging new planting of species that can adapt to climate change, has been incorporated into the Plan

Biodiversity and habitats

- 8.27. High levels of development are likely to have significant impacts on biodiversity and on habitats and therefore development needs to be closely managed through measures such as:
- Avoiding the most sensitive areas
 - Retaining hedgerows, trees and buffer strips to create wildlife corridors and incorporate habitats into urban areas
 - Restore habitats as identified by the South West Nature Map including through identifying land associated with a development and requiring habitat restoration or nature reserve creation on that land before development takes place. This will help to offset the impacts of development on habitats.

Cycling and walking

- 8.28. To promote less reliance on the car, there is a need to provide safe and accessible routes between developments and shops, schools, employment etc. In addition, settlements that rely on larger settlements for service and facility provision should be linked through the provision of safe cycling and walking routes (for example connecting Shillingstone to Blandford via the Trailway). In addition to the provision of cycle routes, secure cycle parking at both ends of the route needs to be provided (ie at home and at work). Minimum standards should be set out in a Transport Development Management Policy
- 8.29. Due to the fact that cycle and foot paths are often planted with trees and other vegetation, they can act as wildlife corridors and can help to mitigate heat stress. Their use will also improve the health of the population through increased exercise and improve accessibility across the district. It is however important that the needs of the mobility impaired are considered in footpath and cycle route provision.
- 8.30. A foot and cycle bridge over the railway in Gillingham is important to link developments in the south of town to the north of the town and the town centre. This will help to encourage more sustainable travel in the town and also link the mainly residential north of the town with the areas to the south of the railway, including the major employment centres. This will improve community cohesion, encourage active lifestyles and improve access to services.

Natural resources

- 8.31. It is important that developments conserve natural resources through the construction phase as well as when occupied. This is especially important in regeneration schemes and in development on brownfield land.

- 8.32. In addition, to allow groundwater recharge and to reduce diffuse pollution, SuDS should be required on all new development sites. This will help to reduce water stress and therefore help to adapt to climate change.

Countryside

- 8.33. The countryside policy, the housing policy and the economy policy all make provision for employment and residential developments in the countryside. This is to some extent contrary to the overall spatial strategy of focusing development in the larger settlements. There may be some need for such developments but these should be the exceptions and should be tightly controlled.
- 8.34. Economy: Only small scale business units are appropriate in the countryside to enable business start-ups. Businesses should then relocate to the main towns. Any larger scale development will encourage unsustainable patterns of development and encourage commuting. In addition, the role of the towns as service centres will be lessened through the dispersed approach.
- 8.35. Housing: Housing development in rural areas should be to meet identified local needs through a rural exceptions policy or for agricultural or other occupational workers' dwellings. The focus for rural exceptions should be well served centres restricting such development in poorly served areas due to problems of rural isolation and increased cost of living.

Policy by policy

Policy 1 – Tackling Climate Change

- 8.36. This policy seeks to meet national / regional targets for the Code for Sustainable Homes and Renewable Energy provision. It does not promote energy efficiency and sustainable energy production above that already required and could do more to achieve greater greenhouse gas emissions savings. A proactive approach to Renewable Energy production should be incorporated into this policy incorporating the setting of targets for the district as a whole.
- 8.37. Suggestion for amended wording:

Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Council will seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with the most up-to-date national and / or regional target (currently 30% reduction by 2026 relative to 1990 levels)¹. Measures that will contribute towards this target in North Dorset include:

- *Encouraging energy efficiency;*
- *Requiring the use of sustainable construction techniques;*
- *Supporting the production of energy from renewable sources;*
and
- *Enabling local needs to be met locally.*

Encouraging Energy Efficiency

*Improving energy efficiency helps cut householder costs and fuel poverty **and reduces greenhouse gas emissions**. It also reduces the number of **renewable** energy installations required to achieve the targets for the production of energy from renewable sources set by the Government. In order to meet the national target on reductions in carbon emissions, the Council is committed to improving energy efficiency in both new and existing homes.*

- 8.38. The potential to incorporate some consequential improvements (such as cavity wall insulation or solar panels) to dwellings when extensions / modifications that require planning permission are applied for should be investigated. This will help to improve the energy efficiency of the existing dwelling stock.
- 8.39. In addition the simplification of the development control and building control application process for the retrofitting of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy installations should be investigated to encourage take up.

- 8.40. Gathering of evidence to support the incorporation of higher targets for the Code and Renewable Energy should be investigated to assess if it is possible to go the extra mile. If this is found not to be possible, each of the non-mandatory elements of the Code for Sustainable Homes should be explicitly sought in Development Management Policies for example cycle storage, home office provision, outdoor drying space and daylighting.
- 8.41. The note included to indicate that national and regional targets may change during the planning application process and that higher targets should be incorporated is a very positive and important point. However the policy should encourage the highest levels of sustainable construction rather than just sticking to the national and regional targets.
- 8.42. The anticipated effects of climate change are more extreme than specified in policy. This section should be strengthened in the light of the Natural England report into impacts on the two AONB.

Policy 2 – Delivering Sustainable Forms of Development

- 8.43. This policy sets out the criteria that need to be met to achieve more sustainable forms of development. In some aspects the policy does not go far enough in requiring developments to meet the criteria. For example there are SuDS methods appropriate to all ground conditions and therefore they should be required in all new build developments not just “encouraged” or “where necessary”. In addition, energy efficiency and energy from renewable sources are important to achieving sustainable development and therefore should be mentioned in the policy to help reduce energy consumption.

Since appraising this policy additional wording has been incorporated into Core Policy 1 regarding energy efficiency and renewable energy and Core Policy 11 has been reworked to incorporate the requirement for SuDS. The policy will be reappraised as part of the next stage of the SA process.

- 8.44. The policy mentions that “...sufficient water will be available to meet the development needs over the plan period...” but what about other adjacent areas and into the future. There is a need to ensure that water efficiency and conservation is required in all developments to preserve water for the future. The current wording is a short sighted and unsustainable view that does not consider the wider impacts of the strategy.
- 8.45. Developers should be required to provide waste management plans for construction waste and these should recycle as much of this waste as possible to prevent landfill as required by the Landfill Directive.
- 8.46. Flood risk at the site level is difficult to assess as it is influenced by factors outside of the boundaries of a site. In addition, actions taken within a site to manage flood risk will have an impact on neighbouring areas and could result in increased risk. For this reason Strategic Flood

Risk Assessments have been devised which look at flooding from all sources over a wider area. Site specific flood appraisals should be required for all new development sites highlighting measures to minimise flooding, regardless of the source of risk.

- 8.47. The policy mentions townscape and landscape under design but it may be worthwhile mentioning heritage assets such as listed buildings and SAMs. This is mentioned above under design and may be more appropriate to include the detail in a Development Management Policy on Design.

Policy 3 – Core Spatial Strategy

- 8.48. This policy focuses development on larger centres within the District based on an assessment of the level of facilities and population within them. This is a fundamental element of reducing the overall impacts of development and therefore needs to be strongly adhered to. The overall strategy also needs to be applied to all types of development not just residential.
- 8.49. Development at Fontmell Magna needs to be careful of habitats issues due to the proximity of internationally important habitats. Any possible impact needs to be mitigated through traffic management on the C13 route and management of recreation on the downs.

Policy 4 – Housing Distribution

- 8.50. This policy seeks to deliver housing in locations where land and constraints permit whilst meeting economic potential and attempting to create self contained settlements. It does not seek to reconcile provision with housing need although location of need is in similar proportions to that proposed. The level of housing need has primarily been used to inform affordable housing provision.
- 8.51. Affordable housing targets for developments aim to deliver affordable housing to the highest level possible in all locations, reflecting the likely viability of a typical development. Targets are set high as the identified annual need for affordable housing is above the rate of delivery of all housing tenures. One potential impact of this may be to reduce the ability of some developments to deliver other requirements such as social infrastructure, especially if other costs (such as in a regeneration scheme) are high.
- 8.52. It may be that in some schemes, the level of affordable housing along with other infrastructure would make the scheme unviable and therefore priorities should be identified and a flexible approach used.
- 8.53. Affordable housing need in the District's smaller villages (outside of policy B and C settlements) should be met through rural exceptions rather than through limited growth due to lack of services in these villages.

Policy 5 – Managing Housing Land Supply

- 8.54. The policy seeks to control the rate of housing provision based on location and to control the split between development on brownfield and greenfield land. It sets a challenging target for development on brownfield land based on suitable identified sites.
- 8.55. The policy enables action to be taken if the split between the three main towns and the rest of the district deviates from the planned rate but does not make any provision for action if the rate of delivery in the countryside deviates too far from the planned rate. The rate of development in the countryside should be monitored and action taken if the proportion in rural areas is too high.

Policy 6 – Economy

- 8.56. This policy sets out the approach to employment related development.
- 8.57. The current economic downturn is likely to be a temporary effect and part of the overall economic cycle. Growth will pick up again within the plan period and therefore it is not important to the overall strategy. The Core Strategy should be looking at the longer term view and set out the strategy for enabling sustainable economic growth rather than planning for the short term ups and downs of the economic cycle.
- 8.58. The approach to economic development should include a bullet point “to encourage the provision of the necessary infrastructure to support business activity”. This infrastructure would include broadband, water supply, renewable energy, district heat and power installations, public transport provision etc.
- 8.59. The policy allows for about 30% of employment development to take place outside of the main towns. However a greater focus on the towns will further support their roles as service centres, acting as hubs for the rural areas. It will also enable the necessary infrastructure to support businesses to be provided more efficiently. If economic development is dispersed, people will have to travel to and from villages. If it is focused in main towns, people will travel to the towns and combine trips for work with trips to shops, banks etc. This makes the town’s services and facilities more viable in the longer term and enables public transport provision to be supported. This is a positive secondary effect of a greater town focus.

Since making this recommendation, additional land has been included for employment uses at Gillingham. This shifts the balance away from the rural areas to a focus on the main towns. It does not however change the overall quantum of development assigned to the areas outside of the main towns (as detailed earlier).

- 8.60. The policy also makes provision for small scale expansion of existing employment sites in the countryside. This will encourage unsustainable

development and encourage travel by car, harming the rural areas of the district. A better approach would be to encourage businesses to relocate, once they outgrow their current rural site to larger settlements in the district. These sites are better served for infrastructure, facilities and public transport and therefore offer longer term benefits to the business.

- 8.61. Locating employment developments in the rural area perpetuates the accessibility problems already being faced in the district. Locating at larger centres enables multiple trips to be combined with a journey to work eg visit shops, bank etc at lunch time or before or after work.
- 8.62. It may be more appropriate not to mention the expansion of existing sites in the Core Policy but detail the particular circumstances where expansion would be permitted (eg if an essential rural location needed for the business). Expansion of rural employment sites is not desirable and the level of control in the Development Management policy appears insufficient. It either needs to be tightened up or removed altogether.
- 8.63. The needs of rural communities could be met through permitting the *“appropriate” reuse of buildings in the countryside where sustainably located* rather than just permitting reuse and expansion of existing sites. The last bullet point in the section on Sustainable Rural Communities should therefore be reworded as follows:

- *to promote more sustainable communities in the rural area through the provision of small-scale local employment opportunities ~~at local service centres~~ and by permitting the reuse of existing buildings ~~where sustainably located and the small scale expansion of existing employment sites in the countryside~~;*

- 8.64. This rewording would offer a similar emphasis to that applied in national policy to the reuse of brownfield land for residential developments.
- 8.65. The review of employment sites is important to the maintenance of appropriate levels of employment land in suitable locations. If land is not being used or developed, a review can identify reasons why and should recommend the reallocation of unsuitable sites. The land supply should therefore be kept constantly under review and a frequency of reviews should be specified. This will reduce the likelihood of getting proposals for non-B Class uses such as out of town retail on unsuitable employment sites.
- 8.66. Sectoral change is trend based and often influenced by actions outside of the district. These trends are unpredictable and therefore rather than planning for the changes that are happening now, a range of sites for different uses should be provided. It may also be appropriate to provide

sites for narrow use classes rather than all employment use classes to avoid incompatible uses on adjacent plots. An example could be a B2 industrial building adjacent to a B1 office development.

- 8.67. The impact of tourism on North Dorset has two main streams. There are potentially positive impacts on the economy both urban and rural and potentially negative impact on the landscape (such as static caravan parks) and on village life (through holiday homes being empty for large parts of the year). It is essential to enhance the positive impacts that are felt on the economy of the district whilst minimising the negative impacts. The effect of second/holiday homes are difficult to control but a Development Management Policy may offer the best route to achieving this.

A Development Management Policy to manage tourism development has been incorporated into the DPD.

Policy 7 – Retail and Other Town Centre Uses

- 8.68. This policy establishes the hierarchy of town centres and level of retail provision in them.
- 8.69. The “town centre” designation for the four main towns supports their role as hubs serving the rural areas that surround them. This should be mirrored in the proportion of employment development being located at them. Locating employment development at the towns and at settlements identified in the retail hierarchy will support their role as local service hubs serving their rural hinterlands.

Policy 8 – Housing Type, Mix and Density

- 8.70. This policy sets out the approach to residential developments, specifically the density and mix of dwelling sizes.
- 8.71. One of the main implications of developing at a high density can be harm to the character of a settlement. It is therefore important to develop at appropriate densities to preserve character but make the best use of land. One of the earlier recommendations of the SA was that Town and Village Design Statements should be used to identify character areas where lower or higher density may be appropriate.
- 8.72. When setting requirements for dwelling size and type it is important not to be too prescriptive as the need for different types of housing change over time. It may be more appropriate to set a percentage range for each type and size of dwelling to enable some flexibility and for developers to respond to demand.
- 8.73. The impact of developments of certain types of housing are greater than for others for example, larger family houses often have more cars and require more outdoor space. In addition, the *per person* energy consumption of 1 bed and 2 bed flats for single people or couples is generally greater than a family home. This is because they each run

the same number of domestic appliances as dwellings with greater occupancy. A central, sustainably fuelled district heat and power facility to supply blocks of small dwellings would go some way to offsetting the impact of their increased energy requirements and should greatly be encouraged in policy.

Policy 9 – Affordable Housing

- 8.74. This policy sets out the approach to the delivery of affordable housing on residential development sites.
- 8.75. The requirement for all sites regardless of size, to provide affordable housing either on-site or a contribution will deliver affordable housing. Delivery of this housing on larger sites should always be “pepper-potted” amongst market housing. This change of wording is needed to help create inclusive communities.
- 8.76. Any provision of low cost market housing should form part of the market housing provided on site and not form part of the affordable housing provision. It should be built at higher energy efficiency levels to reduce day to day running costs as it is aimed at those who cannot afford to buy housing on the open market.

Policy 10 – Affordable Housing: Rural Exceptions

- 8.77. This policy sets out approach to rural affordable housing provided as an exception to normal housing policy. It seeks to focus rural exceptions housing in the villages with some service provision although it does also recognise that rural exceptions housing may be needed in other locations. This approach should be strengthened to give greater focus on the more sustainable small villages to direct such developments away from the least sustainable locations. Suggestion for amended wording:

Villages where Rural Exception Schemes will be Focused

Rural exception schemes are only acceptable within or adjacent to settlements with 3,000 or fewer inhabitants and in North Dorset this 'upper limit' effectively excludes such schemes adjacent to Blandford (Forum and St Mary), Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton. Most rural exception schemes are likely to be located at the District's larger villages, but some will also be required to serve smaller rural communities. Draft Core Policy 10 ~~does not set an absolute 'lower limit'~~, ~~but~~ recognises that schemes in settlements with very small populations and a lack of essential facilities are unlikely to be sustainable.

The policy seeks to focus rural exception schemes at settlements which:

- *have at least one essential facility¹ within 1 kilometre¹ of the physical centre of the village; and*
- *an estimated population living within the settlement of more than 100 people.*

*Few rural exception schemes are likely to come forward at settlements that do not meet these criteria, as in many cases there would be insufficient local housing need to support development. However, the policy does not preclude schemes at very small settlements, as it is recognised that there may be particular local circumstances where such a scheme could enable essential rural needs to be met. **Therefore draft Core Policy 10 seeks to focus rural exception schemes at the most sustainable locations in terms of population and facilities in order to minimise the impact of development.***

Policy 11 – Grey Infrastructure

- 8.78. This policy sets out the approach to the coordinated provision of drainage, utilities and roads to support the residential and employment developments outlined in the strategy.
- 8.79. Higher density development in accessible locations can help reduce the need to travel and reduce the need for development on greenfield land however it is also important to include green space within a development and not to harm the character and heritage of the surrounding built up area. The most appropriate development density for an area will therefore need to reflect the local character as well as concerns about reducing the need to travel.
- 8.80. One aspect of a well designed development incorporates good links to neighbouring areas and to reduce reliance on the private car, these are best provided through cycling and walking routes. These routes can offer multiple benefits such as improved health through more active

lifestyles and the provision of wildlife corridors connecting habitats and the countryside.

- 8.81. In all transport related issues, there is a need to ensure that the needs of the mobility impaired are not harmed for example restrictions on parking need to ensure that adequate disabled parking is provided, cycle and footpath routes need to ensure that access for the disabled is maintained and road design needs to ensure crossing points are included in convenient locations. Priority should be given to pedestrians and cyclists over cars especially in town centres and estate roads within new housing developments.
- 8.82. To ensure that the impact of road developments are minimised, road improvements should only be implemented where the benefits strongly outweigh the negative impacts on the environment as the environment takes a considerable amount of time to recover if at all. This includes considerations of landscape, biodiversity impact and the built heritage in which the proposal will sit.
- 8.83. The policy makes a general point about the need for separate foul and surface water sewerage systems. However, drainage through combined sewers should be avoided to reduce the risk of combined sewer overflows and the health risk associated with such pollution. All new developments should therefore include separate foul and surface water sewers and where possible existing combined sewers should be replaced with separate systems. Surface water drainage systems should be provided through SuDS and only in exceptional situations, through traditional piped based drainage systems.

Policy 12 – Social Infrastructure

- 8.84. The policy sets out the approach to the provision of community, leisure, education and health facilities.
- 8.85. Everyday community facilities in rural areas such as village shops, pubs, village halls etc should be strongly protected as they contribute to the sustainability of a settlement. The loss of such facilities would be detrimental to an area therefore detail is needed as to how they will be protected. There should be some wording in the Core Policy to suggest that the loss of such facilities will be resisted unless they can be demonstrated not to be viable or alternatively a Development management Policy would be appropriate.
- 8.86. It may be more apt to say that the loss of all social facilities will be resisted due to their importance in creating sustainable settlements and improving accessibility although replacement facilities on an alternative, more suitable site may necessitate the loss of the old facility.

Policy 13 – Green Infrastructure

- 8.87. This policy identifies the importance of green infrastructure in towns and villages and requires its provision in developments. The policy commits to the preparation of a Green Infrastructure Strategy.
- 8.88. The Green Infrastructure Strategy should be prepared as soon as possible after adoption of the Core Strategy so that the benefits of integrated green infrastructure provision can be realised. In the absence of a strategy, there is a need to specify minimum standards to ensure that green infrastructure is incorporated into developments to a reasonable level.

Policy 14 – Protecting and Enhancing the Environment

- 8.89. The policy details the approach to biodiversity and geodiversity protection in the district.
- 8.90. There is however no mention of habitat restoration in the bullet points under biodiversity and geodiversity interests that the council will seek to maintain, enhance and restore. The South West Nature Map highlights areas that could be suitable for such restoration. Maybe a concluding sentence to identify this issue needs to be inserted. Suggested wording:

The council will seek to encourage habitat restoration as identified by the South West Nature Map and prevent the loss of sites through development that may be appropriate for the future restoration of such habitats.

- 8.91. To reduce the impact of development on internationally important habitats, it is essential that mitigation measures associated with Habitats Regulations Assessment are implemented prior to development taking place. This should be the case for all sites both within and adjacent to the district and commitment should be made to this in policy.
- 8.92. To highlight the importance of the district landscapes, a sentence should be inserted at the beginning of this section. Suggested wording:

Landscape Character

The landscape character of North Dorset is of a high quality and of particular importance to the attractiveness of the area. It supports the economy of the district through tourism and attracts businesses to the area.

Development should be capable of being accommodated in an area without detracting from its intrinsic landscape qualities. It should not erode local distinctiveness by harming the key positive characteristics of a landscape and should, where possible, enhance the landscape (for example through the removal of features such as power lines), that have a negative influence.

- 8.93. The importance of archaeological sites is highlighted in the text however an amendment should be made to encourage locally important sites to be preserved in situ unless it is not possible to do so. Suggestion for amended wording:

Archaeology

*National policy gives strong protection to scheduled monuments (and their settings) and other nationally important archaeological remains (and their settings). Other remains or sites with potential to hold remains, receive some protection and may need to be evaluated before a judgement can be made on the acceptability of development. Nationally important **and where possible locally important** sites should be preserved in situ. **However** it may be appropriate to excavate and record less important sites in certain circumstances.*

- 8.94. If these recommendations are incorporated into the plan its overall sustainability will be enhanced and therefore the impact of development on the environment will be reduced.

9.0 Monitoring arrangements

- 9.1. Monitoring of the effects of implementing the strategy and policies within the DPD will enable identification of the impacts on the environment as well as the social and economic impacts. It will therefore enable unwanted effects to be identified and whether the proposed mitigation measures are having the desired effect.
- 9.2. In addition to identifying unwanted effects, the monitoring of the DPD implementation will enable the effects that were considered to be uncertain or unknown in the appraisal of the DPD (those that scored a “?” in the appraisal matrices) to be identified. If the impacts are considered to be beyond what was expected and significantly negative, prompt action can be taken to reduce the negative impacts. This could be in the form of a revision of the strategy or the production of a supplementary planning document.
- 9.3. The SA objectives devised as part of the Scoping stage of this SA are linked to the identified sustainability issues for the District. The details of these links are explained in the Scoping Report that accompanies this Initial SA Report. In addition, a number of issues and challenges associated with them were identified in the production of the DPD.
- 9.4. The two sets of issues identified as part of the SA process and as part of the DPD production are therefore linked to the SA objectives. Figure 9.1 shows the links between the DPD issues and the SA objectives.
- 9.5. For each SA objective a series of indicators have been identified and these will form the basis for monitoring of the SA. They will help to indicate if the issues and challenges for the District are being met and will also be used to assess the accuracy of the assumptions made for each SA objective as part of the appraisal. The suite of indicators will be collected on an annual basis and reported in the Council’s Annual Monitoring Report.
- 9.6. The draft list of indicators linked to SA objectives will be finalised during the production of the Final SA Report which will accompany the submission version of the DPD. In the time it takes to finalise the suite of indicators, the draft indicators outlined here will, where possible, be monitored and where available historic data will be collected. When finalising the indicators for the Final SA Report, links will be made between the monitoring framework for the DPD and the indicators proposed here with the intention of producing a single set of indicators to monitor the SA objectives and the effects of the DPD implementation.

Figure 9.1: Link between SA Objectives and DPD Issues.

DPD Issue ↓	SA Objective →	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
To address the causes and effects of climate change							■	■			■		■		■		
To deliver more sustainable forms of development						■					■	■			■		
To deliver more sustainable patterns of development			■												■	■	
The need to conserve and enhance AONB and to foster the social and economic well-being of their communities			■			■			■	■						■	
The protection of internationally important wildlife sites								■									
Safeguarding the environment						■	■	■	■	■							
Addressing the lack of affordable housing		■		■	■												
Tackling the causes and effects of an increasing generational imbalance		■	■	■	■												■
Stimulating a low-growth economy			■											■	■	■	■
Improving access to services			■												■	■	■

9.7. The draft indicators related to each of the SA objectives are detailed below. This is the initial version of the suite of indicators and it may be that new ones are added or some listed below are removed. The final set of indicators will be produced and documented in the Final SA Report and cross referenced to the monitoring framework in the DPD.

1. Provide housing that is affordable and that meets the needs of the community

Indicator	Frequency of data collection	Spatial resolution	Datasets potentially available
Residential development	annual	settlement	number, type, size, tenure, density etc
Affordable housing development	annual	district	number, percent, trend, rural exceptions
Rate of development	annual	district – rural (R) / villages (C) / urban (B)	rate, trend
House price to income ratio	annual	district	average house prices ratio, lower quartile ratio, trend
Average house price	annual	district	average, trend
Gypsy and traveller pitches	annual	district	number, trend

2. Provide balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services

Indicator	Frequency of data collection	Spatial resolution	Datasets potentially available
Village facilities	annual	settlement	range of facilities in settlements
Households within walking distance (800m) of an hourly bus or DRT service	annual	district	percent, trend
New residential development within 20 minutes public transport travelling time of a list of designations (GP, hospital, school etc...)	annual	district	percent, trend
Split of development both residential and commercial	annual	district – rural (R) / villages (C) / urban (B)	percent, location
Retail offer in settlements	bi annual	district – rural (R) / villages (C) / urban (B)	survey of shops

3. Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles

Indicator	Frequency of data collection	Spatial resolution	Datasets potentially available
Life expectancy	annual	district	male/female, age
People with a long term limiting illness	annual	district	percent, rate
Green space managed to the Green Flag Standard	annual	district	number of sites

4. Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life

Indicator	Frequency of data collection	Spatial resolution	Datasets potentially available
Demographic profile	annual	district	age bands, trend
Index of multiple deprivation	annual	district	IMD and sub indices

5. Improve quality of life through well designed developments

Indicator	Frequency of data collection	Spatial resolution	Datasets potentially available
Score against “Building for Life” criteria for major residential developments	annual	district	average score of sample
Rate of violent crimes per 1000 population	annual	district	
Rate of domestic burglaries per 1000 households	annual	district	

6. Reduce the impact of Climate Change, including flood risk and make the best use of opportunities that arise

Indicator	Frequency of data collection	Spatial resolution	Datasets potentially available
Planning application granted contrary to advice from the Environment Agency on flood or water quality grounds	annual	district	number
Dwellings at risk of flooding [in flood zone 2 and 3]	annual	district	quantum, percent, trend
Instances of property flooding in district	annual	district	number
Passive shading	Annual	District	number of schemes

7. Protect and where opportunities arise enhance habitats and biodiversity

Indicator	Frequency of data collection	Spatial resolution	Datasets potentially available
Internationally important sites (SAC, SPA, Ramsar)	annual	district	number, status, trend
SSSI sites	annual	district	number, status, trend
Ensure HRA recommendations are implemented	annual	district	report on site specific recommendations
Habitats – designated sites harmed by development eg LNR, SNCI, RIGS, SAC, SPA, Ramsar, SSSI	annual	district	number, status, trend
LNR – number of hectares compared to Natural England target of 1 hectare per 1000 population	annual	district – rural (R) / villages (C) / urban (B)	number, status, trend
Tree Preservation Orders	annual	district	number, breaches of, new

8. Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district’s heritage assets and distinctive townscapes

Indicator	Frequency of data collection	Spatial resolution	Datasets potentially available
Grade I and II* listed buildings	annual	district – rural (R) / villages (C) / urban (B)	number, number at risk
SAMs, archaeological sites	annual	district	number, number at risk
Built environment – listed buildings, conservation areas, parks and gardens	annual	district – rural (R) / villages (C) / urban (B)	conservation area appraisals, number listed buildings, parks, gardens and percent at risk
Number of B and C settlements with adopted T/VDS	annual	district	number, percent
Conservation Area Appraisal	as and when updated	district	results of assessment

9. Recognise the importance of the District’s distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value

Indicator	Frequency of data collection	Spatial resolution	Datasets potentially available
Landscape impact	Reference will be made to AONB Management Plans		

10.Reduce impacts on the environment

Indicator	Frequency of data collection	Spatial resolution	Datasets potentially available
Any air quality management Areas in North Dorset (yes/No)	annual	district	number
River quality, both biological and chemical	annual	district	?
Greenhouse Gas emissions (sources, quantum, trend, district)	annual	district	quantum, trend, source of emissions
Renewable energy installations (other than PD)	cumulative	district	number, capacity, type

11.Reduce pressure on the District’s natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources

Indicator	Frequency of data collection	Spatial resolution	Datasets potentially available
Recycling	annual	district	number, percent, trend
Waste to landfill	annual	district	amount, percent, trend
New development on previously developed land	annual	district	amount, percent, trend
appropriate reuse of buildings in the countryside	annual	district	number

12. Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production

Indicator	Frequency of data collection	Spatial resolution	Datasets potentially available
Renewable energy installations (other than PD)	cumulative	district	number, capacity, type
Consumption per capita of gas and electricity	annual	district	number, trend
Water consumption per capita	annual	district	number, trend
Properties with water meters???	annual	district	number, percent, trend

13. Improve the competitiveness of the District’s economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy

Indicator	Frequency of data collection	Spatial resolution	Datasets potentially available
High-speed Broadband availability	Annual	district	percentage of properties/exchanges
VAT	annual	district	registrations, de-registrations, number of firms, trend
Employment land available	annual	district	amount
Employment land developed	annual	district	amount, cumulative, trend

14. Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel

Indicator	Frequency of data collection	Spatial resolution	Datasets potentially available
Traffic flows	annual	district	number at key locations, trend
Households within 800 meters of bus stop, DRT service etc	annual	district	percent, type of destination
Accessibility map	annual	district	map of accessibility (revised when changes occur)
Households within 800 meters of shop, school, etc	annual	district	percent, destination type, trend
Vacant shop premises	bi annual	district – rural (R) / villages (C) / urban (B)	number, percent, trend

15. Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and rural areas creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow

Indicator	Frequency of data collection	Spatial resolution	Datasets potentially available
Vacant industrial floorspace in districts five towns	?	?	?
Gross value added (GVA) per head of population	annual	district	number, trend
Working age population	annual	district	percent, trend
Sector split – businesses	annual	district	number, trend, sectors
Sector split – employees	annual	district	number, trend, sectors

16. Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential

Indicator	Frequency of data collection	Spatial resolution	Datasets potentially available
Unemployment rate	annual	district	rate, trend
Average earnings	annual	district	average, trend, male/female
School children achieving a GCSE grade A to C	annual	district / school	percent, trend
Skills levels (post School)	annual	district	percent with qualifications, trend
Part-time / full-time employees	annual	district	ratio, male / female, trend

10.0 Consultation on the Initial SA Report

- 10.1. The requirements for consultation during a SA are determined from the requirements of the SEA Directive. This states that

The draft plan or programme and the environmental report prepared in accordance with Article 5 shall be made available to the authorities referred to in paragraph 3 of this Article and the public.

As this report and the appraisal that informed it is intended to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive, it will need to be consulted on in accordance with this. This means that this initial SA Report must be made available along side the draft Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD and specifically sent to the statutory consultees of English Heritage, English Nature and The Environment Agency. In addition the Initial SA Report and the draft DPD should be made available to the general public.

- 10.2. The final stage of the Initial SA Report production therefore involves public consultation on the report. This consultation will include consultation with the statutory environmental consultees (as outlined above) and also other individuals and groups who may have an interest in the content of the report. It will be consulted on in parallel with the draft DPD over the period 15th March to 30th April 2010.
- 10.3. The earlier stage of the SA process was the preparation of a Scoping Report. This report was consulted on in June 2009 and all those who responded to this consultation will also be sent a copy of this initial SA Report. In addition all agents, groups, individuals and other interested parties who have been sent a copy of the draft DPD will be made aware of this initial SA Report and how they can obtain a copy if they so wish. The document will be available in printed form and also on the Council's web site.
- 10.4. Comments are specifically sought on the content of this Initial SA Report and in particular conclusions and recommendations within it. Comments are also invited if there are any particular parts where additional work needs to be undertaken or if additional options should be considered.
- 10.5. Local Authorities within Dorset have brought together a group of interested parties, local authority officers and the statutory consultees to share best practice and concerns about the process. Additional feedback will be sought from this group as to the way the assessment has been undertaken, the structure of the report and on the key findings of the appraisal.
- 10.6. Once the consultation period has finished, comments made on the initial SA Report and on the draft DPD will be assessed and any resulting recommendations for changes to the draft DPD will be identified. These suggestions will be considered and where judged to be important, changes to the DPD will be made.

- 10.7. Once the DPD has been finalised, any significant changes will be appraised, a final full appraisal of the plan will be undertaken and a final SA Report will be produced highlighting how the DPD has been influenced by the SA process and assessing the potential effects of implementing the plan.

11.0 Glossary

This glossary explains terms used throughout this report including in the appendices which follow.

Anthropogenic Climate Change	Anthropogenic Climate Change is climatic change caused by the release of greenhouse gasses resulting from human activity
Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)	Required to be produced annually under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to report on the effects of implementing policies on a range of indicators
Creative Industries	Those goods and services in the creative sector: advertising, architecture, art and antiques, crafts, design, designer fashion, film and video, interactive leisure software, television and radio, performing arts, music and software and computer services which feature original creativity and generate intellectual property with a potential for wealth and job creation
Culture	<p>Culture is defined as having both a material and value dimension.</p> <p>The material dimension encompasses for example the performing and visual arts, play, sports, libraries and museums, landscape, the built environment, and heritage.</p> <p>The value dimension embraces shared memories, experience and identity</p>
Development Plan Document (DPD)	The Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document - the Documents that this Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report relates to and the document that contains policies on which the Sustainability Appraisal will be undertaken.
Eutrophication	Eutrophication occurs when the local environment becomes enriched with nutrients. This can be a problem in aquatic habitats such as rivers and lakes and can cause algal blooms.
Green Infrastructure	The sub-regional network of protected sites, nature reserves, green spaces and greenway linkages. The linkages include corridors and floodplains, migration routes and features of the landscape, which are of importance as wildlife corridors. Green infrastructure should provide for multi-functional uses i.e. wildlife, recreational and cultural experience, as well as delivering ecological services, such as flood protection and microclimate control. It should also

	<p>operate at all spatial scales from urban centres through to open countryside (Biodiversity by Design (TCPA, 2004)</p> <p>http://www.tcpa.org.uk/pages/biodiversity-by-design.html</p>
Historic Environment	<p>All designated and non-designated features of historic or architectural interest. This includes World Heritage Sites, listed buildings, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens and scheduled monuments. It also includes their settings; the wide urban and rural landscape and the potential for unrecorded archaeology. The manifestation of an area's heritage assets can be as subtle as the historic street patterns, below ground archaeology and discrete architectural features. It can include key views, settings and those familiar and cherished local scenes. These historic environment features combine to make a vital contribution to a sense of place and local identity.</p>
Indicators	<p>Data collected on a particular theme to give an indication of how that theme has changed over time. This change could be due to external influences such as policy implementation and developments that takes place as a result.</p>
North Dorset	<p>The area covered by North Dorset District Council and the DPD</p>
Plans and Programmes	<p>A strategy produced which determine the use of small areas of land. They set the framework for future development usually in one of the following sectors: agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning and land use.</p>
Sustainability Appraisal (SA)	<p>A broad appraisal process required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It incorporates sustainable development into plan formation through the consideration of the potential Social, Economic and Environmental impacts of plan implementation.</p>
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	<p>An assessment carried out at the strategic level to assess the significant effects of plan or programme implementation on the environment. Required under European Directive 2001/42/EC (the SEA Directive) for all plans or programmes that sets a framework for future development. It is carried out at the strategic level so that the cumulative effects of multiple developments can be considered. It must be carried out for all plans and programmes which are likely to have significant environmental effects.</p>

SuDS

Sustainable drainage systems or sustainable (urban) drainage systems - a sequence of management practices and control structures designed to drain surface water in a more sustainable fashion than some conventional techniques.

12.0 Bibliography

These documents have been used to guide the preparation of this Initial SA Report and were used to guide the SA process as a whole. In addition, some were used as reference documents.

A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, [Internet] ODPM, Published 2005a, Available at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/practicalguidesea>

Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents, [Internet] ODPM, Published 2005b, Available at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/sustainabilityappraisal>

Local Development Frameworks Guide on Sustainability Appraisal, [Internet] Planning Advisory Service, Published 2007, Available at:

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Beating the heat: keeping UK buildings cool in a warming climate, [Internet] Hacker, JN, Belcher, SE & Connell, RK, Published 2005, Available at:

http://www.ukcip.org.uk/index.php?id=322&option=com_content&task=view

Appendix A: The DPD Vision and SA Framework

- A 1. This Appendix contains the matrix showing the compatibility between the SA Objectives and the DPD Vision. It highlights where the DPD will reinforce the sustainability principles contained in the SA Framework and therefore help to achieve sustainability. It also highlights where there are potential conflicts between the DPD Vision and the sustainability principles as defined in the SA Framework.
- A 2. The implications of this compatibility analysis for the DPD are discussed in Section 5.0.

Key

- ✓ Potentially compatible objectives
- ✘ Potentially incompatible objectives
- No significant link

North Dorset – Core Strategy & Development Management DPD
Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report - March 2010

Vision ↓	SA Objectives →	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
be a District that has played a positive role in addressing the causes and effects of climate change		—	—	—	—	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	—
have more sustainable forms of development that are adequately served by infrastructure (including sustainable transport solutions) and made best use of natural resources (including previously developed land)		—	✓	—	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	—
have expanded thriving market towns collectively providing homes, jobs and high level services for those living within them and within the communities they serve		✓	✓	—	✓	—	—	x	x	—	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	—
have sustainable smaller rural communities providing local services which enable day to day needs to be met locally		✓	✓	—	✓	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	—
have a protected and enhanced locally distinctive built and natural environment that retains the qualities that make the District's urban and rural areas even more attractive and desirable place to live, work and visit		—	—	—	—	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	x	—	—	—
have more housing, and in particular more affordable housing, that better meets the diverse needs of the District		✓	✓	—	✓	—	—	x	x	x	x	x	✓	—	—	—	—
be a District that has: advanced towards more cohesive communities; that has recognised the needs of the older population; and where the life chances for children and young people have been enhanced		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	✓
have a robust and prosperous economy (including sustainable tourism) with high quality jobs and skills focused in locations that best support the District's growing population		✓	✓	—	—	—	✓	—	x	—	—	x	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
have a range of community, leisure, cultural and recreation facilities in locations that are accessible to the local population		—	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	—	✓	✓	—	—

Appendix B: The DPD Objectives and SA Framework

- B 1. This Appendix contains the matrix showing the compatibility between the SA Objectives and the Objectives of the DPD. It highlights where the DPD will reinforce the sustainability principles contained in the SA Framework and therefore help to achieve sustainability. It also highlights where there are potential conflicts between the DPD Objectives and the sustainability principles as defined in the SA Framework.
- B 2. The implications of this compatibility analysis for the DPD are discussed in Section 5.0.

Key

- ✓ Potentially compatible objectives
- ✘ Potentially incompatible objectives
- No significant link

Objective 1 - Thriving Market Towns: The objective is to support the role and function of the market towns of Blandford (Forum and St. Mary), Gillingham and Shaftesbury as the main service centres for the District by:

DPD Sub-objective ↓	SA Objective →	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
a	Making them the focus in the District for housing, including affordable housing	✓	✓	—	✓	—	—	x	✓	x	✓	—	—	—	✓	—	—
b	Enhancing their employment and training opportunities, particularly through the provision of sufficient employment land, to meet the growing needs of the towns and their hinterlands	—	✓	✓	—	—	—	x	x	x	—	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
c	Focusing an improved range of retail, cultural and leisure uses within the town centres	—	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	x	—	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	✓
d	Improving health, education and community services to meet the needs of the towns and their rural hinterlands	—	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—
e	Improving sustainable transport links and accessibility within the towns; between the towns and the villages in their rural hinterlands; and, through improved linkages with strategic transport networks	—	✓	—	✓	—	—	x	—	x	x	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
f	Securing the delivery of mixed use regeneration on previously developed land in accessible locations	✓	✓	—	—	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	—
g	Ensuring that housing development is delivered in step with employment opportunities, community facilities and infrastructure	✓	✓	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	✓
h	Taking account of the effects of any interaction between the towns themselves and with SSCTs in neighbouring districts	—	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	✓

Objective 2 - Sustainable Rural Communities: The objective is to create a network of sustainable smaller rural communities where local services enable day to day needs to be met locally by:

DPD Sub-objective ↓	SA Objective →	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
a	Taking forward the opportunities to both regenerate and expand Sturminster Newton and improve its town centre to support and enhance its function as the District's largest local service centre	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	✓/ x	✓	✓	—	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	—
b	Focusing the remaining limited development potential in Stalbridge and other sustainable settlements within the District that are well served by a range of local services	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	x	x	✓	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	—
c	Securing the retention, enhancement and future viability of local community facilities and local services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	✓
d	Adopting a general policy of restraint in the countryside whilst still enabling essential rural needs to be met	✓	x	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—

Objective 3 - Protecting and Managing the Environment: To better manage and protect the environment of North Dorset by:

DPD Sub-objective ↓	SA Objective →	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
a	Encouraging the use of sustainable construction techniques, available renewable energy technologies and taking account of the effects of climate change	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓
b	Ensuring that North Dorset's wildlife, landscape and cultural heritage are protected and enhanced	x	x	✓	—	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	—	x	—	—	x
c	Encouraging design that maintains the quality of the District's built and natural environment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—
d	Ensure that the District's residents are able to enjoy their homes and public places without undue disturbance or intrusion from neighbouring uses	—	—	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	x	—	—	—

Objective 4 - Meeting the District's Housing Needs: The objective is to deliver more housing, including more affordable housing that better meets the diverse needs of the District by:

DPD Sub-objective ↓	SA Objective →	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
a	Focusing provision to meet the overall District needs on the main and local service centres	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	—	x	✓	x	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—
b	Exceptionally allowing affordable housing to meet local needs elsewhere	✓	x	✓	—	—	—	x	—	x	x	x	—	—	x	—	—
c	Ensuring that all new dwellings contribute to overcoming the affordable housing shortfall	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓
d	Ensuring that the type, design and mix of housing reflects housing needs in up-to-date assessments	✓	—	✓	✓	—	—	—	✓	—	—	✓	—	—	—	✓	✓
e	Ensuring that housing is designed to support the changing needs of its occupants and users	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	✓	—	—
f	Ensuring that sufficient, sustainably-located sites are provided to meet the needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling show people in the District	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	—	x	—	x	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Objective 5 - Improving the Quality of Life: The objective is to improve the quality of life of North Dorset’s residents, particularly the older population, and enhance the life chances of the young by:

DPD Sub-objective ↓	SA Objective →	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
a	Encouraging the provision of viable community, leisure and cultural facilities focused on the main and local service centres	—	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	✓	—	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
b	Retaining the current range of healthcare and education services and ensuring that additional healthcare and education facilities are provided in accessible locations	—	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
c	Ensuring that a network of quality sports and recreation facilities and public open space are distributed throughout the District in locations that are most accessible to the community	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	—	—	—	✓	—	—
d	Securing an integrated approach to private and public transport (including parking provision and management), which improves accessibility to services	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	✓	—	✓	—	—	✓	✓	—	—
e	Ensuring that development makes a positive contribution to enhancing existing and providing new transport infrastructure	✗	—	—	—	✓	—	✗	✓	✗	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	—

Overview of DPD Objectives: The broad compatibility of all five DPD Objectives against SA Objectives

SA Objective ↓	DPD Objective →	1	2	3	4	5
1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓x
2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	✓	✓	✓	✓x	✓
3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Improve quality of life through well designed developments	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	—	—	✓	—	✓
7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	x	✓	✓	x	✓x
8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	x	✓	✓	x	x
10	Reduce impacts on the environment	✓x	—	✓	x	✓
11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	✓	✓	✓	✓x	—
12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	—	—	✓	—	—
13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	✓	✓	✓	—	✓
14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	✓	✓	—	✓x	✓
15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	✓	✓	✓x	✓	✓

Appendix C: Core Policy Option Matrices

- C 1. The following matrices detail the assessment of the options that were considered as part of the Core Strategy formulation. The results of these assessments influenced the formulation of policy through the comparison of the options considered.
- C 2. Where no options were considered the policies have been included in this section to highlight the potential impact of the policy implementation rather than to allow comparison of options.
- C 3. For all of these matrices, the following scoring has been used to indicate the direction (positive or negative) and the magnitude of the potential impact of implementing the policy.

Key

++	=	Strong positive impact
+	=	Positive impact
o	=	Neutral or no impact
-	=	Negative impact
--	=	Strong negative impact
?	=	Unknown or uncertain impact

Core Policy 1: Tackling Climate Change

What options were considered?

Option 1(1): – Targets: Options are to adopt the national and regional timetables for the Code for Sustainable Homes target introduction and energy from renewable sources or to adopt a faster timetable supported by the required evidence. Gathering this evidence would require an additional resource input from the District Council.

Option 1(1) – Tackling Climate Change

Tackling climate change is one of the biggest challenges facing the Core Strategy. It is now widely accepted that action needs to be taken to reduce anthropogenic climate change and the Core Strategy can aid in achieving this.

One of the biggest sources of greenhouse gas emissions is related to the housing stock through inefficient heating systems and poor insulation. Although the existing dwelling stock is generally outside of the influence of the Core Strategy, the efficiency of the new houses which are to be built can be influenced by policies adopted in the Core Strategy.

By requiring high standards of energy efficiency for all new dwellings, the impact of these dwellings on the environment will be reduced. This impact will be primarily through reduced greenhouse gas emissions, reduced use of other resources including through water efficiency and the use of recycled or sustainably sourced building materials and reduced flood risk as a result of the development taking place through the incorporation of SuDS into each scheme. Obviously greater benefits will be realised if higher standards are adopted however there will be an increase in greenhouse gas emissions from residential developments unless all new dwellings are built as zero carbon homes standard.

The appraisal indicated that there are likely to be several secondary effects of improved dwelling efficiency. The more efficient a dwelling is, the cheaper it will be to heat therefore reducing the instances of fuel poverty among those on low incomes. It may also encourage the development of green technologies and innovative construction methods to meet the higher standards. In addition, the realisation of the benefits of highly efficient dwellings by householders will not only encourage new dwellings to be built to high standards but it will also encourage the retro-fitting of the existing dwelling stock.

Clearly the higher the standard adopted, the less the environmental impact of the new dwellings will be. However, adopting high standards may reduce the amount of housing and especially affordable housing being built due to the additional cost burdens placed on developers. The Core Strategy should incorporate a requirement for the highest standards of sustainable construction that can be achieved whilst still enabling housing provision to be delivered at the planned rate. In addition, renewable energy

generation capacity should be incorporated into developments so that as high as possible proportion of the developments energy requirement is met sustainably.

Conclusion

Option 1(1)a, adopting higher targets and requirements, is judged to offer the greatest benefits in terms of sustainability.

Policy 1(1)	Tackling Climate Change		Option 1(1)a Adopt National and Regional requirements	Option 1(1)b Adopt higher targets (based on evidence)
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	o	-
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	o	o
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	+	++
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	o	o
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	+	++
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	+	+
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	o	o
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	o	o

Policy 1(1)	Tackling Climate Change		Option 1(1)a Adopt National and Regional requirements	Option 1(1)b Adopt higher targets (based on evidence)
SA Objectives				
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	+	++
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	+	++
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	+	++
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	o	o
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	o	o
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	+	+
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	o	o

Core Policy 2: Sustainable Forms of Development

What options were considered?

Option 2(1): No alternative options were considered as the policy sets out the requirements for development to deliver more sustainable forms of development.

Option 2(1) – Sustainable forms of development

The policy aims to ensure that the impact of development is taken into account early on in the planning process. It sets out criteria which must be met to reduce the impact of development especially related to the environmental impacts.

The policy scores well especially in relation to the environmental protection objectives but also in relation to some of the social objectives due to the inclusion of open space and infrastructure as part of developments. In addition, the policy is likely to have a positive effect on people's health and wellbeing due to the requirement for the inclusion of open space, through hazard avoidance and through well designed developments. It is important however that the infrastructure delivery plan is robust otherwise delivery of infrastructure cannot be guaranteed.

The design criteria within the policy should help to protect the built form of the district's towns. It could however be strengthened to ensure that developments are well integrated within towns therefore enhancing the built environment. There is also no specific mention of landscape within the policy. Due to the high quality of the district's landscape, not only within the two AONB, it may be worthwhile referring to landscape within the policy.

Specific mention of some environmental concerns such as flooding means that the policy is likely to have positive impacts on these sustainability objectives. The mention of the conservation of water and high quality agricultural land means that these are offered some degree of protection however the policy does not mention other resources such as building materials. The policy does not mention energy efficiency or renewable energy although some of the criteria in the policy may help to reduce energy consumption. This is however covered by Core Policy1 along with the integration of recycling facilities in new developments.

The inclusion of requirements for green space and SuDS potentially could provide additional habitats within developments. However, as there is no direct mention of biodiversity and habitats within the policy the impact of open space and SuDS is unknown. It may result in habitat creation but then again it may not.

The requirement for the inclusion of sustainable transport measures in developments along with the provision of infrastructure enabling local needs to be met locally should aid in reducing the dependence on private cars. It is however difficult to implement sustainable travel measures when individuals have the ability to choose their mode of travel. The aim should therefore be to make sustainable travel choices the most attractive option.

The area where the policy may have negative effects relate to housing provision where the secondary effects associated with the requirements for development may reduce the viability of some schemes. This may make larger developments more attractive due to the economies of scale that can be realised and small scale infilling less attractive however there are areas where this may not be the case.

Conclusion

This policy is judged to help move towards more sustainable forms of development.

Policy 2(1)	Sustainable forms of development		Option 2(1)a Adopt requirements as set out in Policy 2
SA Objectives			
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	o
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	++
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	+
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	o
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	++
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	+
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	o
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	+
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	o

Policy 2(1)		Sustainable forms of development	Option 2(1)a Adopt requirements as set out in Policy 2
SA Objectives			
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	+
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	+
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	o
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	+
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	++
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	o
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	o

Core Policy 3: Core Spatial Strategy

The Core Spatial Strategy identifies the overall hierarchy and function that settlements within the district will be given. This hierarchy reflects the RSS Settlement Policies and therefore the following assumptions have been made:

- North Dorset does not have any settlements which have been identified as Strategically Significant City or Towns (SSCT) and therefore classification is as Policy B settlements, Policy C settlements or not giving a settlement an RSS classification.
- A Policy B settlement would be a centre where there was a concentration of economic activities and also a range of shopping, culture, faith, education and health facilities serving the town and its hinterland. Growth at this type of settlement would support its function as a service centre and be at a lesser level than at an SSCT.
- A Policy C settlement would be a centre for small scale economic activity meeting primarily local needs. It would receive growth at a lower level than a Policy B settlement and would contribute to extending the range of facilities on offer.
- If a settlement was not classified in one of the above categories it would not receive any housing growth other than through Rural Exception sites to meet identified local need.

What options were considered?

There are a number of permutations that could be applied but the key options are as follows:

Option 3(1) – Sturminster Newton: Should Sturminster Newton be an RSS Policy B or C settlement?

Where should the lower cut-off be for settlements that are assigned Policy C status?

Option 3(2) – Population range 700 to 900 inhabitants: Include settlements in the range 700 to 900 population

Option 3(3) – Population range 500 to 700 inhabitants: Include settlements in the range 500 to 700 population as well as those in the range 700 to 900 population

Option 3(4) – Population of less than 400 inhabitants: Should settlements of less than 400 population receive some growth?

There are then two anomalies which due to the level of services within the settlements, do not neatly fall within the characterisations above:

Option 3(5) – Fontmell Magna: Include or exclude Fontmell Magna as Policy C Settlement

Option 3(6) – Spetisbury: Include or exclude Spetisbury as Policy C Settlement

Option 3(1) – Sturminster Newton

The impacts of the status given to Sturminster Newton can be felt at two levels; at the local level where impacts are closely related to Sturminster Newton and its immediate hinterland; and the impact at the district level including on settlements further afield.

Identifying Sturminster Newton as a Policy B settlement would give the town a greater role in meeting overall District wide housing needs. However the impact on other towns will be to reduce their housing allocation and effectively diminishing the chances of meeting the housing need in these towns. The other impact of raising Sturminster Newton up the hierarchy of settlements would be to increase the demand for facilities and services such as shops and GPs. This would be likely to have a negative impact on the equivalent services in other nearby settlements such as Stalbridge and Marnhull as such facilities are likely to be more viable in the larger centres and therefore provided there in preference.

In addition, by raising Sturminster Newton up the settlement hierarchy, less development would take place at other Policy B settlements, reducing the available funds to improve their infrastructure. It is thought to be better to concentrate growth at a limited number of settlements rather than to adopt a more dispersed pattern of development. However, the status of a settlement within a hierarchy doesn't significantly impact on individual's health and wellbeing, on community cohesion and on design although larger settlements can feel less personal.

Increased pressure for development as a result of higher levels of growth assigned to a Policy B settlement would result in more pressure for greenfield development. All development will have an impact on the environment however the design and location of development at Sturminster Newton and the other towns will help to reduce impact on landscape, built form and biodiversity. Sensitive design and careful selection of sites will therefore be important to minimise these impacts and policy should be put in place to aid in this.

At local level, identifying Sturminster Newton as a Policy B settlement would result in higher levels of housing and economic development. This is likely to have negative impacts environmentally for example the pressure for greenfield land development or increased traffic congestion. There may however also be positive effects due to the increased economic activity bringing greater wealth and reduced poverty and increased levels of housing to meet the local need.

At the district level, the impact on nearby Policy B settlements is likely to be negative as growth at these centres will be reduced. Designating Sturminster Newton as a Policy C settlement will effectively allow the needs of the town to be met without the level of growth being too high. If it is designated as a Policy B settlement, the level of growth at the town will be more related to the growth

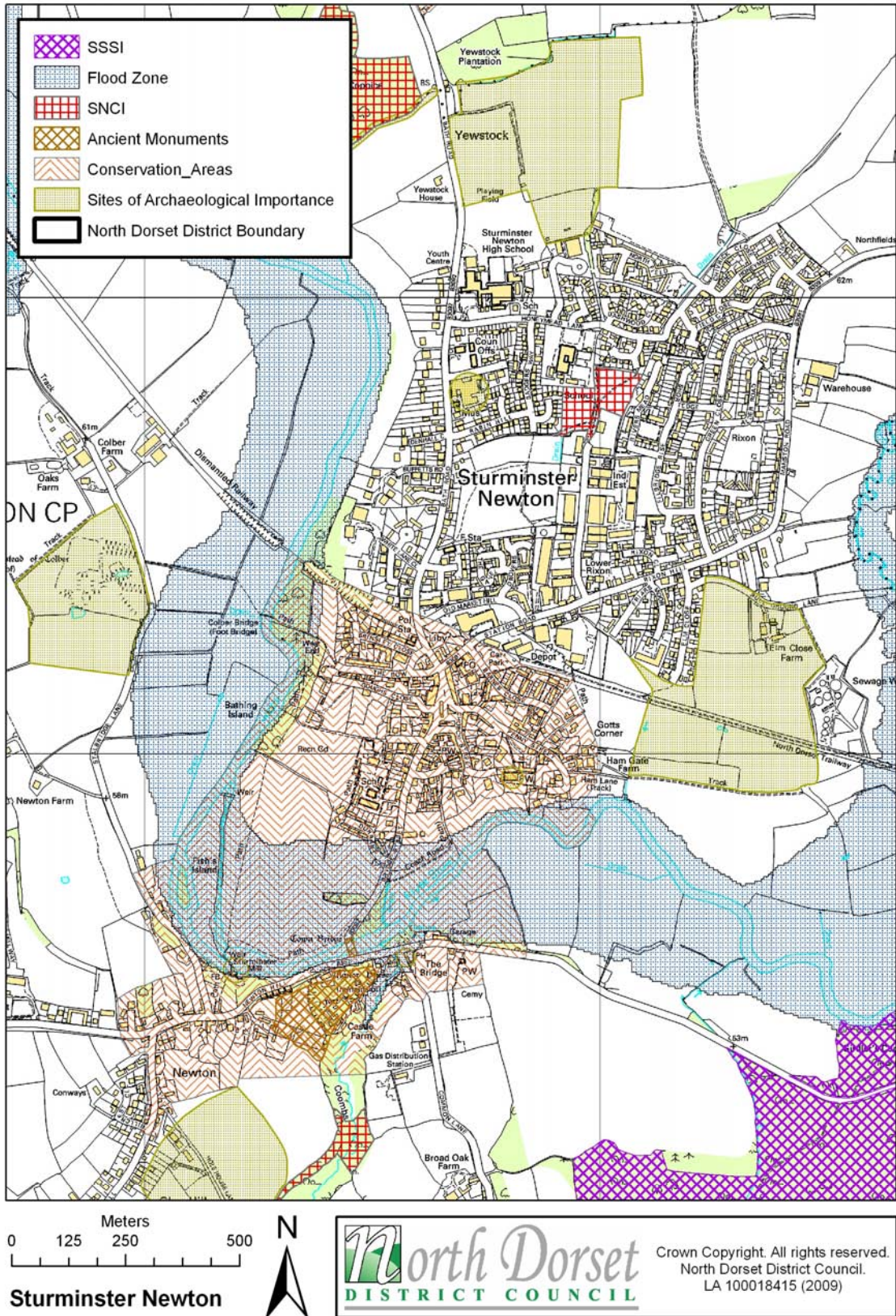
of the district as a whole through a four centres rather than three centres strategy, effectively diluting the level of growth at the other towns.

As Sturminster Newton is a less sustainable location in terms of transport congestion and road links it is thought that the town is better suited to modest growth to support its vital role as a local hub.

Identifying the appropriate level of growth for Sturminster Newton in the wider context of the district is important. At the local level, more growth may be beneficial but at district wide level, impacts may be negative.

Conclusion

Sturminster Newton is judged to fall better into the role of a Policy C settlement due to its current size, location relative to other settlements and function in the wider area and due to the constrained and historic nature of the town.



Policy 3(1)	Core Spatial Strategy – Sturminster Newton		Option 3(1)a Identify Sturminster Newton as a RSS Policy B Settlement	Option 3(1)b Identify Sturminster Newton as a RSS Policy C Settlement
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	++	+
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	-	+
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	o	o
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	o	o
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	o	o
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	?	?
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district’s heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	?	?
	9	Recognise the importance of the district’s distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	?	?

Policy 3(1)		Core Spatial Strategy – Sturminster Newton	Option 3(1)a Identify Sturminster Newton and an RSS Policy B Settlement	Option 3(1)b Identify Sturminster Newton and an RSS Policy C Settlement
		SA Objectives		
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	--	-
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	-	+
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	o	o
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	-	+
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	-	+
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	+	+
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	+	+

Option 3(2) – Population range 700 to 900 inhabitants

Settlements which fall into this category are Pimperne, Iwerne Minster, Bourton, Okeford Fitzpaine and Milton Abbas. All of these settlements have a reasonable level of services and are of a reasonable size. The settlements have been assessed as a block because of their similarity and therefore there are no substantial grounds for favouring one settlement over another unless detailed.

Designating these settlements as Policy C settlements will allow some level of growth to take place enabling housing to be provided to meet needs including those of particular minority groups. This will in turn give extra support for the services that exist within the settlements, improving their viability. If no growth is allowed in the village, need could only be met through a Rural Exceptions policy.

Fluvial flooding is a concern in all settlements except Milton Abbas and Okeford Fitzpaine however; flooding from other sources is an issue in all areas and therefore SuDS should be incorporated into all developments.

There are no internationally or nationally designated sites in or adjacent to any of these settlements however; all except Pimperne have sites of nature conservation interest. All greenfield development sites will need to consider biodiversity in their planning stages as they have the potential to harm biodiversity locally

All of the settlements are within or adjacent to AONB and therefore landscape issues are of equal consideration. In addition all settlements have many listed buildings and, with the exception of Bourton, also have conservation areas. The impact of development on this built form and on landscape is therefore important in all of the settlements.

The level of development in these settlements is likely to be small; however the cumulative impact of this development on the environment will be larger unless a suite of policies is put in place to mitigate this impact. Mitigation could include policies to ensure that SuDS are incorporated in developments, that the highest levels of sustainable construction are promoted and that renewable energy is required. Neighbourhood wide mitigation measures such as these can be more viable in larger developments due to economies of scale.

With all impacts, unless positive proactive measures are put in place, development is likely to result in degradation of the environment. However, by not designating the settlements for growth, the overall result will be neutral.

Designating the settlements as Policy C settlements would result in not only residential development but also small scale employment development. The impact of this development is however uncertain primarily due to its small scale. Small scale economic development will create more vibrant settlements and may encourage new businesses to start. The result will be

additional support for the local services and enhanced job opportunities. The impact on the economy of the settlement is therefore likely to be positive as it will enhance employment opportunities however this may draw businesses away from the larger settlements and therefore impact negatively on them.

Conclusion

Settlements in this range offer a good level of services and have a reasonable level of population. They therefore should be identified as RSS Policy C settlements and receive some growth to enable them to continue to function as local service centres.

Policy 3(2)	Core Spatial Strategy – 700 to 900 population		Option 3(2) a Include settlements in range 700 to 900 population	Option 3(2) b Exclude settlements in range 700 to 900 population
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	+	-
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	+	-
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	o	o
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	+	-
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	?	o
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	-	o
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	-	o
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	-	o

Policy 3(2)	Core Spatial Strategy – 700 to 900 population		Option 3(2) a Include settlements in range 700 to 900 population	Option 3(2) b Exclude settlements in range 700 to 900 population
SA Objectives				
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	-	o
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	-	o
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	+	o
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	?	o
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	+	-
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	+	o
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	+	-

Option 3(3) – Population range 500 to 700 inhabitants

Settlements which fall into this category are Winterborne Whitechurch, Hazelbury Bryan, Winterborne Kingston, Stourpaine, Winterborne Stickland, Spetisbury and East Stour. All of these settlements have some essential services and are of a reasonable size. The settlements have been assessed as a block because of their similarity and therefore there are no substantial grounds for favouring one settlement over another unless detailed. Spetisbury is the exception to this due to its lack of services and population at the lower end of the range. For this reason it has been considered separately.

Designating these settlements as Policy C settlements will allow some level of growth to take place enabling housing to be provided to meet needs including those of particular minority groups. This will in turn give extra support for the services that exist within the settlements, improving their viability. However due to the low level of services in these settlements, allowing growth may result in commuting until a “critical mass” is established to support a higher level of service provision. It is considered that by allowing a small amount of development in these settlements they could be made “more sustainable” by increasing population levels to support additional services.

Flooding is a concern in all settlements especially in relation to surface water flooding and therefore SuDS should be incorporated into all developments. Fluvial flooding is not considered to be an issue in Hazelbury Bryan and East Stour as they do not have rivers flowing through them.

There are no internationally designated sites adjacent to any of these settlements. Several of the settlements have SNCI near them but only Winterborne Stickland has one adjacent to the built up area of the settlement. However, there are biodiversity interests associated with hedgerows and undeveloped areas which need to be considered when assessing development locations around the settlements. Biodiversity space needs to be incorporated into new developments so as to not harm biodiversity locally.

The impact of development on landscape needs to be taken into account when considering sites for development and this is true even outside of the AONB. Winterborne Kingston and East Stour are two settlements in this list away from the AONB but where landscape still needs to be taken into account. In addition, neither of these settlements have designated conservation areas. However, all settlements have a range of listed buildings and historic areas which could be harmed by development. For this reason, the design of developments needs to respect and be in keeping with the existing built form of the settlements.

The level of development in these settlements is likely to be small; however the cumulative impact of this development on the environment will be larger unless a suite of policies is put in place to mitigate this impact. Mitigation could include policies to ensure that SuDS are incorporated in developments, that the highest levels of sustainable construction are promoted and that renewable

energy is required. Neighbourhood wide mitigation measures such as these can be more viable in larger developments due to economies of scale.

With all impacts, unless positive proactive measures are put in place, development is likely to result in degradation of the environment. However, by not designating the settlements for growth, the overall result will be neutral.

Designating the settlements as Policy C settlements would result in not only residential development but also small scale employment development. The impact of this development is however uncertain primarily due to its small scale. Small scale economic development will create more vibrant settlements and may encourage new businesses to start. The result will be additional support for the local services and enhanced job opportunities. The impact on the economy of the settlement is therefore likely to be positive as it will enhance employment opportunities however this may draw businesses away from the larger settlements and therefore impact negatively upon them.

Conclusion

Settlements in this range offer a reasonable level of services. Additional population growth should help to support these services and enable the settlements to function better as local service centres. These settlements should therefore be identified as RSS Development Policy C settlements.

Policy 3(3)	Core Spatial Strategy – 500 to 700 population		Option 3(3)a Include settlements in range 500 to 700 population	Option 3(3)b Exclude settlements in range 500 to 700 population
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	+	-
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	?	-
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	o	o
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	+	-
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	?	o
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	-	o
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	?	o
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	-	o

Policy 3(3)		Core Spatial Strategy – 500 to 700 population	Option 3(3)a Include settlements in range 500 to 700 population	Option 3(3)b Exclude settlements in range 500 to 700 population
		SA Objectives		
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	-	o
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	-	o
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	+	o
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	-	o
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	?	-
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	+	o
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	+	o

Option 3(4) – Population of less than 400 inhabitants

The villages that fall into the population range of up to 400 inhabitants include Durweston, Iwerne Courtney, Stourton Caundle, Stour Row, Kington Magna, Bryanston, Tarrant Keyneston and Hinton St. Mary. In addition there are 24 smaller villages/hamlets which are considered in this category.

These villages are small and are poorly served by everyday facilities. If growth was allowed at these small villages housing need could be met but this would result in poor accessibility to services causing higher living costs. The level of growth that would be needed in these centres to improve the viability of services is likely to be greater than that associated with Policy C status. Local needs cannot therefore be met through a dispersed approach. Level of service provision and viability of services in rural areas is minimal. Focusing growth on larger well served centres therefore is better as it enables the viability of services to be improved.

The level of housing need is related to the size of the current population of a settlement. As these settlements are small, the level of housing need is also likely to be small and therefore this need can be met through a Rural Exceptions policy.

If some growth is allocated to these smaller settlements, the impact on the environment is likely to be more significant as change will be felt over a wider area. If growth is permitted, careful site selection is needed to ensure this impact is minimised. This is true for impacts from pollution (especially from transport), on biodiversity, on landscape and on the environment and therefore an approach concentrating growth in fewer larger centres is likely to have less of an impact.

In a similar way, dilution of economic development through permitting growth at a number of centres will remove the potential for business clusters. Development at a large number of locations will also increase the cost of infrastructure provision as they will all need to be connected to for example the broadband network. Developing employment uses in a small number of locations will therefore offer economies of scale in terms of infrastructure provision and also enable the creation of business clusters. Business clusters are thought to create innovation and increase competitiveness, a desirable effect which could be lost if a dispersed pattern of economic development is permitted.

Conclusion

Settlements in this range have few everyday services and a relatively low population. Additional population growth to support and enhance these services would need to be significant and would harm the character of the area and impact / be impacted on by neighbouring settlements. For this reason, these settlements should not be identified as RSS Development Policy C settlements.

Policy 3(4)	Core Spatial Strategy – population less than 400		Option 3(4)a Include settlements of less than 400 population	Option 3(4)b Exclude settlements of less than 400 population
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	+	-
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	--	-
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	o	o
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	?	?
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	-	?
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	-	+
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	o	o
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	-	o

Policy 3(4)		Core Spatial Strategy – population less than 400	Option 3(4)a Include settlements of less than 400 population	Option 3(4)b Exclude settlements of less than 400 population
		SA Objectives		
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	-	+
	11	Reduce pressure on the district’s natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	o	o
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	-	o
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district’s economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	-	o
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	--	+
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	-	+
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	-	+

Option 3(5) – Fontmell Magna

If the village of Fontmell Magna was not designated as a Policy C settlement the ability to meet the housing needs of the village will be harmed as the only way that housing needs could be met would be through Rural Exception sites. By enabling some development to take place, housing can be provided for specific groups such as the young / elderly or the disabled.

Fontmell Magna is a relatively small village in terms of population but it does have a high level of service provision with six everyday services in close proximity to the village centre. These services also serve the smaller nearby villages of Sutton Waldron and Bedchester. Planning for small scale development, offers support for the services in the village. This is therefore a location where small scale development may have a positive impact in terms of service provision and the creation of balanced communities. Not providing development may result in the closure of some services in the village due to lack of patronage, thereby reducing community vitality.

The benefits of supporting the village facilities cut across several objectives including reducing the need to travel by making walking or cycling to facilities (eg to school or the local shop) more attractive. This may result in healthier lifestyles although the scale of the impact on health is more difficult to predict.

Due to the proximity of the Fontmell and Melbury Downs SAC, development in the village has the potential to have an impact on the designated habitat. There is therefore a need to include mitigation measures in line with results of the Habitats Regulations Assessment and to take the potential impact into account when deciding which housing sites are to be developed. The inclusion of a design policy is also considered important to minimise the impact of development on both the landscape and built form of the village especially as the village is covered by an extensive Conservation Area and the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB. In this light, it may be worthwhile promoting a Village Design Statement for the village as a priority and applying the design guidance to expansion sites at the village to ensure they do not harm the character of the village and surrounding area.

If Fontmell Magna is not designated as a Policy C settlement the impact on the environmental assets of the area, such as the Conservation Area or the internationally designated site, is considered to be neutral unless proactive measures are taken for their protection or enhancement.

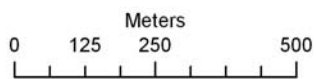
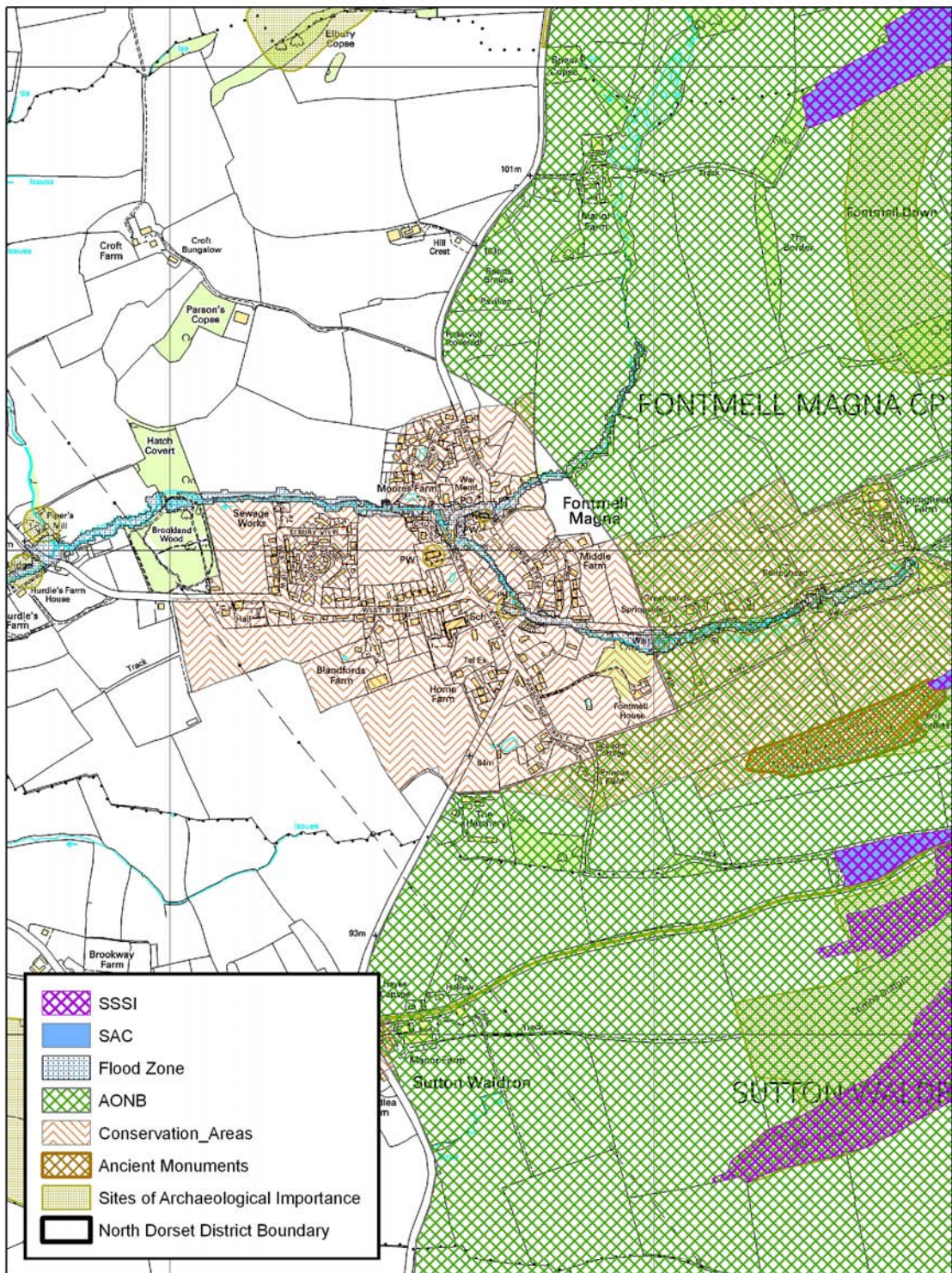
As the levels of growth in the village are likely to be relatively small, the potential for the inclusion of large scale SuDS and renewable energy schemes in the village are limited as their viability will be brought into question. The simple act of designating the settlement as a Policy C settlement does not promote clean energy production and therefore there is a need for a policy to promote this on development sites.

The economic potential of the village is likely to be enhanced by allowing some growth as it will make provision for small scale developments for economic activity such as business starter units. In addition, the proximity of Fontmell Magna to Shaftesbury with its tertiary education college offers opportunities for improving the skills of the village's residents. It is however not considered appropriate for large scale economic activity to take place in Fontmell Magna nor in any of the smaller villages as the impact in terms of landscape and traffic congestion would be detrimental to the rural area. It would be more appropriate to focus large scale economic activity in the larger towns within the district.

Conclusion

Fontmell Magna acts as an important service centre along the A350 corridor. Allowing growth at the village will support this function and may enhance the provision of services for the surrounding area. It should therefore be identified as a RSS Development Policy C settlement.

North Dorset – Core Strategy & Development Management DPD
 Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report - March 2010



Fontmell Magna



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 LA 100018415 (2009)

Policy 3(5)	Core Spatial Strategy		Option 3(5)a Identify Fontmell as a RSS Policy C Settlement	Option 3(5)b Do not identify Fontmell as a RSS Policy C Settlement
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	+	-
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	++	-
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	?	?
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	+	o
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	?	?
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	?	o
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	-	o
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	-	o

Policy 3(5)	Core Spatial Strategy		Option 3(5)a Identify Fontmell as a RSS Policy C Settlement	Option 3(5)b Do not identify Fontmell as a RSS Policy C Settlement
SA Objectives				
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	-	o
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	-	o
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	?	o
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	+	-
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	+	-
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	+	o
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	+	o

Option 3(6) – Spetisbury

Many of the effects of permitting some growth at Spetisbury are similar to those of permitting growth at Fontmell Magna. For example, by restricting growth housing needs can only be met through rural exceptions and planning for some growth will enable the housing needs of specific groups to be met within the village. There are however a few subtle differences explained below:

Spetisbury is not adjacent to internationally designated wildlife protection sites and therefore issues about protection of biodiversity are not as obvious. There are however several areas around the village which are important for biodiversity (including several SNCIs and the River Stour) and therefore impacts of development on wildlife cannot be ignored. If the village is not allocated for growth (Option 3(3)b) the impact on the biodiversity assets is reduced, however it could only be considered to have a positive impact if proactive measures were included to protect or enhance the biodiversity in the area. The same is true for impacts on the built form especially in relation to the adjacent Ancient Monument of Spetisbury Rings, the bridge over the River Stour and other listed buildings.

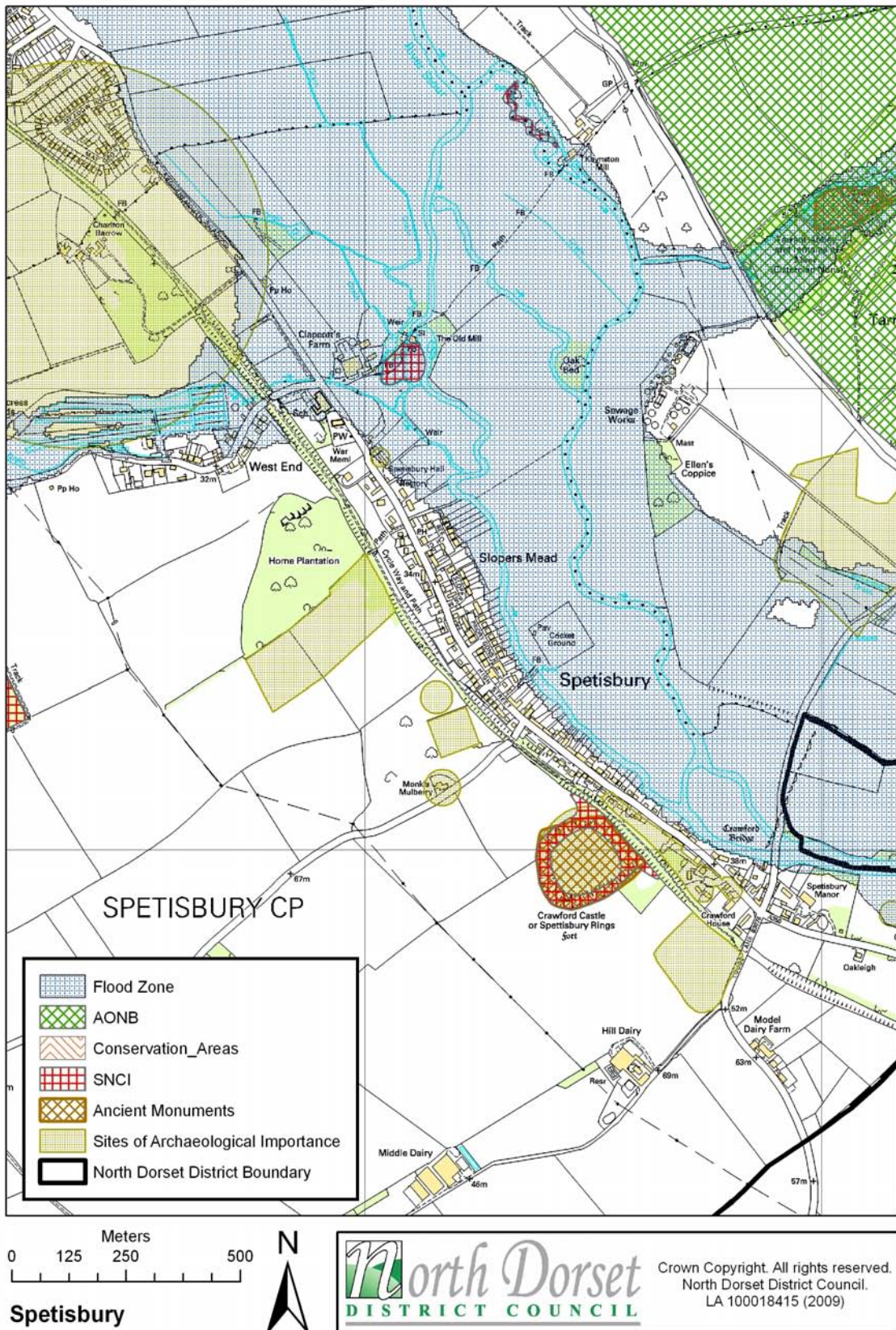
The village has limited services and limited potential for development as it is constrained by the River Stour and its extensive floodplain to the Northeast and the redundant railway line and topography to the Southwest. The only major opportunities for growth would therefore extend the village in length, creating ribbon development along the A350.

The potential impact of ribbon development in this location is thought to be significant. It is likely to encourage the use of private car travel to both Poole and Blandford as there are limited services and employment opportunities in the village. Due to the proximity of the village to Poole and Blandford, the scale of development associated with a Policy C settlement is not thought to have the “critical mass” needed to support additional village services. Development would also significantly impact on the character of the village and on the landscape by potentially merging with neighbouring settlements and creating one long strip of sub-urban like development along the A350.

Well planned growth of a settlement should include a mix of uses to help reduce commuting and encourage self containment. However in Spetisbury, including economic development is likely to increase the amount of traffic on the already busy A350 through the transportation of goods and people.

Conclusion

Spetisbury has limited services but a reasonably high population. The settlement is constrained environmentally creating a linear settlement. Growth here would be unlikely to support the level of service provision in the village and would be likely to encourage commuting to Poole or Blandford. It should not be identified as a RSS Development Policy C settlement.



Policy 3(6)	Core Spatial Strategy		Option 3(6)a Identify Spetisbury as a RSS Policy C Settlement	Option 3(6)b Do not identify Spetisbury as a RSS Policy C Settlement
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	+	-
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	-	o
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	?	?
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	+	-
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	-	+
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	-	o
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	-	o
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	-	o

Policy 3(6)	Core Spatial Strategy		Option 3(6)a Identify Spetisbury as a RSS Policy C Settlement	Option 3(6)b Do not identify Spetisbury as a RSS Policy C Settlement
SA Objectives				
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	-	o
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	-	o
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	?	o
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	?	?
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	-	o
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	+	o
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	+	-

Core Policy 4: Housing

Options considered centres around the overall quantum of residential development (1) and the location of this development (2).

Option 4(1)a: Plan for less than 7000 dwellings

Option 4(1)b: Plan to deliver 7000 dwellings (in line with emerging RSS)

Option 4(1)c: Plan to deliver more than 7000 dwellings

Option 4(2)a: Deliver high proportion in the main towns (80% Policy B and 20% elsewhere)

Option 4(2)b: Deliver medium proportion in the main towns (70% Policy B and 30% elsewhere)

Option 4(2)c: Deliver a lower proportion in the main towns (60% Policy B and 40% elsewhere)

Option 4(1) – The overall quantum of housing

The background evidence gathered to support the Southwest RSS concluded that around 5100 dwellings should be provided in North Dorset. In the run-up to the EiP, new population projections were produced taking into account new household formation rates derived from the 2001 Census.

The new population projections suggest that a significantly increased number of dwellings would be needed in North Dorset (about 8376 dwellings). This increase implied by the population projection, is partially attributed to non-employment led population growth such as people retiring to the area. Meeting this growth level would therefore not be in line with the employment led growth which is the emphasis of the Southwest RSS. The level of housing provision in North Dorset was therefore set at 7000 dwellings up to 2026 in the RSS Proposed Changes.

The implications of this for the actual level of housing delivery are therefore complex. If housing is provided at a rate below 7000 dwellings the needs of the district based on up to date household formation rates, may not be met. This will have an impact on the affordability of dwellings and the distance people have to travel to go to work. The result will be an increase in the levels of commuting into the district.

If more than 7000 dwellings are built over the plan period, the result is likely to be that the supply of housing will cater for those who wish to retire to / own second homes in the district but who do not necessarily contribute directly to its economy. The result of this will be increased demand for the healthcare and related services but not increase the labour supply. In addition, the rise in second/holiday homes that may result from the higher level of housing provision will harm the viability of village facilities.

The approach of supplying 7000 dwellings in line with the RSS Proposed Changes will help to control the level of in commuting and second homes but may harm the delivery of housing to meet the needs of residents. This will have implications for the affordability of housing including the deliverability of affordable housing. If more land is made available for housing, more affordable housing can be delivered as part of these developments. However it is likely that the level of housing needed to significantly influence the price of market housing is way beyond the availability of land and the negative effects would be significant. By making provision for 7000 dwellings, the economic benefits of in migration such as increased labour supply may be realised whilst the negative impacts such as the increased proportion of retired people, can be reduced. This is most likely to be achieved by having good well paid jobs and providing housing that closely meets the needs of the economically active.

The benefits of residential development include provision of decent and affordable housing enabling people to participate within their community. The provision of affordable homes can reduce accommodation costs of those in need, increasing disposable income resulting in reduced poverty. Well designed developments integrated with the existing settlement can improve the quality of life of the residents and therefore all developments should be designed to a high standard.

However, a greater level of housing development will have a greater impact on the environment and put pressure on existing infrastructure and community facilities. A carefully planned approach is needed to ensure that infrastructure delivery keeps pace with housing delivery and that environmental harm is kept to a minimum. Contributions should be taken from developers to help the delivery of infrastructure. Developments should also be located where the need to travel is reduced due to the proximity of everyday needs such as jobs and shops. Housing development can therefore aid in the regeneration of town centres through mixed use schemes.

The impact on the environment can be mitigated to some extent through careful site selection. Generally more development results in a greater impact on the environment due to greater land and resource consumption. Developments should avoid areas of high biodiversity value and areas where the impacts on landscape are likely to be significant. The inclusion of green space and trees within developments can also reduce their impact on the environment through the creation of areas for wildlife and by breaking up the built form.

The impact on greenhouse gas emissions is likely to be significant unless all of the new homes are built to zero carbon standard. There will be an overall increase in greenhouse gas emissions due to the increased numbers of dwellings. Building to high sustainability levels will reduce per capita emissions but increase overall emission levels. It is expected that more than a 20% increase in total household energy use from all dwellings would arise from the new homes unless they are built to a high standard. Building the new dwellings with water efficient measures and rainwater harvesting, with high levels of insulation and with renewable energy incorporated into the development will help to reduce the impact on the environment however a per capita decrease in greenhouse gas emissions is the best that can realistically be achieved.

Conclusion

Delivering around 7000 dwellings is likely to be the most sustainable option as this will enable housing needs to be met and increase the supply of labour to support economic growth. It will also help to control the level of in-migration for non economic purposes such as retirement.

Policy 4(1)		Housing – overall quantum	Option 4(1)a Plan for less than 7000 dwellings	Option 4(1)b Plan to deliver 7000 dwellings (in line with emerging RSS)	Option 4(1)c Plan to deliver more than 7000 dwellings
SA Objectives					
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	-	+	++
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	-	+	?
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	-	+	+
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	-	+	+
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o	o

Policy 4(1)		Housing – overall quantum	Option 4(1)a Plan for less than 7000 dwellings	Option 4(1)b Plan to deliver 7000 dwellings (in line with emerging RSS)	Option 4(1)c Plan to deliver more than 7000 dwellings
SA Objectives					
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	+	+	+
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	-	-	--
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	?	?	?
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	-	-	--

Policy 4(1)	Housing – overall quantum		Option 4(1)a Plan for less than 7000 dwellings	Option 4(1)b Plan to deliver 7000 dwellings (in line with emerging RSS)	Option 4(1)c Plan to deliver more than 7000 dwellings
SA Objectives					
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	-	-	--
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	-	-	--
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	+	+	+
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	-	+	?
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	+	+	++
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	+	+	++
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	o	o	o

Option 4(2) – Housing distribution

The split of development between rural and urban areas is important in delivering sustainable patterns of development. The level of housing development has been based on employment led growth and the in migration that goes with this growth. It is therefore important to match the level of job growth in the towns with the level of housing provision although this may be difficult to achieve.

The first element of housing provision is to meet the needs of the existing population. This necessitates a “base” supply of housing in all settlements that are designated for growth and is likely to be proportional to the existing population level. In addition to this “base” level of housing provision, housing needs to be supplied to enable economic growth. As the main towns in the district will act as hubs the majority of economic growth and therefore housing growth should be centred on them.

Currently approximately 43% of the population of the district live in the three main towns. However, with the role of the towns being to act as hubs for their rural hinterlands, the percentage of development in the towns should be higher than related to purely the existing proportion residents that live within them. This will strengthen the development strategy, supporting the role of the towns whilst still enabling development to help meet the needs of the rural areas.

By focusing growth on the best served centres, the facilities in these centres will be supported and new facilities may be provided. These centres can then act as service centres for their surrounding rural areas, improving accessibility across the district. Dispersal of development removes this support and also removes the attractiveness of walking to schools/shops etc increasing the reliance on the car. However for cycling and walking to be attractive, good quality pedestrian and cycle routes need to be integrated into both new developments and existing developed areas.

Increased support for service centres increases their vitality and therefore increases community cohesion. This is particularly true in small communities such as villages and therefore some development to support these communities is important. However, regeneration of the towns and the creation of vibrant town centres will best be achieved through an urban focus rather than a dispersed approach.

A secondary effect of delivering housing in rural settlements is that the cost of living in these areas is generally higher than in the main towns. An example of this is that many villages are not on mains gas and therefore rely on domestic oil for heating. This source of heating is more expensive than gas and therefore the cost of heating is greater in these locations than in the larger settlements. Locating too much development in rural areas will therefore increase cost of living and may result in increased levels of fuel poverty.

The impacts of climate change will be felt across the whole district, however a dispersed development pattern may offer more opportunities to adapt to the effects of climate change eg through flood avoidance. Developing in a more dispersed pattern is nonetheless more likely to have a greater impact on biodiversity and landscape.

In addition to the increased impacts due to the physical development that will take place, under a dispersed approach the need to travel will increase to enable residents to meet their daily needs. This will result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions over a more urban focused pattern of development.

A further advantage of focusing development in the urban areas is that infrastructure provision is generally better and new infrastructure can be put in place making the most of the economies of scale that will exist. The result is that shortfalls in infrastructure provision are more likely to be made up and to a higher standard in the urban areas than in rural areas. An example is that of Broadband connectivity and speed. In some rural areas connectivity is limited and the speed is slower than in many towns and cities across the country.

The main towns are already centres for business activity and therefore by focusing housing development in these towns, access to job opportunities is increased. However if no development is permitted in the rural areas, rural business innovation is likely to be harmed.

Conclusion

It is likely that the 80% to 20% focus on the main towns will not meet the needs of the rural areas. The result will harm the viability of the larger villages to act as hubs for the local rural area and harm economic activity in these areas. However, having too great a focus on the rural areas will exacerbate the problems associated with rural isolation and result in increased reliance on the car. The most sustainable approach is therefore likely to be a 70:30 split, focusing on the main towns.

Policy 4(2)	Housing distribution	Option 4(2)a Deliver high proportion in the main towns (80% Policy B and 20% elsewhere)	Option 4(2)b Deliver medium proportion in the main towns (70% Policy B and 30% elsewhere)	Option 4(2)c Deliver a lower proportion in the main towns (60% Policy B and 40% elsewhere)	
SA Objectives					
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	+	++	+
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	++	+	-
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	+	+	?
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	?	+	+
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o	o

Policy 4(2)	Housing distribution	Option 4(2)a Deliver high proportion in the main towns (80% Policy B and 20% elsewhere)	Option 4(2)b Deliver medium proportion in the main towns (70% Policy B and 30% elsewhere)	Option 4(2)c Deliver a lower proportion in the main towns (60% Policy B and 40% elsewhere)	
SA Objectives					
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	?	?	?
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	+	?	-
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	?	?	-
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	+	+	?
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	o	o	-
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	++	+	o
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	?	?	?

Policy 4(2)	Housing distribution		Option 4(2)a Deliver high proportion in the main towns (80% Policy B and 20% elsewhere)	Option 4(2)b Deliver medium proportion in the main towns (70% Policy B and 30% elsewhere)	Option 4(2)c Deliver a lower proportion in the main towns (60% Policy B and 40% elsewhere)
SA Objectives					
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	+	+	-
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	++	+	-
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	?	+	-
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	+	?	?

Core Policy 5: Managing Housing Land Supply

Management of residential land supply is important in achieving the objectives of the plan. However, the level of management that is undertaken needs to be proportional to the benefits that can be obtained from such management and hence options considered related to the geographical level of management.

The development on previously developed land reduces the amount of greenfield land that is needed for development. A target for the amount of pdl that should come forward is important and can aid in reducing the impact of development on the natural environment.

What options were considered?

Option 5(1)a: Manage housing supply at the district level

Option 5(1)b: Manage housing supply at the sub-district (local) level

Option 5(2)a: Adopt a low target to enable an unrestricted housing supply

Option 5(2)b: Adopt a target based on the availability of brownfield land

Option 5(2)c: Adopt a higher target therefore restricting greenfield development

Option 5(1) – Management scale

Managing housing land supply is important as it allows for the necessary infrastructure to be provided in parallel with residential development. It is also important to ensure that housing and economic development progress at a similar rate so that the need to travel can be reduced. The fine grain of management that is needed to make up any infrastructure deficiencies is only likely to be achieved with sub district management. For this reason management at the sub district level is preferred as it is likely to provide more benefits than managing across the district as a finer grain of management can be achieved.

Management at the local level is likely to benefit regeneration and the redevelopment of previously developed land. Where opportunities for redevelopment or previously developed land exist, greenfield land can be constrained to encourage the

regeneration and redevelopment to take place whilst enabling greenfield development in other areas of the district. Managing at the district level would remove this management ability.

Conclusion

Management at the Sub-district level is therefore likely to deliver more sustainable forms of development.

Policy 5(1)	Managing Housing Land – management scale		Option 5(1)a Manage housing supply at the district level	Option 5(1)b Manage housing supply at the sub-district (local) level
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	?	+
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	-	+
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	o	o
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	o	o
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	o	o
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	o	o
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	o	o
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	o	o

Policy 5(1)		Managing Housing Land – management scale	Option 5(1)a Manage housing supply at the district level	Option 5(1)b Manage housing supply at the sub-district (local) level
SA Objectives				
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	-	+
	11	Reduce pressure on the district’s natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	-	+
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	o	o
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district’s economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	-	+
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	-	+
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	-	?
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	-	?

Option 5(2) – Previously developed land

Redeveloping previously developed land reduces the development pressure on greenfield sites. However previously developed land often costs more to develop due to contamination, ownership, access and other issues. Proactive steps sometimes need to be taken to encourage such sites to be developed. One possible approach is to restrict greenfield development around a settlement to encourage the previously developed site to be redeveloped.

Redeveloping previously developed land in suitable locations enables many of the biodiversity, landscape and built environment objectives to be met through reduced greenfield development and through regeneration of urban areas. Regeneration opportunities in suitable locations can also be used to provide new and enhanced town centre facilities, reducing the need to travel. In general, suitable brownfield sites are closer to town centres than greenfield sites and therefore can offer opportunities to create pleasant walking and cycling routes through previously impenetrable derelict/previously developed areas. In addition, the realisation of regeneration opportunities generally improve the built environment.

The majority of previously developed sites in North Dorset are small or are currently being used intensely and therefore are likely to have limited biodiversity value. In contrast, greenfield sites have biodiversity value and the development of them not only removes this biodiversity but also significantly reduces the potential for important habitat restoration. In developments, habitat restoration would only be achieved through the inclusion of green areas, specifically set aside for that purpose.

Large scale development sites offer opportunities for climate change adaptation and mitigation measures such as SuDS and district heating schemes. Previously developed sites in towns can help to retrofit such measures to the existing urban area, offering wider benefits. In addition infrastructure improvements and upgrades, such as broadband, can be installed in a regeneration area, providing opportunities for upgrades of such infrastructure to neighbouring areas. This “overspill” effect can also be true for the vibrancy of areas of a town which can encourage businesses to start up and grow.

It is however important not to restrict housing development on greenfield sites too tightly as this may prevent housing needs being met which could harm economic development and encourage long distance commuting.

Conclusion

Having a brownfield target based on the availability of suitable land is the best approach as it offers the balance between restricting greenfield development whilst enabling housing delivery. The 35% target is therefore the most appropriate in North Dorset.

Policy 5(2)	Managing Housing Land – previously developed land	Option 5(2)a Adopt a low target to enable an unrestricted housing supply (20%)	Option 5(2)b Adopt a target based on the availability of brownfield land (35%)	Option 5(2)c Adopt a higher target therefore restricting greenfield development (50%)	
SA Objectives					
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	++	+	--
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	+	++	-
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	o	o	o
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	o	o	o
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o	o

Policy 5(2)	Managing Housing Land – previously developed land	Option 5(2)a Adopt a low target to enable an unrestricted housing supply (20%)	Option 5(2)b Adopt a target based on the availability of brownfield land (35%)	Option 5(2)c Adopt a higher target therefore restricting greenfield development (50%)	
SA Objectives					
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	?	?	-
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	-	+	++
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	-	++	+
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	-	+	++
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	-	+	+
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	-	++	+
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	-	+	++

Policy 5(2)	Managing Housing Land – previously developed land		Option 5(2)a Adopt a low target to enable an unrestricted housing supply (20%)	Option 5(2)b Adopt a target based on the availability of brownfield land (35%)	Option 5(2)c Adopt a higher target therefore restricting greenfield development (50%)
SA Objectives					
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	-	+	+
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	-	++	+
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	--	++	+
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	o	o	o

Core Policy 6: Economy

The overall quantum of jobs being planned for is important in considerations of economic growth and population increase. In addition, sufficient land needs to be made available to accommodate these jobs. The amount of land needed is not easy to predict as the number of people employed by a business can vary considerably depending on the business type, for example, a manufacturing plant may employ far more people than a distribution warehouse. The other important factor is the location of this employment land provision. Options considered therefore centre around these three themes:

What options were considered?

Option 6(1)a: Plan for growth of about 2000 jobs (broad RSS interpretation)

Option 6(1)b: Plan for growth of about 3300 jobs (based on more detailed local assessment of evidence)

Option 6(1)c: Plan for growth of greater than 3300 jobs

Option 6(2)a: Allocate enough land to meet need as identified in Workplace Strategy (approximately 25.3ha)

Option 6(2)b: Allocate more land than needed

Option 6(3)a: Allocate most land at B settlements (greater than equivalent in housing growth)

Option 6(3)b: Provide employment land in locations in proportion to proposed housing growth

Option 6(1) – Overall quantum of jobs

National and Regional strategies seek to concentrate economic growth in well served larger cities and towns. Outside of these areas, economic growth is to be more restricted and focused on important settlements within an area. Option 6(1)a restricts job growth to a very low level, Option 6(1)b allows job growth to a level that should meet the predicted Workspace needs of the district and Option 6(1)c allows for job growth above and beyond the predicted Workspace need.

Job provision at a level that meets identified Workspace needs should enable the existing economy to grow but it may not be sufficient to enable the economy to diversify or help to reduce out-commuting. However, If job provision significantly exceeds the demand for work from the population of the district, significant levels of in-commuting may result. This would have several knock on effects both environmentally and socially and therefore is undesirable.

Restricting job growth will decrease the availability of jobs within the district and therefore increase competition for the jobs that do exist. This is likely to lead to higher unemployment, decrease the wages to those in employment and encourage longer distance commuting to seek out better job prospects. This in turn is likely to decrease people's ability and time to participate in community events.

Positive impacts arising from restricting development include less change and therefore fewer impacts on biodiversity and landscape. This is particularly true of employment development which often consists of large buildings and industrial processes. All levels of development and growth will contribute to increases in greenhouse gas emissions and therefore to climate change. It is important when development takes place that its impact is minimised through renewable energy, well insulated buildings, and other mitigation measures and non domestic buildings should not be an exception to this.

However when change occurs, opportunities arise which can be capitalised upon to bring benefits to an area. Environmental opportunities include retrofitting SuDS to reduce surface water flooding in a settlement, district heating to bring clean energy to a wider area, renewable energy and habitat restoration. These opportunities do however need to be integrated into developments through the appropriate policy framework.

Increased levels of growth will require greater levels of infrastructure provision and this is likely to encourage innovation and business start-ups. This will improve the job prospects and wealth of the districts residents.

Conclusion

The most appropriate approach is to plan for job growth that meets the likely future demands and help to reduce commuting into and out of the district.

Policy 6(1)		Economy – quantum of jobs	Option 6(1)a Plan for growth of 2000 jobs (RSS interpretation 1)	Option 6(1)b Plan for growth of 3300 jobs (RSS interpretation 2)	Option 6(1)c Plan for greater than 3300 jobs
SA Objectives					
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	o	o	o
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	--	-	++
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	-	-	+
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	-	-	+
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o	o

Policy 6(1)	Economy – quantum of jobs		Option 6(1)a Plan for growth of 2000 jobs (RSS interpretation 1)	Option 6(1)b Plan for growth of 3300 jobs (RSS interpretation 2)	Option 6(1)c Plan for greater than 3300 jobs
SA Objectives					
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	?	?	?
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	-	-	--
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	?	?	?
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	-	-	--
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	--	-	-
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	-	-	--
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	+	+	+

Policy 6(1)	Economy – quantum of jobs		Option 6(1)a Plan for growth of 2000 jobs (RSS interpretation 1)	Option 6(1)b Plan for growth of 3300 jobs (RSS interpretation 2)	Option 6(1)c Plan for greater than 3300 jobs
SA Objectives					
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district’s economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	+	+	++
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	-	+	+
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	--	-	+
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	--	-	+

Option 6(2) – Employment land provision

Meeting the estimated need for employment land will enable businesses to expand and create job opportunities within the district. However, making more land than is needed available for employment uses allows headroom for further expansion in a planned way, reducing the need for development outside of the most suitable locations. In addition, making more land available than needed will offer a range and choice of sites to businesses enabling the most appropriate to be selected as not all sites will be suitable for all uses. Greater land allocation will however increase the impact on the environment and therefore the impact needs to be given careful consideration when allocating particular sites.

The most important factors will be the location and size of the available land. If plots are too small, businesses may not be able to expand to their full potential and likewise, if the available land is not well served by the necessary infrastructure, development is less likely to take place. The potential result of insufficient land allocation will be that businesses will locate outside of the district, harming the economy and job opportunities for residents.

The increase in employment development and investment associated with increased levels of employment land availability may help in improving infrastructure provision. In addition, by having more employment opportunities in the district, the need to travel long distances to work is likely to be reduced as employers will be located in closer proximity to housing. However, if too much land is made available, the increased employment activity may encourage in commuting over long distances. The easier access to employment opportunities through greater levels of employment development will also help to reduce poverty.

In addition to ease of access to employment and the accessibility of infrastructure from employment developments, the location of such developments is important in reducing negative impacts. Clearly it is important to avoid important biodiversity sites and to prevent pollution but it is also important to locate employment developments in areas where the landscape impact is minimal. This is primarily because employment developments (such as industrial estates) often consist of large buildings with limited green space around them. For this reason, the design and layout of such sites is important and should incorporate open space for use by employees.

To minimise the impact of development measures such as SuDS should be used to help reduce pollution especially diffuse pollution and energy efficiency measures and renewable energy should be incorporated. This also offers opportunities for benefits to the wider community and neighbouring uses.

Conclusion

Allocating enough land to meet the identified need is likely to offer the most sustainable option as it should reduce the negative environmental impacts whilst still enabling the economy to grow. However, the supply of land should be kept under review to ensure that the most appropriate and sustainable land is available to allow for sustainable levels of economic growth.

Policy 6(2)	Economy - land		Option 6(2) a Allocate enough land to meet workspace need (about 25ha)	Option 6(2) b Allocate additional land
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	o	o
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	+	+
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	+	+
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	o	o
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	+	+
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	-	--
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	-	-
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	-	--

Policy 6(2)		Economy - land	Option 6(2) a Allocate enough land to meet workspace need (about 25ha)	Option 6(2) b Allocate additional land
SA Objectives				
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	-	--
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	-	--
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	+	+
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	+	+
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	+	+
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	+	++
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	+	++

Option 6(3) – Employment land distribution

The spatial distribution of employment land plays an important role in delivering more sustainable patterns of development. Generally, locating employment at towns results in a reduced need to travel to access other services as employees can combine trips to work with trips to shops, banks, schools etc. This effect is however diluted through a more dispersed pattern of employment development.

There is a need to ensure that jobs are created in the rural areas to maintain their viability and improve their sustainability. However, just because jobs and houses are provided near each other does not mean that the residents of the houses will occupy the nearby jobs. Matching jobs to homes provision is important although wider environmental benefits can be realised by focusing jobs provision on the towns.

A town focus also offers opportunities for innovation and collaborative working between businesses. Examples could include situations where the by products from one business could be used as the raw materials for another or a service provided by one business could complement a service provided by another, enhancing and adding value to the final product. By locating businesses in a few locations, these benefits can be easier to realise.

Infrastructure is easier and cheaper to provide to one large industrial estate rather than several small ones and therefore concentration in accessible town locations can offer economies of scale. This will be true for all types of infrastructure including broadband, roads, district heating and green infrastructure. In addition, the provision of cycling and walking facilities and public transport to and from concentrations of employment uses, can aid in reducing the dependence on the private car. It is therefore important that sustainable transport provision is integrated within developments.

As with all developments, the exact location and design of the development are important in reducing or avoiding impacts. Design is important for its impacts on the landscape and townscape. Important biodiversity sites need to be avoided as do sites of high landscape value and areas liable to flood. Generally, the impact of development of this type has less of an impact if it is concentrated in a few locations rather than being dispersed around the countryside.

Conclusion

Generally a slight focus on the urban areas will offer greater benefits than a dispersed approach and therefore Option 6(3)a is likely to be the most sustainable option.

Policy 6(3)	Economy - location		Option 6(3)a Allocate most land at B settlements (greater than housing growth)	Option 6(3)b Provide employment land in locations in proportion to housing growth
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	o	o
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	++	-
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	+	+
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	o	o
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	-	-
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	-	-
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	-	--
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	-	--

Policy 6(3)		Economy - location	Option 6(3)a Allocate most land at B settlements (greater than housing growth)	Option 6(3)b Provide employment land in locations in proportion to housing growth
SA Objectives				
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	+	?
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	+	o
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	+	o
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	++	-
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	+	+
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	++	+
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	+	o

Core Policy 7: Retail and Other Town Centre Uses

The economic growth predictions for the district estimated additional retail floorspace provision. Options centred on the level of provision:

Option 7(1)a: Continue with current primary and secondary shopping areas

Option 7(1)b: Expand town centre areas to allow for projected growth

Option 7(1) – Town centre designation

There is little identified need in the towns for additional convenience retail provision and therefore any growth up to 2026 is most likely to be focused on comparison retail. A mixture of larger national retailers as well as smaller local retailers is needed to create a range of shopping opportunities.

The demand for town centre uses is related to the level of housing growth in an area. In the four towns designated as “town centre” there is unlikely to be sufficient capacity made available in existing centres and therefore expansion of these centres through regeneration of neighbouring areas will provide the additional capacity required. Making provision for sufficient land to meet demand will result in town centre uses being focused on these expanded town centres through the application of a town centre first approach. One of the major impacts therefore of restricting land for town centre uses would be out of town development which generally encourages car use. Out of town developments also have a greater landscape impact and impact negatively on the viability and vitality of existing town centres.

By making provision at the projected growth level in town centres, the needs of the community can be met in the most sustainable and accessible location. The secondary effect being that development in accessible locations encourages walking and cycling which in turn improves health and wellbeing. Making adequate provision in town centres, through increased capacity improves their vibrancy and therefore increases the range of goods and services on offer, creating more inclusive centres that better meet the needs of the community. It is also possible that having vibrant town centres will encourage people to shop before and after work, combining several trips to town into one multi-purpose journey.

However, towns generally fit within a hierarchy in terms of their retail provision and therefore it is important that the level of provision is not out of scale with its role within the hierarchy to avoid a negative impact on neighbouring larger centres. It is also

important that the right level of provision is made so that the towns within the district have adequate retail provision to meet the needs of the areas they serve so that travel to neighbouring centres is not encouraged.

As several of the town centres in the district are within or adjacent to areas liable to flood, it is important that the expansion of these centres is in an appropriate location away from the areas at most risk. In addition, the inclusion of green space within town centres will help to reduce the urban heat effect, increase biodiversity and create leisure space. Important buildings in town centres are often responsible for attracting people to them. Well designed town centres should therefore incorporate green space and respect the character of the existing valuable buildings.

Higher levels of town centre development can encourage infrastructure provision and increase job opportunities through the creation of vibrant towns with a range of town centre uses.

The landscape impact of town centre development is likely to be minimal however if insufficient provision is made for town centre uses, out of town development may take place which will have a greater visual impact. In addition, focusing development in the town centres can aid regeneration. As with all developments, it is essential that they are well designed to fit in with their setting, incorporate energy efficiency measures and renewable energy and include pollution and flood reduction measures such as SuDS.

Conclusion

Making adequate provision for retail uses in the town centre is important to avoid the negative effects of out of town retail. Therefore the most appropriate option is likely to be to make provision for additional retail growth in the towns through expanded secondary and primary shopping areas.

Policy 7(1)		Retail and Other Town Centre Uses	Option 7(1)a Business as usual (continue with current secondary & primary shopping areas)	Option 7(1)b Expand town centres to allow for projected growth
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	o	o
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	-	+
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	-	+
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	-	+
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	+	?
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	o	o
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	+	?
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	--	+

Policy 7(1)	Retail and Other Town Centre Uses		Option 7(1)a Business as usual (continue with current secondary & primary shopping areas)	Option 7(1)b Expand town centres to allow for projected growth
SA Objectives				
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	-	+
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	-	+
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	o	o
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	-	+
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	--	++
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	-	+
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	-	+

Core Policy 8: Housing Mix, Type and Density

Requiring residential developments to be built at a high density can aid in achieving several of the objectives of the Core Strategy however, requiring a density too high will impact negatively on some other objectives. For this reason, the following two options were tested:

Option 8(1)a: Have a flexible density requirement generally between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare

Option 8(1)b: Ensure developments are built at at least 40 dwellings per hectare

The size of dwellings being built is important in helping achieve a number of objectives of the plan. This also has sustainability considerations and therefore options considered were:

Option 8(2)a: Specify size of dwellings for all developments based on identified current need

Option 8(2)b: Specify the size of dwellings to help support the economy (ie dwellings to attract in-migrants to support the economy)

Option 8(1) – Density requirement

The benefits of building at high density include the reduction in the amount of land that is needed to accommodate the level of housing development in an area. Therefore building at low density can result in urban sprawl creating housing estates with little provision of public transport and facilities and increasing the impact on biodiversity. This increases the distance to travel to meet basic everyday needs for example to travel to schools, shops and work. The two options considered seek to encourage development at high densities to minimise these detrimental impacts.

There are however several negative points to having a rigid policy requiring high density development. Primarily the problem is that high density can harm the character of the existing built up area. For this reason a more flexible approach is likely to offer the appropriate protection for the character of an area whilst enabling the benefits of high density development to be recognised. The identification of areas where it may be appropriate for density to be lower than the specified range should be a key role of Town and Village Design Statements, as prepared by the local community. The production of these should therefore be supported and they should be used to influence development.

One of the major benefits of building at high density is the improved accessibility to everyday facilities achieved by creating the “critical mass” within walking distance to support such facilities. This is also true for public transport provision. Encouragement of walking and cycling will also improve health.

In addition to the provision of facilities and services for a development, infrastructure provision such as Broadband, walking and cycling routes and low-carbon energy such as district heating can be provided more efficiently and economies of scale can be realised. The provision of these can all help to reduce the impact on the environment resulting from new developments.

Poorly designed high density developments can have little green outside space which reduces the attractiveness of the development and does not provide appropriate space for children to play. The lack of green space increases the impact of development on urban biodiversity and increases rainwater runoff. However other factors such as the amount of energy provided from renewable sources are more significant in reducing the impact of development on the environment. The flexible approach is therefore likely to offer the most appropriate policy.

Conclusion

Having a flexible approach but generally requiring development between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare is likely to deliver the most sustainable outcomes. It will respect the character and heritage of the settlements within the district whilst enabling an efficient use of land.

Policy 8(1)	Residential – density		Option 8(1)a Have a flexible density requirement generally between 30 and 50 dph	Option 8(1)b Ensure developments are built at at least 40 dph
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	+	+
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	o	o
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	?	+
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	o	o
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	++	+
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	o	o
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	?	?
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	+	--
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	o	o

Policy 8(1)		Residential – density	Option 8(1)a Have a flexible density requirement generally between 30 and 50 dph	Option 8(1)b Ensure developments are built at at least 40 dph
SA Objectives				
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	?	?
	11	Reduce pressure on the district’s natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	?	?
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	+	+
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district’s economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	+	+
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	+	++
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	+	?
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	o	o

Option 8(2) – Housing type

Meeting housing needs is important to delivering sustainable development. However housing needs can change over time and therefore there is a need to be flexible. Clearly meeting the needs of the existing population will help to achieve sustainable development and therefore the housing types should be matched to the identified need arising from the current population. Although many people on the housing register have expressed a need for a smaller property, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment shows that those in housing need tend to require 3 bed affordable units. Smaller household units are however less efficient due to the high per resident ownership of domestic appliances. For this reason it will be important to ensure that the greater impact that results from these dwellings is mitigated through inclusion of sustainable heating and energy supplies such as a sustainably fuelled district heating and power installation.

The district also experiences high levels of in-migration that also have a need for housing. In the past, there have been high levels of non-economically active in-migrants to the area (for example those moving to the area for retirement) due to the high quality environment. This puts pressure on the services in the area (for example hospitals and social care) and increases demand for housing. Although this cannot be prevented from happening, the provision of housing targeted at economically active in-migrants will help the economy to grow and therefore improve opportunities and incomes for existing residents.

It is not possible to prevent people retiring to the area and it would not be beneficial to do so as they also contribute to the area through supporting village and town facilities, however if housing was not geared to supporting the economy, the imbalance in generations is likely to become more marked over time. This would increase the pressure on housing and services, resulting in an unsustainable pattern of development.

Although the environmental impact of each option will be the same in terms of housing numbers and developed land area, the impact of stimulating the economy will be greater economic development. This would have an impact on the environment and needs to be managed carefully to ensure that this impact is minimised. Ensuring that such development takes place in the most sustainable locations (ie the main towns) is therefore important.

Generally both options will help in achieving sustainable developments. The most sustainable option is however likely to be meeting the needs of the economy and therefore encourage economic activity. This is due to the level of non-economically active in migration. By attempting to deliver housing to meet the needs of the economically active, economic in migration can be encouraged which will stimulate the economy and create more balanced communities.

Conclusion

Meeting the needs of the existing population of the district is important and should form the basis for the housing mix in terms of affordable housing. In addition, the provision of housing to meet the needs of the economy will offer greater benefits and therefore the provision of 3 and 4+bed market housing is needed particularly in the main towns. Both options should therefore be considered as a combined strategy to deliver the appropriate mix of housing.

A possible approach could therefore be to have a focus on 3 bed affordable dwellings to meet the needs of the current population and 3 and 4+ bed open market dwellings to attract the economically active.

Policy 8(2)	Housing – type	Option 8(2)a Specify size of dwellings based on identified current need	Option 8(2)b Specify the size of dwellings to help support the economy	
SA Objectives				
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	++	+
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	+	++
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	o	o
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	++	+
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o
Effective protection of the environment	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	o	o
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	o	o
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district’s heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	o	o
	9	Recognise the importance of the district’s distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	o	o

Policy 8(2)	Housing – type	Option 8(2)a Specify size of dwellings based on identified current need	Option 8(2)b Specify the size of dwellings to help support the economy	
SA Objectives				
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	o	o
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	o	o
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	o	o
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	o	o
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	o	o
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	+	++
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	+	++

Core Policy 9: Affordable Housing

The emerging Southwest RSS sets the overall quantum of housing to be provided in the district up until 2026. It also advises that at least 35% of these should be affordable. However a higher percentage can be sought in a district or part of a district depending on the local situation. It is a long established fact that housing affordability in North Dorset is a problem and the HMA found that the need for housing is great and that the maximum level of affordable housing should be sought.

The viability of some sites may be questionable at high percentages and therefore options considered were as follows:

Option 9(1)a: Require 35% affordable on all schemes

Option 9(1)b: Require 40% affordable except in Gillingham where 35% affordable will be required

Option 9(1)c: Require 40% affordable on all schemes (including grant)

In addition, the options for the threshold at which affordable housing would be sought on a site were tested as follows:

Option 9(2)a: Apply threshold of 15 dwellings

Option 9(2)b: Apply a threshold of 3 dwellings

Option 9(2)c: Seek affordable housing / contribution for all schemes (no threshold)

Option 9(1) – Affordable housing percentage

The percentage of units on a development that were built as affordable housing is unlikely to have a significant impact on the environment as all dwellings irrespective of tenure should be built to high environmental standards, be well designed and avoid important landscape and biodiversity assets. These criteria are dealt with in other policies whereas this policy impacts directly on the social and economic aspects of sustainability.

One possible impact on the environment is related to the additional costs placed on developments and therefore a potential decrease in the willingness of developers to incorporate energy efficiency measures into schemes. Similarly the additional costs may cause problems with infrastructure delivery. The viability of schemes therefore needs to be considered so that development costs are integrated into calculations when setting the proportion of units that should be affordable housing.

The provision of affordable housing can aid in reducing poverty and therefore improve health. It can also contribute to creating inclusive communities however the creation of mono-tenure developments can cause segregation between the different groups in the community. Affordable housing units should be “pepper-potted” across development sites and should be “tenure blind” so that these barriers are minimised.

Increased supply of affordable housing will better meet the needs of individuals, giving stability and therefore the potential for more settled employment. This longer-term view may result in increased willingness to access training and to progress in a chosen profession. Requiring affordable housing on all sites will also mean that a broad spectrum of employees live in close proximity to employment opportunities.

All of the options considered are likely to provide affordable housing however where the financial burdens placed on a potential housing site result in a scheme becoming unviable; it will not be developed unless additional funding is made available. For this reason the option which closely follows viability is likely to be the most appropriate to enable sites to be developed. However, if a scheme is likely to be unviable at the high percentage, it may be appropriate to have a flexible approach where developers can negotiate a lower percentage based on individual scheme economics. A high percentage should be used as the starting point for negotiations with individual site viability evidence being used to inform the negotiation.

Conclusion

The most sustainable approach is likely to be to have a percentage requirement for an area set as high as possible having regard to viability. This can then act as the starting point for negotiations on sites where viability is called into question. Requiring 40% affordable in all areas except in Gillingham where 35% affordable will be required is therefore the favoured option.

Policy 9(1)	Affordable Housing - percentage	Option 9(1)a Require 35% affordable on all schemes	Option 9(1)b Require 40% affordable except in Gillingham where 35% affordable will be required	Option 9(1)c Require 40% affordable on all schemes (including grant)	
SA Objectives					
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	++	++	++
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	+	+	?
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	-	+	+
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	+	++	?
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o	o

Policy 9(1)	Affordable Housing - percentage		Option 9(1)a Require 3% affordable on all schemes	Option 9(1)b Require 40% affordable except in Gillingham where 35% affordable will be required	Option 9(1)c Require 40% affordable on all schemes (including grant)
SA Objectives					
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	o	o	o
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	o	o	o
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	o	o	o
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	o	o	o
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	o	o	o
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	o	o	o
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	o	o	o

Policy 9(1)	Affordable Housing - percentage	Option 9(1)a Require 3% affordable on all schemes	Option 9(1)b Require 40% affordable except in Gillingham where 35% affordable will be required	Option 9(1)c Require 40% affordable on all schemes (including grant)	
SA Objectives					
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	+	++	+
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	o	o	o
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	o	o	o
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	+	+	+

Option 9(2) – Affordable housing threshold

The characteristics of housing developments in North Dorset are that a large number of dwellings are built on sites of less than 15 dwellings. If a threshold was set high, these sites would not deliver affordable housing and therefore meeting the target for affordable housing would be more difficult. If the threshold was set at 15 dwellings, based on the past trend of site size, over 30% of sites would not contribute to affordable housing. Similarly with the threshold set at 3 dwellings, 10% of sites would not contribute.

Again, based on the past trend of site size, applying the threshold of 3 dwellings would mean that the 35% affordable housing target would only just be met. It therefore does not allow any buffer against sites that were not viable and all sites of 3 or more dwellings would have to deliver the appropriate level of affordable housing. If the threshold of one net additional dwelling was used, a contingency is built in to enable a more flexible approach when viability is a problem and offering more chance of meeting the 35% target.

The provision of affordable housing is important in reducing poverty and improving health and well being. Establishing a threshold of 1 net additional dwelling enables affordable housing to be provided on all residential sites therefore increasing the overall supply of affordable housing. This may however prevent some sites from being developed restricting supply, regeneration and other objectives. It is therefore important that where viability of a scheme is questioned, a flexible approach is used to assess site by site viability. In addition, by requiring affordable housing pepper-potted across all developments a more inclusive, mixed tenure community will result.

The location and design of developments are important in reducing the impacts on the environment. This applies to biodiversity, landscape and the built form and the threshold for affordable dwelling provision is not important.

Affordable homes currently have to meet a higher level on the Code for Sustainable Homes than private dwellings and therefore building more affordable homes will increase the energy efficiency of the dwelling stock. This effect will be equalised over time and therefore the effect of this is likely to be minimal in the long term. In addition, requiring affordable units on a site may encourage the developer to build all units to a higher standard rather than just the affordable ones. However, where the viability of a scheme is questionable, this effect may not be realised and the installation of renewable energy may also be discouraged.

In general, applying a threshold of one net additional dwelling would deliver more affordable housing but may prevent other objectives being met. For this reason, especially in regeneration areas, it may be more appropriate to have a flexible approach.

Conclusion

Setting the threshold as low as possible will deliver the highest number of affordable homes however there may be instances where viability is an issue. A flexible approach with the threshold set at one net additional dwelling is therefore the most sustainable option.

Policy 9(2)	Affordable Housing - threshold	Option 9(2)a See affordable housing / contribution on all sites of 15 or more dwellings	Option 9(2)b See affordable housing / contribution on all sites of 3 or more dwellings	Option 9(2)c Seek affordable housing / contributions on all sites (no threshold)	
SA Objectives					
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	+	++	++
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	+	+	++
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	+	+	+
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	+	++	++
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o	o

Policy 9(2)	Affordable Housing - threshold		Option 9(2)a See affordable housing / contribution on all sites of 15 or more dwellings	Option 9(2)b See affordable housing / contribution on all sites of 3 or more dwellings	Option 9(2)c Seek affordable housing / contributions on all sites (no threshold)
SA Objectives					
Effective protection of the environment	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	o	o	o
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	o	o	o
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	o	o	o
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	o	o	o
Prudent use of natural resources	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	?	?	?
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	?	?	?
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	?	?	?

Policy 9(2)		Affordable Housing - threshold	Option 9(2)a See affordable housing / contribution on all sites of 15 or more dwellings	Option 9(2)b See affordable housing / contribution on all sites of 3 or more dwellings	Option 9(2)c Seek affordable housing / contributions on all sites (no threshold)
SA Objectives					
Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	o	o	o
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	o	o	o
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	+	?	?
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	+	+	+

Core Policy 10: Rural Exceptions

Rural exceptions sites are sites for 100% affordable housing to meet identified local need in locations where housing sites would not normally be permitted. However, permitting such development in all rural areas can cause accessibility problems and hence higher living costs which offset the benefits of providing housing that is affordable.

What options were considered?

Option 10(1)a: Allow sites in all settlements of 3,000 inhabitants or less

Option 10(1)b: Restrict sites based on level of services/population

Option 10(1)c: Restrict exception sites to Policy C settlements only (excluding Sturminster Newton)

Option 10(1) – Rural exceptions sites

Permitting rural exceptions in all settlements across the district is likely to deliver more affordable housing in the locations where need is identified and conversely, a restricted approach is likely to make meeting need more difficult. In addition, rural exception sites are permitted based on local need often related to family or employment ties and therefore development of such sites will help to build rural communities.

However, the cost of living in rural areas, where everyday facilities are some distance away, is greater than in well served centres and therefore the benefits of subsidised housing are diluted. Focusing rural exceptions on larger, well served centres is likely to improve accessibility for prospective residents, delivering an improved quality of life. The unrestricted approach will work against the objective of improving accessibility with the knock on effect of increasing reliance on the private car for everyday trips.

Considerations of the individual sites for development need to ensure that they do not impact on biodiversity and take account of the landscape character of the area especially as the rural landscapes of North Dorset are recognised as an important asset.

The problems of accessibility in rural areas have knock on effects for a number of the SA Objectives. The increased need to travel increases greenhouse gas emissions from transport and increases traffic on roads. Access to career and training opportunities is more difficult and hence aspirations are lower amongst the younger generation.

Conclusion

The conclusion is that placing some restriction on the location of rural exception sites is desirable although placing too much restriction can harm rural communities. Option 9(1)b is therefore likely to be the most appropriate option.

Policy 10(1)	Rural Exceptions		Option 9(1)a Allow sites in all settlements of 3,000 inhabitants or less	Option 9(1)b Restrict sites based on level of services/population	Option 9(1)c Restrict exception sites to Policy C settlements only (excluding Sturminster Newton))
SA Objectives					
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	++	+	-
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	-	++	+
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	-	+	+
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	++	+	+
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o	o

Policy 9(1)	Rural Exceptions		Option 9(1)a Allow sites in all settlements of 3,000 inhabitants or less	Option 9(1)b Restrict sites based on level of services/population	Option 9(1)c Restrict exception sites to Policy C settlements only (excluding Sturminster Newton))
SA Objectives					
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	o	o	o
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	?	?	?
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	?	?	?
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	?	?	?
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	-	+	+
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	o	o	o
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	o	o	o

Policy 9(1)	Rural Exceptions		Option 9(1)a Allow sites in all settlements of 3,000 inhabitants or less	Option 9(1)b Restrict sites based on level of services/population	Option 9(1)c Restrict exception sites to Policy C settlements only (excluding Sturminster Newton))
SA Objectives					
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	o	o	o
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	-	+	++
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	o	o	o
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	-	+	+

Core Policy 11: Grey Infrastructure

The Transport study commissioned by the County Council as part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy identified a number of recommendations. The package of recommendations fall into four main themes. Some of the recommendations fall outside of the remit of the Core Strategy and therefore are the responsibility of other organisations (primarily DCC highways). Options therefore are to support and promote the recommendations or to reject them.

What options were considered?

Demand Management

Manage mix, location and density of developments, manage parking, promote community travel planning

Option 11(1): Should the Demand Management recommendations be supported?

Highway Network

Freight management, provide accurate information, review road schemes, Route Management Strategies

Option 11(2): Should the Highway Network improvement recommendations be supported?

Public Transport

Gillingham interchange improvements, real time bus information, additional bus services, integrated rail/bus ticketing

Option 11(3): Should the Public Transport recommendations be supported?

Walking and Cycling

Signage for pedestrians and Cyclists, prioritise and timetable rights of way improvement schemes, implement walking and cycling improvements in towns, implement walking cycling and equestrian schemes

Option 11(4): Should the Walking and Cycling improvements be supported?

In addition, the management of parking across each town can aid in influencing peoples travel behaviour and therefore:

Option 11(5): Should an integrated Parking Strategy be produced to manage parking in public car parks, on street parking and residential parking?

Option 11(1) – Demand management

The main instrument for demand management is the location and density of all types of development so the distance people need to travel to access work, shops etc. is reduced and these needs can be met more sustainably. The result of this action is to improve accessibility, one of the key challenges facing North Dorset. It can also improve the viability of town centres due to increased patronage and reduces the transport costs of individuals through reducing reliance on the private car. The net result for individuals can include improved health through greater cycling and walking and reduced living costs, hence reduced poverty.

Managing demand is likely to mean that alternatives to car travel are made more attractive and therefore more viable. This improves the local environment, improves road safety and improves the attractiveness of an area. It also widens opportunities for those who cannot drive and improves community cohesion through the use of local facilities, car sharing and public transport use. Several strategic planning aims are also supported through demand management actions; these included reduced landscape impact, reduced urban sprawl and reduced pollution from traffic.

The impact on the wider environment is also likely to be reduced through reduced air, noise and water pollution, and other types of environmental damage. This will be better for biodiversity through reduced land take and therefore habitat fragmentation and loss. Reduced traffic will also result in reduced number of instances of animals being killed on roads.

An important element of economic activity is adequate provision transport infrastructure to enable the flow of people, goods and services to and from markets. The costs and environmental impacts of such infrastructure can be large and therefore the most efficient use of the existing infrastructure should be a priority. This can be aided through demand management by reducing usage of infrastructure therefore reducing maintenance costs and congestion, enabling more reliable and efficient travel. Locating development at well served centres also improves the viability of these centres through the creation of a critical mass for support and through economies of scale in infrastructure provision.

There are therefore numerous positive effects of high density development in accessible locations however caution also needs to be exercised to ensure that the negative effects are minimised. Negative effects include loss of settlement character and the potential for increased urban heat due to increased hard surfacing. These can be overcome through careful application of a density policy and through the inclusion of open space within and around developments. However, in all instances, developments should be in the most accessible locations reducing the distance travelled to fulfil basic everyday needs.

Conclusion

The greatest benefits are likely to arise through implementing the demand management recommendations.

Policy 14(1)	Transport – demand management		Option 11(1)a Support Demand Management recommendations	Option 11(1)b Do not support recommendations
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	o	o
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	++	o
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	+	o
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	o	o
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	-	o
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	o	o
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	+	?
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	--	?
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	?	-

Policy 14(1)	Transport – demand management		Option 11(1)a Support Demand Management recommendations	Option 11(1)b Do not support recommendations
SA Objectives				
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	+	-
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	+	-
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	o	o
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	+	o
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	++	?
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	++	?
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	o	o

Option 11(2) – Highway network

Improvements to the transport network, such as straightening roads or removing slow moving traffic from main routes, will ease congestion and improve travel times. There are therefore three main areas that benefit from improvements made to the transport network. Firstly there are benefits to the user such as time savings, safety improvements and possible reductions in fuel consumption. This widens the opportunities for individuals to access work, training and leisure.

Secondly there are efficiency saving to industry and commercial companies as access is gained to more distant markets through reduced transport time and costs are reduced through less time being spent travelling. The investment in the transport network will create a more efficient business environment however there are limited funds to implement the package of improvements needed to make these gains significant. For this reason, there is likely to be a need to restructure the way businesses operate and to invest in small scale network management packages which offer the greatest returns.

Thirdly there are jobs created in the construction and maintenance of roads and the other network improvements proposed. However, for these benefits there are also negative impacts which need to be taken into account.

A knock on effect of reduced travel times is that individuals are more willing to travel further to work or for leisure and therefore increase the overall emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants. In addition, individuals are less willing to walk or cycle due to the greater distances covered and therefore there is less support for local facilities such as village shops, reducing their viability. The reduced congestion will offer some local improvements to the environment however; this will be offset by the likely increases in distance travelled.

Road upgrades that form part of a package of transport network improvements have negative impacts through land take. This affects biodiversity through habitat loss and fragmentation and has a potential impact on the local landscape. However, the proposal for freight management is likely to offer benefits for the transportation of freight through some of the towns resulting in improved local environments.

Conclusion

There are likely to be several negative effects from implementing the package of highway network recommendations against which mitigation measures will need to be put in place. If this is done effectively, the most appropriate action will be to implement these recommendations.

Policy 11(2)	Transport – highway network		Option 11(2)a Support Highway Network recommendations	Option 11(2)b Do not support recommendations
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	o	o
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	-	o
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	?	o
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	o	o
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	o	o
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	-	?
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	+	-
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	-	?

Policy 11(2)	Transport – highway network		Option 11(2)a Support Highway Network recommendations	Option 11(2)b Do not support recommendations
SA Objectives				
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	--	?
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	?	?
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	o	o
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	++	-
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	-	?
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	+	-
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	+	-

Option 11(3) – Public transport

Improvements to public transport both through improved information availability and the effectiveness of the way public transport operates, help to break down barriers to active lives individuals may face, including relating to disabilities and low incomes. It enables people to take up job opportunities, access essential day to day services and participate in leisure and community activities when previously they may not have been able to do so.

Improved access to jobs and services has economic benefits to the district through increased participation and productivity of individuals but also through reducing reliance on benefits through the improved access to and choice of work. Investment in an integrated public transport system will help to improve the competitiveness of the economy through ease of access to new markets. An example could be reduced travel times to London or Exeter by rail. The greatest benefits are likely to be achieved in areas of poorest accessibility and areas where there is limited access to sustainable transport choices.

Reduction in the reliance on car travel that could be achieved through a fast and efficient integrated public transport system will reduce the impact on the environment through reduced emission of pollutants and reduced congestion. If no action is taken to improve public transport, the accessibility and environmental problems associated with transport are likely to get worse by virtue of the increase in population that will result from house building.

Conclusion

Implementing the package of public transport recommendations is likely to be the most sustainable option, offering benefits to the residents of the district.

Policy 11(3)		Transport – public transport	Option 11(3)a Support Public Transport recommendations	Option 11(3)b Do not support recommendations
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	o	o
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	++	-
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	+	o
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	+	o
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	o	o
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	?	?
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	?	-
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	o	o

Policy 11(3)	Transport – public transport		Option 11(3)a Support Public Transport recommendations	Option 11(3)b Do not support recommendations
SA Objectives				
Prudent use of natural resources	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	++	-
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	o	o
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	o	o
Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	+	o
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	++	-
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	?	o
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	+	-

Option 11(4) – Walking and cycling

Higher levels of walking and cycling help to improve the general health of the population, reduce weight and improve fitness. In addition, the cost of cycling and walking is less than car travel, it is quicker to get through congested areas and no pollution is produced which is better for the environment. The result of increased cycling and walking is that there are fewer cars on the road which enables goods to be transported quicker and more efficiently and improving air quality.

Steps to encourage walking and cycling therefore offer several benefits for individuals and businesses. The coordinated provision of cycling and walking routes in towns is important to this and aids in improving access to community facilities and additional signage will help to reduce barriers to community participation. A further benefit of walking and cycling routes is the greening of the urban environment. This has benefits for biodiversity, climate change adaptation and improved appearance.

If no action is taken and new developments are not planned within a coordinated cycling and walking framework, reliance on the private car is likely to increase especially for short journeys. This will increase congestion in towns with the knock on effect of decreasing air quality. Accepting the recommendations is therefore the most sustainable option.

Conclusion

Implementing the recommendations for walking and cycling improvements is likely to offer improvements in terms of sustainable transport, however greater emphasis could be given to connecting villages to each other and to the main towns through safe cycle and walking routes

Policy 11(4)	Transport – walking and cycling		Option 11(4)a Support Walking and Cycling recommendations	Option 11(4)b Do not support recommendations
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	o	o
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	++	?
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	++	o
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	+	o
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	?	?
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	+	o
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	+	o
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	+	?
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	o	o

Policy 11(4)		Transport – walking and cycling	Option 11(4)a Support Walking and Cycling recommendations	Option 11(4)b Do not support recommendations
		SA Objectives		
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	+	-
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	o	o
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	o	o
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	o	o
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	+	-
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	o	o
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	o	o

Option 11(5) – Parking strategy

The provision of adequate parking space on new residential developments is important to improving the quality of a development and the quality of life of residents. However, taking a coordinated approach to parking in town centres, industrial estates and in residential areas offers opportunities for greater benefits. Firstly, the closer management of parking reduces the number of incorrectly parked cars, resulting in fewer accidents, safer streets and improved traffic flows, including access for emergency service vehicles. Secondly the visual appearance of the towns will be improved and roads will be safer for all users, including pedestrians and cyclists. Thirdly, greater use of public transport, walking and cycling is encouraged with associated health and environmental benefits.

The management of parking needs careful consideration to ensure that the needs of the mobility impaired are met through the provision of adequate parking for the disabled. In addition the management of parking in town centres may reduce people's willingness to "pop-in" to the town centres and therefore have a negative effect on their viability.

In terms of the role of the Core Strategy and the Local Development Framework, new developments only can be influenced. The management of parking is fundamental to creating well designed developments in which people want to live. It is therefore important that the standards set for car parking in new developments fit in with the wider aims of an integrated parking strategy and that these are adhered to.

The potential for reduced car use that may result from the management of parking will help to reinforce several of the objectives of the Core Strategy. These include better air quality and reduced pollution resulting in benefits for health and biodiversity, reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from transport and better resource efficiency. Although several of these impacts may be small, the cumulative effect of action on car parking, along with other measures such as good cycling and walking routes, will offer greater benefits.

Conclusion

Managing parking across the district in a comprehensive way should encourage more sustainable travel choices however it requires actions outside of the remit of the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy should however not prevent it from happening at some time in the future and therefore should include the residential parking guidelines developed across the whole County as the first part of this process.

Policy 11(5)	Transport – parking strategy		Option 11(5)a Adopt Residential Car Parking Standards	Option 11(5)b Develop a comprehensive Car Parking Strategy for the whole district
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	o	o
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	?	?
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	o	+
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	o	-
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	+	++
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	o	o
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	o	o
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	+	+
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	o	o

Policy 11(5)	Transport – parking strategy		Option 11(5)a Adopt Residential Car Parking Standards	Option 11(5)b Develop a comprehensive Car Parking Strategy for the whole district
SA Objectives				
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	+	++
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	o	o
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	o	+
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	o	+
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	+	++
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	o	?
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	o	?

Core Policy 12: Social Infrastructure

Social infrastructure includes the provision of schools and colleges, GP surgeries and other healthcare facilities, community halls and leisure centres including bowling and cinemas. Options considered included

Option 12(1)a: Focus provision at the main towns

Option 12(1)b: Focus provision at the main towns and also allow some provision at the larger villages

Option 12(1) – Location of social infrastructure

The provision of social infrastructure is important in creating sustainable settlements. Good access to social infrastructure such as schools, GPs, leisure centres etc, is essential to everyday life. Allowing provision of social infrastructure in the larger villages will aid in creating more sustainable settlements and help reduce the need to travel to larger settlements. Provision in villages will also help to create more inclusive settlements due to the sense of community created around for example a school or a village fete.

However, some facilities such as leisure centres are not viable in small settlements and need to be located in larger centres. There is a need for a balanced approach as a blanket “no new facilities in villages” would reduce the need for multiple small facilities but not help with other sustainability objectives. It is therefore thought that provision of major facilities such as leisure facilities, town halls, restaurants, fitness centres, schools, GPs etc should be provided in the main towns and smaller scale facilities such as GP surgeries, village halls, replacement / expanded primary schools etc should be permitted in smaller villages.

Conclusion

Permitting small scale facilities in villages whilst focusing the larger facilities in the main towns is considered the most sustainable way to meet need

Policy 12(1)	Social Infrastructure – location		Option 12(1)a Restrict provision to the main towns	Option 12(1)b Allow provision in larger villages
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	o	o
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	--	+
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	-	+
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	--	++
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	o	o
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	o	o
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	o	o
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	o	o

Policy 12(1)	Social Infrastructure – location		Option 12(1)a Restrict provision to the main towns	Option 12(1)b Allow provision in larger villages
SA Objectives				
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	-	+
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	o	o
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	o	o
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	o	o
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	-	+
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	o	o
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	o	o

Core Policy 13: Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure can offer multiple benefits to the urban environment. Its provision needs to form part of developments however provision can be coordinated across a settlement or provided on site by site basis. Options considered therefore were:

Option 13(1)a: Coordinate provision of Green Infrastructure across a settlement through a Green Infrastructure Strategy

Option 13(1)b: Allow provision to be made on a site by site basis by setting standards for open space in developments

Option 13(1) – Green infrastructure strategy

Green infrastructure offers multiple benefits to a town including the greening of the built environment, provision of areas for biodiversity and learning, provision of playing pitches, cycle and walking routes and provision of areas for flood water storage. These benefits can improve the built environment and help integrate the landscape into towns. Well designed developments are recognised to incorporate open space provision. The benefits of green infrastructure can be enhanced through the connection of areas and hence a coordinated and strategic approach will offer enhanced benefits.

If provision is not coordinated through a strategic approach, open space may well be delivered as islands of green within a built up area. Although this delivers functional green space such as sports fields, it is less likely to deliver the wider benefits that can be achieved through a connected network of green infrastructure.

Functional green space include sports pitches which help improve health through active lifestyles, community open space which encourages a sense of community through social events, play areas for children, and the secondary effect that green space can result in urban cooling helping adaptation to climate change.

Connecting green infrastructure elements together with footpaths and cycle ways in a coordinated way will offer benefits in terms of accessibility and increased permeability of the urban area. It enables cycling and walking to town centres from residential areas encouraging healthy active lifestyles and enables sports pitches and play space to be accessed easily. A network of green infrastructure also allows wildlife to move through an urban area enhancing the biodiversity in a town. This offers educational benefits through exposure to wildlife and an understanding of biodiversity.

Coordinated provision of SuDS in a town can help to reduce the potential impacts of flooding again offering opportunities for climate change adaptation. Coordinated SuDS provision will also enable the impact of diffuse pollution from runoff from roads to be

minimised. If provision of SuDS is not coordinated, individual schemes are unlikely to be linked and therefore the hierarchy of SuDS elements will not work in the most efficient way.

Integrating green infrastructure such as trees, parks and foot/cycle paths into developments breaks up the built area effectively bringing the rural landscape into a town. This highlights the importance of the rural area, connecting the town to its rural hinterland.

A coordinated approach to green infrastructure provision enables the multi functionality of green infrastructure elements to be maximised. An example of this would be the inclusion of a cycle path alongside a SuDS scheme, connecting an area to the town centre and also acting as a wildlife corridor.

Conclusion

Generally it is harder to realise the full benefits of green infrastructure elements without a coordinated approach to its provision and therefore the option for developing a Green Infrastructure Strategy is considered the best approach. However it is also important to set standards to ensure the provision of sufficient open space in new developments.

Policy 13(1)	Green Infrastructure		Option 13(1)a Coordinate provision through a Green Infrastructure Strategy	Option 13(1)b Allow provision on a site by site basis
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	o	o
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	++	-
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	++	+
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	+	?
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	++	+
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	+	?
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	++	+
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	+	?
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	o	o

Policy 13(1)	Green Infrastructure		Option 13(1)a Coordinate provision through a Green Infrastructure Strategy	Option 13(1)b Allow provision on a site by site basis
SA Objectives				
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	+	?
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	o	o
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	o	o
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	o	o
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	++	-
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	o	o
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	o	o

Core Policy 14: Protecting and Enhancing the Environment

What options were considered?

Option 14(1): No alternative options were considered as the policy reiterates national and international policy for environmental protection and interprets it to the local case. In addition, greater protection is given to locally significant environmental features.

Option 14(1) – Protecting and enhancing the environment

This policy seeks to offer a high level of protection to the environmental assets which make North Dorset attractive. This may however inhibit the delivery of housing, employment developments and community facilities. Restricting growth through this policy may also result in a lack of economic growth and therefore restricted job opportunities. The delivery of other infrastructure may also be harmed by this policy due to concerns over habitat and landscape protection.

One particular example could be a bypass for Melbury Abbas which would have a potential impact on the landscape and on the internationally protected Melbury Downs SAC. However, the level of traffic in the village is causing harm to its buildings and to the economy of the district through the congestion caused.

However, the protection of the environmental assets of the district will also have several positive benefits beyond just the obvious environmental benefits. Allowing space for biodiversity and creating a network of wildlife corridors can offer opportunities for establishing footpath and cycle routes through towns. Regeneration of town centres can be heritage led through recognition of the connections the regeneration site has with the town and incorporating historic buildings into developments. Environmental assets and heritage assets are fundamental to good design. This level of good design can improve the quality of the built environment which in turn can attract businesses to the area, stimulating further growth and job creation. The creation of attractive places and the fostering of cultural associations with places are also important to mental and physical well-being

The protection given to the environment by this policy includes the protection of heritage associated with the area such as scheduled ancient monuments and listed buildings but also seeks to protect important non-listed buildings, parks and gardens. It also seeks to prevent degradation of landscape character when development takes place and to protect and where possible restore habitats. All of these seek to improve the built environment and protect the rural areas from harmful development.

Concerns about the environment and the inter-relationship between environmental features will help to reduce the impact from developments. The environment should therefore form an important part of the development planning stage and should be integrated into the design and form of developments. This will help to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Conclusion

This policy seeks to integrate the environment into development decisions and offers a level of protection to the environment. It does however need to be rigorously enforced.

Policy 14(1)	Protecting and Enhancing the Environment		Option 14(1)a Adopt protection framework as set out in Policy 14
SA Objectives			
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	-
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	-
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	+
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	o
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	+
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	+
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	++
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	++
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	++

Policy 14(1)	Protecting and Enhancing the Environment		Option 14(1)a Adopt protection framework as set out in Policy 14
SA Objectives			
Prudent use of natural resources	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	+
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	+
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	o
Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	-
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	o
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	o
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	o

Core Policy 15: Blandford

Blandford is the largest settlement in the south of the district and is therefore one of the districts main towns. This status means that it will be one of the focuses for development and future expansion.

The options considered centred around the expansion of the town once the currently identified large development sites within the settlement boundary have been developed:

Option 15(1)a: No post 2016 expansion of the town

Option 15(1)b: Expand the town to the north east

Option 15(1)c: Expand the town to the south west

Option 15(1) – Expansion of the town

The main implications of the options considered relate to housing delivery. If the town is constrained in the period after 2016, the delivery of housing will be harmed and increased commuting to the town is likely to result. In addition the economy of the town will be harmed due to labour shortages and a lack of vibrancy in the town centre. Lack of development is likely to harm the sense of community in the town due to the potential increase in in-commuting. Any housing or employment growth would have to be accommodated within the town through intensification. This is likely to impact negatively on the townscape and built heritage but may encourage greater walking and cycling within the town itself.

No greenfield expansion would however offer benefits for the environment especially for local biodiversity. There would be no loss of biodiversity due to greenfield development, the landscape and the AONB around the town would not be harmed and reuse of previously developed land would be encouraged.

To meet the needs of the town and its hinterland greenfield expansion is necessary. Due to the towns location relative to the two AONB, this greenfield development is likely to have an impact on the landscape and therefore on the AONB themselves. Development in areas outside of the AONB will also have an impact on landscape and townscape.

The land to the north east breaches the defensible barrier of the town's bypass and develops up to the boundary of the AONB. Due to the open nature of this area, the landscape impact would be considerable and therefore undesirable. Parts of the sites to the south west are within the AONB but due to the topography of the area, the impact of development would be sheltered / screened by hills and woods. The overall impact of such development on the landscape is therefore less than development to the north east.

The land that forms the site to the north east drains directly into a small stream which flows through Blandford town centre and into the River Stour. If development was to take place on this site, it would need to ensure that runoff from the developed site does not increase flows in this stream due to the potential to increase the risk of flooding in Blandford. If possible development should aim to reduce the risk of flooding to areas downstream. Effective SuDS would need to be incorporated to ensure that this was the case. Development of the site to the south east would bring the town to the edge of the floodplain of the River Stour. This does expose part of the site to potential flooding from the Stour but development should avoid impact on and be confined to the areas outside of the floodplain. Again SuDS will need to be incorporated into the development to ensure that flooding downstream is not increased.

The biodiversity on any development site is reduced through the act of development and long established habitats are permanently lost. Development of the site to the north east will result in permanent loss of agricultural land including the associated impact on hedgerows and fields. However development to the south east may have a potential impact on the hunting grounds of the greater horseshoe bats living at Bryanston. In addition there are areas suitable for woodland habitat restoration in the areas to the south of the town as identified by the Southwest Nature Map.

Both of the options for the expansion of the town result in the permanent loss of productive agricultural land. The majority of the area to the south west is grade 4 agricultural land with a small amount of grade 3 land. The area to the north east is similar but also includes an area of grade 2 agricultural land which is of higher productive value. It is also important that development of a site does not result in pollution of neighbouring agricultural land or groundwater resources. Adequate measures need to be put in place to ensure this does not happen.

Development of large greenfield sites offers the opportunity to incorporate large scale renewable energy schemes such as sustainably fuelled district heating and power. This could be used to fuel flatted developments on the site but also neighbouring large heat users such as schools, the leisure centre and the hospital. Greater benefits could be achieved from this by developing the areas to the south west due to the proximity of the site to such heat loads.

One important aspect of sustainable development is reducing the impact of developments. An obvious impact of a residential development is the amount of travel that results once the new dwellings are occupied. By locating development close to the

facilities that people use on a regular basis (such as schools, GPs, shops, supermarkets, employment sites etc) the need to travel is reduced. The area to the south west is closer to the town centre and schools than the area to the north east and therefore offers greater prospects for sustainable travel such as walking and cycling. This is also likely to improve the health of the residents and can bring benefits to the town as a whole through provision of useable links to the town centre and existing residential areas.

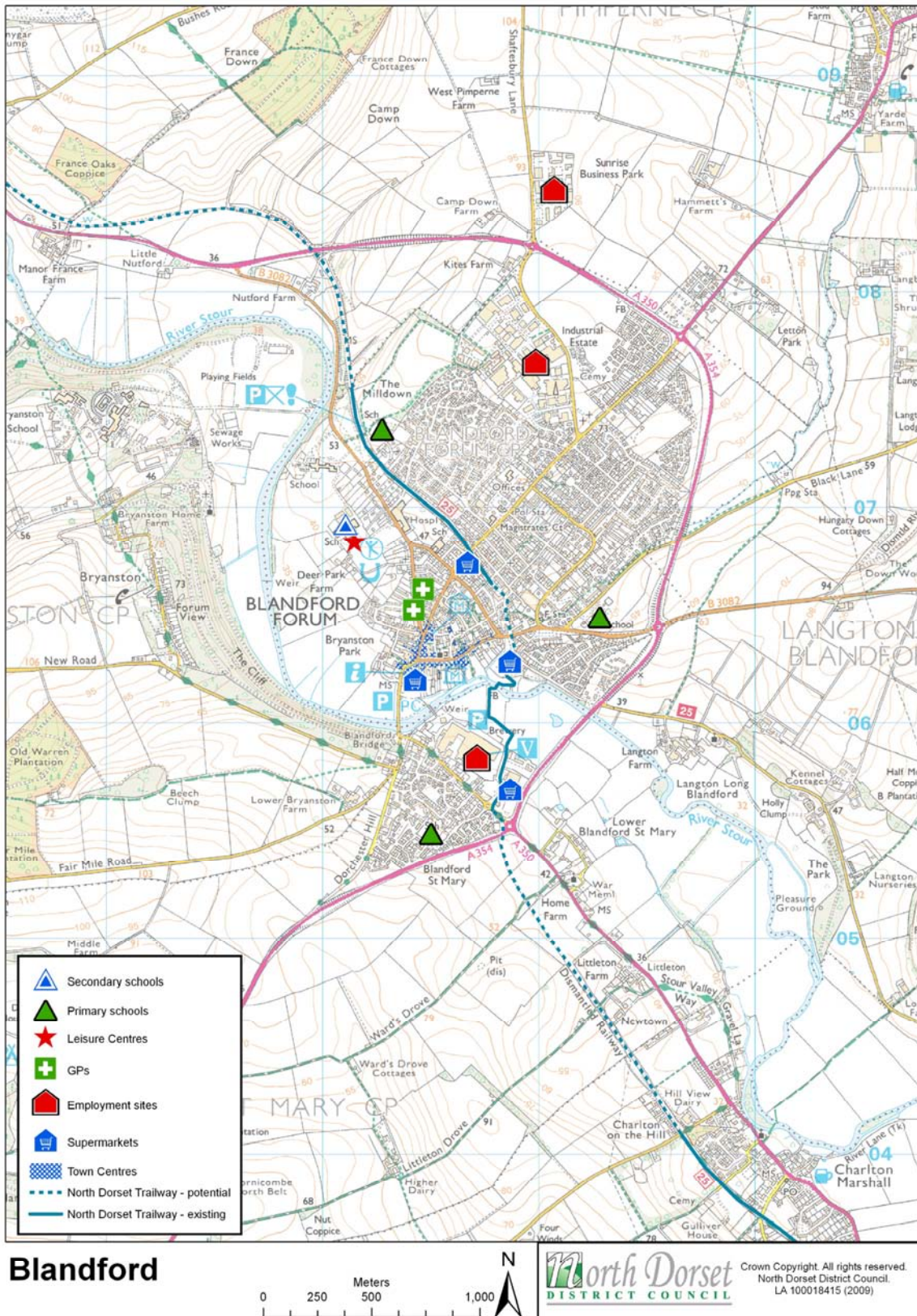
Both sites are however a similar distance to employment sites and therefore access to employment opportunities within the town are likely to be similar. Again there is a need for the infrastructure to enable sustainable travel choices to be incorporated into any development that takes place.

Conclusion

In general not allowing expansion of the town post 2016 is not considered sustainable. Development to the south west is considered to be the better of the two expansion options due to its lesser impact on the landscape and proximity to the town centre and schools. Extension of the town to the north east would potentially result in increased risk of flooding to the town centre and would breach the barrier of the town's bypass.

Expansion of the town has a negative impact on the environment. To mitigate this impact, the necessary infrastructure to support the development such as SuDS for drainage and cycle/foot paths to enable sustainable travel, renewable energy and the highest levels of energy efficiency in new buildings need to be considered from the outset and incorporated into the final development.

North Dorset – Core Strategy & Development Management DPD
 Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report - March 2010



Policy 15(1)	Blandford		Option 15(1)a No post 2016 greenfield extension	Option 15(1)b Extension to the North East	Option 15(1)c Extension to the South West
SA Objectives					
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	--	++	++
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	-	-	+
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	-	-	+
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	-	+	+
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o	o

Policy 15(1)		Blandford	Option 15(1)a No post 2016 greenfield extension	Option 15(1)b Extension to the North East	Option 15(1)c Extension to the South West
SA Objectives					
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	o	-	-
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	o	-	--
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	-	-	-
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	+	--	-

Policy 15(1)	Blandford		Option 15(1)a No post 2016 greenfield extension	Option 15(1)b Extension to the North East	Option 15(1)c Extension to the South West
SA Objectives					
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	+	-	-
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	o	-	-
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	o	+	+
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	o	o	o
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	+	-	+
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	o	o	o
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	?	+	+

Core Policy 16: Gillingham

Gillingham is the largest settlement in the district and will be the main focus for development in the north of the District. In addition, due to relatively few environmental constraints and the potential to accommodate additional housing, the town is likely to receive a significant level of growth.

The options considered centred on the residential expansion of the town pre and post 2016:

Option 16(1)a: Restrict growth to existing settlement boundary up until 2016

Option 16(1)b: Allow greenfield expansion before 2016

Option 16(2)a: Expand the town to the south and south east

Option 16(2)b: Expand the town to the north west

Option 16(2)c: Expand town through smaller scale development at both sites

To enable and support the growth in population that will result from this residential development, options considered centred on the provision of employment land, the level of town centre uses to be provided, regeneration of the town centre and transport improvements.

The allocation of an additional site to act as a high quality business park at Gillingham was considered as a potential approach to enhancing the town's role as an employment centre and stimulate economic growth.

Option 16(3)a: Allocate an additional strategic employment site at Gillingham

Option 16(3)b: Do not allocate an additional strategic employment site at Gillingham

To meet the needs of the growing population, there may be the need to enhance the level of retail provision beyond anticipated need as identified in the retail study and if so where should this go?

Option 16(4)a: Should additional retail growth be provided for at Gillingham?

Option 16(5)a: Direct town centre uses to existing centre and Station Road regeneration area

Option 16(5)b: Adopt a broader approach to join together disparate parts into a more cohesive centre

The level of growth that will be taking place at Gillingham is likely to result in impacts to the surrounding area primarily related to increased traffic on the roads. Options considered were:

Option 16(6)a: Do Nothing

Option 16(6)b: Adopt a package of measures to manage demand and make the best use of existing transport infrastructure.

Option 16(1) – Pre 2016 development

The aim of restricting growth in Gillingham to the existing settlement up until 2016 would be to encourage the regeneration of the town centre. This may however harm the overall rate of delivery of housing as there are limited sites on which housing can be delivered.

The main site within the town on which housing can be delivered is the Station Road regeneration area. This site needs to deliver an improved town centre but has the potential to deliver some housing. Housing on this site should enable the regeneration of the town centre to take place due to the extra value that residential uses add to a development.

The town centre regeneration will create an improved town centre which will offer benefits to the wider town. The enhancement of the town centre retail offer will encourage people to shop in the town centre rather than travel further afield. This will also encourage walking and cycling to the town centre rather than longer distance travel to neighbouring town centres. This will however only happen if good links are provided between the town centre and residential areas.

The regeneration of the town centre, making it more attractive, will help create a sense of community in the town through the creation of open space on which community events can take place. It also offers opportunities to create better transport links with the creation of a bus terminal at the railway station and improved cycling and walking links to that area.

As with all developments, design is important to ensuring that new developments integrate with the existing built up area. This is especially important with a regeneration scheme and especially important in this instance due to the fact that the different parts of Gillingham town centre currently are not well connected to each other or to the rest of the town. Regeneration of the town should help to improve the appearance of the townscape and can enhance the setting of important local buildings through heritage led regeneration.

Greenfield development will deliver housing at a rate above that which would be delivered if just the regeneration of the town centre was permitted. There will however be impacts on biodiversity and landscape in the area where development takes place and these impacts should be minimised.

Regeneration will help to encourage business activity in the town through the enhancement of the town centre and provision of office space. This will improve job prospects in the town and therefore help to reduce poverty. The provision of additional greenfield development will support this through the delivery of housing. It is however important that permitting greenfield development alongside the regeneration of the town doesn't prevent the regeneration from taking place. It can often be the case that developers will be unwilling to develop a regeneration site if greenfield development opportunities exist in the same area as they are perceived to be easier and cheaper to develop.

Conclusion

Limited greenfield land needs to be made available for development up to 2016 to enable the housing delivery rate to be maintained at an appropriate level. It is however important that the regeneration of the town centre takes place along side this to secure benefits for the town.

Policy 16(1)	Gillingham – Pre 2016		Option 16(1)a Allow some greenfield expansion before 2016	Option 16(1)b Restrict development to existing settlement boundary to 2016
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	+	-
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	+	+
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	+	?
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	+	+
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	?	?
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	+	?
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	-	?
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	?	+
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	?	o

Policy 16(1)	Gillingham – Pre 2016		Option 16(1)a Allow some greenfield expansion before 2016	Option 16(1)b Restrict development to existing settlement boundary to 2016
SA Objectives				
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	+	+
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	?	+
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	?	?
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	+	+
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	?	+
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	+	+
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	o	o

Option 16(2) – Post 2016 development

The two potential development sites to the south and south east and to the north west of the town, have the capacity to deliver in the region of 2000 dwellings. This level of development is likely to deliver the critical mass to enable supporting infrastructure to be delivered such as local centres and cycling and walking links. With a smaller scale distribution of development to the two sites, the critical mass needed to deliver supporting infrastructure may not be met.

The site to the south and south east of the town is closer to the town centre and the railway station and therefore offers better opportunities for improving access than the site to the north west. However, due to the distance to the town centre, a local centre may be appropriate at both sites, but probably more important at the site to the north west. With both sites it is important that good cycling and walking links to the town centre are established and for the sites to the south of the town, this should include additional links across the railway line to reduce the severance that already exists.

Climate change is likely to result in greater risk of flooding due to increased winter rainfall, increased droughts due to drier summers and increased summer temperatures. All sites contain areas at fluvial flood risk and therefore flooding needs to be taken into account on all sites. Areas prone to fluvial flooding should be avoided and SuDS should be incorporated to reduce the risk from surface water. To minimise the impact of summer droughts, the consumption of water in new buildings needs to be minimised through water efficiency measures and potentially the recharging of groundwater through the use of SuDS. In addition, developments need to be designed to enable shading and passive ventilation from the extremes of summer heat without having to resort to active cooling for example through air conditioning.

Greenfield developments will result in some loss of biodiversity and therefore it is important that the existing habitats on a site such as trees and hedgerows are conserved. In addition the creation of new habitats and wildlife corridors within the development site is important as is the restoration of habitats to offset the negative impacts of development. The creation of habitats and the retention of hedgerows and trees will reduce the impact of the developments on the landscape.

For the site to the south east, it is important that the impact on the scheduled ancient monument of King's Court Palace is minimal and that where possible it is enhanced. To achieve this it may be necessary to leave areas close to the site undeveloped. For the site to the north west, it is important that development does not join the settlement of Milton on Stour to Gillingham to preserve the separate physical identity of the two settlements. Again it may be necessary to leave some areas undeveloped.

To enable development to take place and for the impacts of development to be minimised, supporting infrastructure such as a southern link road, need to be provided. This southern link road could easily be provided as part of the development to the south of

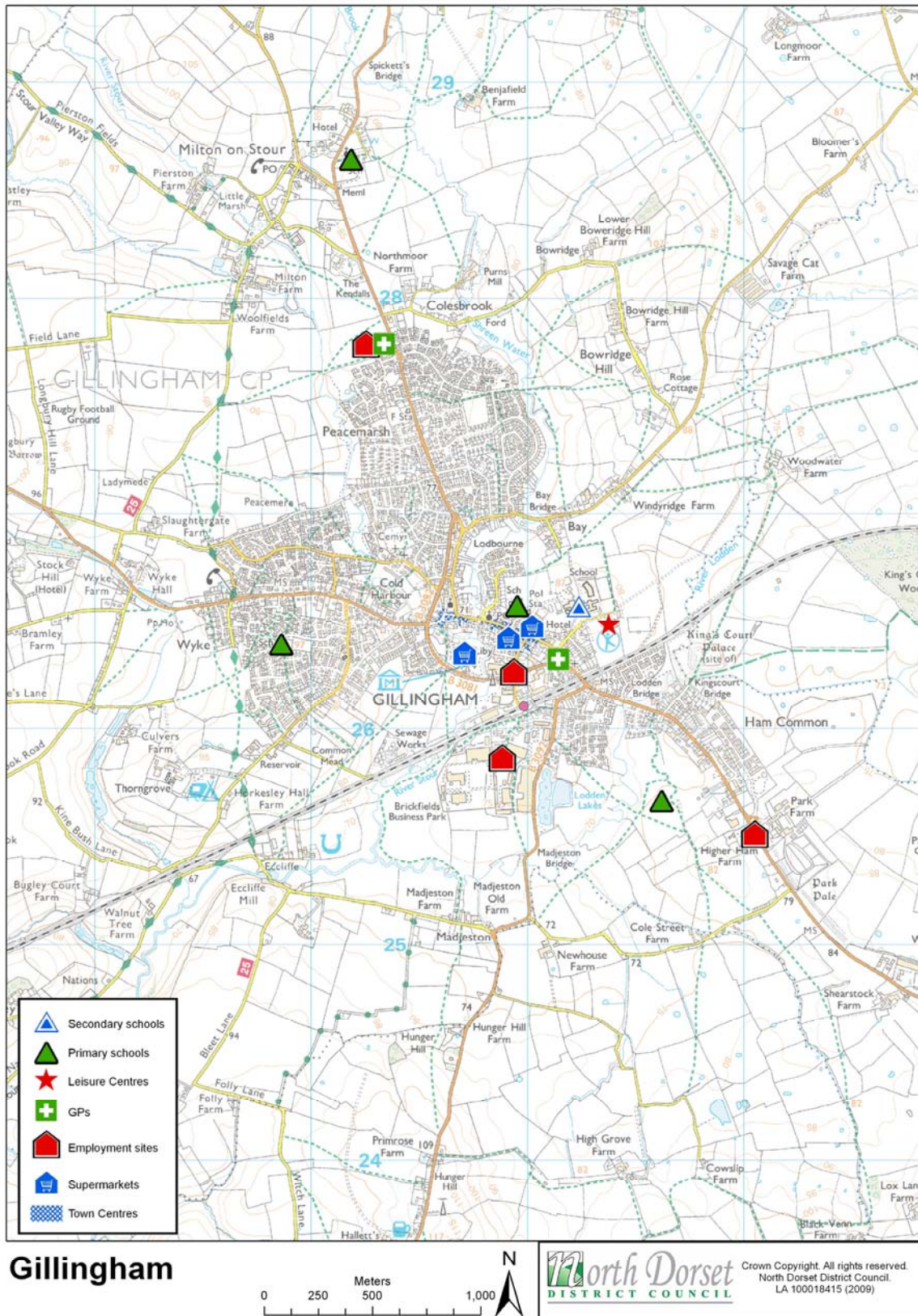
the town and would improve access to the town's main industrial estates as well as reducing pressure on the B3081 bridge over the railway. Development to the north west and a dispersed approach would not enable the link road to be provided as part of the development.

In addition there is potential for the inclusion of renewable energy on both large greenfield sites, made more viable due to economies of scale.

Conclusion

Development of the site to the south and south west of the town would offer the best approach due to the proximity to the town centre and the railway station.

North Dorset – Core Strategy & Development Management DPD
 Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report - March 2010



Policy 16(2)		Gillingham – Post 2016	Option 16(2)a	Option 16(2)b	Option 16(2)c
SA Objectives			Expand town to the South and Southeast (Ham area)	Expand town to the North and West (Peacemarsh area)	Combination of Options b and c on a smaller scale
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	+	+	+
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	++	+	-
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	?	?	?
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	?	?	?
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o	o

Policy 16(2)		Gillingham – Post 2016	Option 16(2)a	Option 16(2)b	Option 16(2)c
SA Objectives			Expand town to the South and Southeast (Ham area)	Expand town to the North and West (Peacemarsh area)	Combination of Options b and c on a smaller scale
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	?	?	?
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	-	-	-
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	-	-	?
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	-	-	?
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	+	+	?
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	-	-	--
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	o	o	o

Policy 16(2)		Gillingham – Post 2016	Option 16(2)a	Option 16(2)b	Option 16(2)c
		SA Objectives	Expand town to the South and Southeast (Ham area)	Expand town to the North and West (Peacemarsh area)	Combination of Options b and c on a smaller scale
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	++	-	-
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	+	+	?
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	o	o	o
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	o	o	o

Option 16(3) – Strategic economic site

The strategy for Gillingham involves significant levels of housing growth to enhance the role of the town. To do this, economic growth in the town needs to be stimulated and one way of achieving this is to make a high quality large employment site available for a business to move into. If such a site can be developed, jobs can be provided to meet the enhanced role of the town. Gillingham is well placed for this role due to its location on the London to Exeter railway line, enabling links to the rest of the country.

The allocation of such a site is not likely to have a significant impact on housing growth in the town although it may make the town a more attractive option and therefore developers will be more willing to invest. However, the development of such a site will have impacts on the biodiversity of the area and on the landscape and built form. It is therefore important that the location of such a site is carefully chosen and that all possible mitigation measures such as screening and design, are in place to lessen the negative effects.

If a site is not allocated to support the town, housing growth at Gillingham may not be developed in tandem with job growth and it will be less likely that the local economy will diversify. Currently employment sites are of a general industrial nature and a high quality site is needed to attract firms offering higher-skilled and higher-waged jobs. There may be limited development within the town on previously developed land but this would most probably be small scale and therefore not meet the enhanced role of the town. The result would be longer distance commuting out of the area and the associated impact on the transport network.

As the potential site could be a large greenfield site, opportunities arise to reduce the impact of development through designating it as for example an “Eco Technology Park”. This could incorporate environmental mitigation measures such as renewable energy such as district heating, solar panels, SuDS, open space, and sustainable travel measures such as cycling and a shuttle bus to the railway station. It would also offer opportunities for enhanced broadband and other infrastructure to be delivered. This could in turn encourage a company who are looking to “green” their operations to locate in the town. If an approach along these lines is adopted, the development brief for the site should specify the environmental mitigation measures that will be sought on the site.

Conclusion

It is likely that allocation of a large strategic technology park at Gillingham will offer the best outcome although the impact on biodiversity, landscape and townscape needs to be considered carefully. The environmental mitigation measures required on site need to be specified early to ensure they are delivered and therefore reduce the impact of development.

Policy 16(3)	Gillingham – Strategic economic site		Option 16(3) a Allocate an additional strategic site at Gillingham	Option 16(3) b Do not allocate an additional strategic site at Gillingham
SA Objectives				
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	o	o
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	+	-
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	o	o
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	o	o
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o
Effective protection of the environment	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	+	o
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	-	+
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	-	+
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	-	+

Policy 16(3)		Gillingham – Strategic economic site	Option 16(3) a Allocate an additional strategic site at Gillingham	Option 16(3) b Do not allocate an additional strategic site at Gillingham
		SA Objectives		
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	-	o
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	-	?
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	+	o
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	+	o
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	+	-
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	++	-
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	+	-

Option 16(4) – Town centre and retailing

Providing sufficient land for retail development in town centre locations improves the vitality of town centres and reduces the need for out of town retail development. The level of retail provision is dependant on need and this need is related to levels of housing and economic growth. The proportion of growth in Gillingham is greater than in the other towns and therefore additional land would help to meet the higher levels of growth proposed for the town.

The neighbouring centres of Yeovil and Salisbury are sufficient distance away for additional retail provision at Gillingham to have a limited impact on them and also for the impact of these towns not to be significant on growth at Gillingham itself. The result would be that Gillingham would have an enhanced role in line with the higher levels of housing and economic growth that are planned for the town. It would encourage people to shop in the town rather than travel further afield to shop. It may however harm the vitality of nearby Shaftesbury encouraging travel between the two towns. The high frequency bus route between the towns is therefore very important and needs to be retained.

The higher level of retail development may encourage regeneration of the town centre. The alternative of not planning for higher retail growth close to the town centre could be greater pressure to allow out of town retail development. This would encourage greater reliance on the private car and result in a less vibrant town centre

Regeneration of the town may result in increased walking and cycling and increased use of the railway as the potential exists to link the station with the existing town centre and create better foot/cycle links across the main road in the town centre. The links with the rail station will also encourage longer distance trips to be undertaken in a sustainable way rather than through reliance on the car. This would also make the town more accessible to people who do not have access to a car.

The result of an improved town centre and a raised profile for the town would be an increased investment from businesses and therefore improved infrastructure, job prospects and a more vibrant town centre. It is however important to make the best use of the assets that already exist in the town centre such as the rail station, the rivers, the important historical buildings etc and to achieve high quality design. This is most likely to be achieved by taking a strategic approach to town centre developments rather than considering developments on a site by site basis. Taking a strategic approach would also offer opportunities for the retail units to be powered through a sustainably fuelled district heating system. This would also offer opportunities for existing buildings such as the rail station, the schools etc to be connected at a later date.

Planning for additional retail growth is not likely to have a significant impact on housing delivery although existing use values may make it difficult to deliver affordable housing alongside retail and infrastructure in the regeneration area. It is likely that regeneration

of the town centre area would be encouraged by allowing some housing development the majority of which would be flats over the retail units.

Some areas in the centre of Gillingham are at risk of flooding. It is important to avoid these areas and to incorporate mitigation measures to minimise the impact of flooding and climate change. Creating flood storage areas can improve the attractiveness of the town centre through the creation of green space. The inclusion of areas of green space in the town along the river corridors will also aid improving biodiversity, however the impact on biodiversity of allowing additional retail provision is thought to be limited.

The impact on the landscape is likely to be minimal although if insufficient land is made available for retail and other town centre uses at the town centre, there may be an increased pressure to permit out of town retail development. This would have an increased negative impact on the landscape.

Conclusion

The provision of additional land at or close to the town centre of Gillingham will help to meet the retail needs of the expanded town and enable it to better meet the needs of the area it serves. Opportunities also arise to realise wider benefits such as greater use of the railway, a district heating system, enhancing the town centre visually and links with the rest of the town. For these reasons, higher levels of growth are considered the best option for Gillingham.

Policy 16(4)		Gillingham – Town centre and retailing	Option 16(4)a Plan for additional retail growth at Gillingham	Option 16(4)b Do not plan for additional retail growth at Gillingham
SA Objectives				
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	+	-
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	++	--
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	+	-
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	+	-
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o
Effective protection of the environment	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	?	o
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	?	o
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	+	-
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	o	o

Policy 16(4)		Gillingham – Town centre and retailing	Option 16(4)a Plan for additional retail growth at Gillingham	Option 16(4)b Do not plan for additional retail growth at Gillingham
		SA Objectives		
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	+	-
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	+	-
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	?	o
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	+	-
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	++	-
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	+	?
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	+	-

Option 16(5) – Town centre regeneration

The objective of designating the town centre of Gillingham as a regeneration area is to enhance the retail offer, providing a more attractive centre to the town that can serve the expanded town. As part of the mixed use regeneration; retail, employment and residential uses are to be provided. A coordinated approach is likely to enable the benefits of the regeneration to be maximised, joining the town centre together into a single coherent unit.

By adopting a broader approach to the regeneration of the town centre, the various parts of the centre can be linked together, improving access and therefore encouraging walking and cycling between them. This will not only improve the usage of the town centre and the railway but it will create a more vibrant place which people are more likely to use for their shopping and other needs rather than travelling to more distant centres. Greater opportunities arise through a coordinated approach than through the designation of a more limited regeneration area into which the town centre should expand.

To ensure that the regeneration of the town centre is delivered in a sustainable way the impacts of climate change need to be taken into account. It is necessary to ensure that the flood zones associated with the three rivers in the town are avoided and that areas of green space and shading are incorporated to reduce the impact of higher summer temperatures. The importance of the river corridors also relates to the biodiversity associated with them. They are an important asset to the town centre as they offer opportunities to create green space and to enable walking and cycling corridors between the town centre and the residential areas adjoining them.

There may be opportunities within the regeneration scheme to incorporate sustainable energy schemes in the form of district heating and combined heat and power. This could be used to supply the existing heat load associated with the current buildings and also the new buildings that are to be constructed. All buildings whether new or refurbished should incorporate all possible energy efficiency measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Coordination of the regeneration of the town centre will result in improved access to the railway station and hence improve access to the strategic transport network. This will offer improved business opportunities for existing businesses, retail businesses and new businesses that wish to move into the town.

To realise the potential benefits that exist in the town centre, a masterplan and design guide needs to be prepared. This should specify the connections that need to be made, the roles that different parts of the town centre should have and the sustainability requirements for the buildings in terms of renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Conclusion

A coordinated approach covering the wider town centre is likely to offer greater opportunities to capitalise on the benefits of regeneration.

Policy 16(5)		Gillingham – Town centre regeneration	Option 16(5)a Direct town centre uses to Existing centre and Station Road regeneration area	Option 16(5)b Adopt a broader approach to join together disparate parts into a more cohesive centre
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	+	+
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	+	++
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	?	+
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	?	+
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	?	+

Policy 16(5)		Gillingham – Town centre regeneration	Option 16(5)a Direct town centre uses to Existing centre and Station Road regeneration area	Option 16(5)b Adopt a broader approach to join together disparate parts into a more cohesive centre
		SA Objectives		
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	?	?
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	-	-
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	+	++
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	o	o
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	+	+
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	+	+
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	?	?

Policy 16(5)	Gillingham – Town centre regeneration		Option 16(5)a Direct town centre uses to Existing centre and Station Road regeneration area	Option 16(5)b Adopt a broader approach to join together disparate parts into a more cohesive centre
SA Objectives				
Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	+	+
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	+	++
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	+	+
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	+	+

Option 16(6) – Traffic management

The growth of Gillingham will result in increased traffic levels on the roads around the town and also on the strategic road network, mainly the A303. This traffic is likely to result in increased congestion and an increase in road traffic accidents. Ideally the increase in traffic should have no impact on the strategic road network for local trips and therefore to help prevent this from happening a package of measures are proposed to encourage other forms of travel such as the use of the railway and to encourage local traffic to use the A30 rather than the A303. The package includes a new link road around the south of the town, several minor road junction improvements in and away from the town itself including a new link road at Enmore Green in Shaftesbury (covered in the Shaftesbury policy but related to the growth of Gillingham) and promotion of public transport and cycling within the town. This package of measures will not significantly harm the delivery of housing other than through contributions towards infrastructure provision. It may however have a negative impact on the environment due to the road improvements planned.

The road junction improvements would be designed to improve road safety at specific locations. In addition, road improvements are likely to enable improvements in local air quality due to the fact that traffic is less likely to be stationary for long periods of time.

These road improvements are however likely to have a negative impact on landscape and biodiversity due to the loss of undeveloped land. Reductions in pollution may result in improved environment and improved habitat condition which may offset the negative effect of habitat loss. It is important therefore that any lost habitat is replaced with an equivalent habitat in a suitable location and that trees and hedgerows are retained or replaced where they are lost to minimise landscape impacts.

Improving road bottlenecks and therefore enabling traffic to flow more freely may result in greater car use as travel times become shorter and more reliable. This may encourage people to travel longer distances and therefore increase pollution and congestion. In addition, road improvements may disadvantage those who do not have access to a car as it will further encourage reliance on car based travel. This then reduces support for public transport and adds to the problems of rural accessibility. The enhancement of public transport and the package of walking and cycling improvements need to be implemented as soon as possible to ensure that increased traffic levels do not arise out of the road improvements and people without access to cars are not disadvantaged.

The resultant improvements in the transport network and the improvements to public transport are likely to encourage business to stay in the area and may encourage businesses to relocate. The improvements will however need to be significant and combined with other measures such as suitable and available high quality employment sites, to enable the benefits to be realised. This improved economic environment is likely to result in improved job prospects.

Conclusion

The package of measures are likely to help reduce the traffic impact of the growth of Gillingham although it is important that other measures such as cycling and walking links within and into the town are provided. In addition, the impacts on heritage, biodiversity and landscape need to be taken into account when looking in detail at the environmental impacts of the proposed road improvements.

Policy 16(6)		Gillingham – Transport	Option 16(6)a Do nothing	Option 16(6)b Adopt measures to encourage A30 use
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	o	o
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	o	o
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	--	+
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	o	-
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	o	o
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	-	--
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	-	+
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	o	--

Policy 16(6)		Gillingham – Transport	Option 16(6)a Do nothing	Option 16(6)b Adopt measures to encourage A30 use
SA Objectives				
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	--	-
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	o	-
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	o	o
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	-	++
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	-	--
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	-	+
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	o	o

Core Policy 17: Shaftesbury

Shaftesbury is a hill top town on the Dorset Wiltshire border. It is the third largest town in the district and performs an important function in the north east of the area. Due to its hill top location, there are limited opportunities for the town to grow.

The options considered were:

Option 17(1)a: Restrict growth to within the current boundaries of the town

Option 17(1)b: Permit growth on greenfield land to the east of the town (other than that already being developed)

In addition, the provision of land for a Community Hub was considered as this would help to provide the town with the social infrastructure needed to support the population.

Option 17(2)a: Reserve land for the provision of a Community Hub in the town centre (incorporating a community hall, further education facilities and some retail development)

Option 17(2)b: Allow provision of community facilities on other sites (eg East of Shaftesbury development site)

Option 17(1) – Expansion of the town

Due to the constraints of the AONB, the SNCI and the slopes that characterise the town, additional greenfield growth of Shaftesbury would be most likely located to the east and north east of the town.

If development was restricted to the current built up area of the town, it would result in increased density of development through redevelopment and infilling. This may create a more vibrant town centre but would most likely deliver small dwellings, primarily 1 and 2 bed flats. It would be difficult to maintain the same rate of housing delivery through a restricted approach as larger greenfield sites tend to be quicker and easier to develop than constrained smaller redevelopment sites within an urban area. Restricting growth to the built part of the town may also result in increased levels of commuting into the town from neighbouring settlements.

There are some opportunities within the town for redevelopment and infilling such as the Somerfield car park and the areas around the cattle market. These are well connected to the town centre and therefore development would make good use of the existing infrastructure and facilities in the town. It would be important that any development in the town creates good cycling and walking links to encourage the use of alternatives to the car.

The increased vibrancy of the town centre that may result from a concentration of development within the town may result in increased job opportunities in the town. Restricting growth of the town in this way may however result in the loss of a prime town centre site for retail and community uses (including the expansion of the towns further education college) and hence a loss of an opportunity to up-skill the towns young people. Alternatively, it may be possible to provide the college on a greenfield site on the edge of the town although this would not encourage the use of sustainable transport modes.

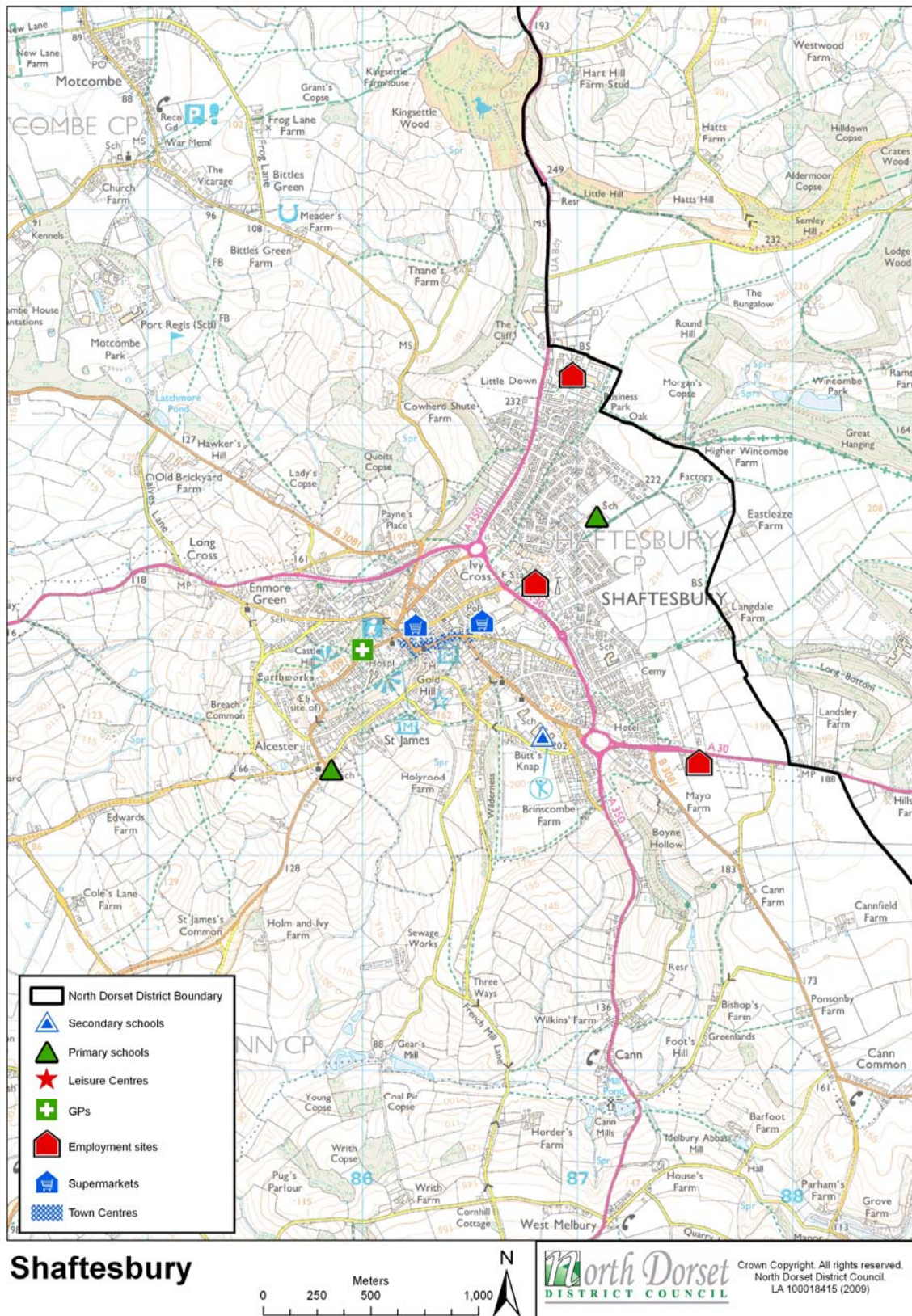
If greenfield development was restricted, the impact on the landscape would be minimised and this is especially important in Shaftesbury due to its hilltop location and the views into the town from the surrounding area. Compromising these views would be detrimental to the landscape. The restriction of greenfield land would result in a better use of land due to the redevelopment of previously developed sites. In addition, the land around the eastern side of Shaftesbury is of high agricultural value and therefore development on it should be restricted where possible.

Development at the town is likely to have a significant impact on biodiversity. Intensification of the town is likely to result in a loss of urban biodiversity due to the loss of green space. In addition, any development would be likely to put pressure on water resources, increasing overall water consumption. This could potentially affect aquifers in the catchment of the River Avon putting pressure on water levels in the river which would potentially harm biodiversity in the River Avon SAC due to low flows. Any development in the town will therefore have to minimise this impact through measures such as water efficient taps and appliances and the use of SuDS.

Conclusion

The moderate expansion of Shaftesbury is likely to be the most sustainable option but in combination with the redevelopment of some town centre sites. It is important however that any development minimises its impact on water resources and includes space for social infrastructure such as the expansion of the further education college and other community facilities.

North Dorset – Core Strategy & Development Management DPD
 Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report - March 2010



Policy 17(1)	Shaftesbury		Option 17(1)a Allow further greenfield development to the east of the town	Option 17(1)b Restrict development to within existing settlement boundary
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	+	-
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	+	-
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	o	?
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	o	?
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	?
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	o	o
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	-	o
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	o	-
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	-	+

Policy 17(1)	Shaftesbury		Option 17(1)a Allow further greenfield development to the east of the town	Option 17(1)b Restrict development to within existing settlement boundary
SA Objectives				
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	-	+
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	-	o
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	o	o
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	?	o
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	o	+
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	o	o
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	o	?

Option 17(2) – Town centre community hub

Community groups in Shaftesbury have identified the need for a community venue and other social infrastructure to serve the town especially in the light of the town's expansion through the development on land to the east. This facility would ideally be in a central location however land for community uses has also been reserved on the eastern development site.

If such a "Community Hub" was to be delivered in a central location, it could include a community hall, an extension of the further education provision, facilities for young people and some additional retail provision. This would clearly provide multiple benefits to the town and the wider area however it may be that there are insufficient funds to permit the expansion of the college. Reserving a site as a community hub to include education uses, may therefore prevent the other community uses from being developed.

Reserving the site for future expansion of the Further Education College would improve access to training and education for the population of the district. This would help to meet one of the challenges facing the district namely "improving the life chances of the young". Provision of further education opportunities would help create balanced communities as people would be able to stay in the district for their education needs rather than have to leave to attend college in larger settlements. This would discourage people from leaving the area in the longer term due to stronger ties with the town, creating the desirable more balanced demographic profile.

Improved skills levels would also improve job prospects and therefore reduce poverty. It will improve competitiveness of the businesses in the district through close links with the college. This will give them access to skills and apprentices which will meet their particular needs. It would also help individuals to feel a part of their community through being able to participate and provide a service to others.

Obviously developing a single building for community uses would enable the sharing of some facilities. This would be a better use of resources and provide a community focus in the town in an accessible location. If the town centre community hub does not take place due to the college not being able to expand, the community hall may be developed on the land to the east of the town. This would serve this area well but would result in a division in the town through to the creation of a second community centre.

The most important consideration is that the need for a community venue and other social infrastructure are met in the most sustainable locations. If funding or commitment for one element of a community hub is lacking, it is more important that the development takes place rather than the whole community hub being jeopardised.

Whichever sites are developed, opportunities will arise for the inclusion of renewable energy. The design of the development will also need to optimise the benefits to the town.

Conclusion

Reserving the site in the centre of the town for community uses would offer multiple benefits for the town. Ideally this would include a community hall, further education facilities and a youth centre however the development of the site for community benefits is more important than for all the potential uses being combined onto the one site

Policy 17(2)		Shaftesbury – town centre community hub	Option 17(2)a Reserve land for the provision of a Community Hub	Option 17(2)b Allow provision of community facilities on other sites
SA Objectives				
Social progress that recognises the needs of	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	o	o
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	++	+
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	o	o
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	++	+
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	o	o
Effective protection of the environment	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	o	o
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	o	o
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district’s heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	+	o
	9	Recognise the importance of the district’s distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	o	o

Policy 17(2)		Shaftesbury – town centre community hub	Option 17(2)a Reserve land for the provision of a Community Hub	Option 17(2)b Allow provision of community facilities on other sites
SA Objectives				
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	o	o
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	+	o
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	o	o
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	o	o
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	++	+
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	+	o
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	++	-

Core Policy 18: Sturminster Newton

Sturminster Newton is the main service centre in the west of the district. It serves a large rural area and is supported by the settlements of Stalbridge and Marnhull to the north.

The options considered were:

Option 18(1)a: Restrict growth to within the current boundaries of the town, encouraging regeneration of the town centre.

Option 18(1)b: Permit limited growth on greenfield land in addition to town centre regeneration.

Option 18(1) – Expansion of the town

Restricting growth of the town will encourage the regeneration of the town centre sites and will enable delivery of employment and facilities in tandem with housing. The result of regenerating the town centre of Sturminster Newton will be an increased level of services and the increased vibrancy of the town centre. This may encourage more people to travel to the town rather than travelling further a field and the provision of good cycle and walking links will encourage these trips to be undertaken in a more sustainable way.

A well designed and well thought out town centre redevelopment will enhance the quality of life of the towns residents and should help remove barriers to individuals participating in community life. Provision of good quality open space should encourage community events and a more usable space rather than the current underused town centre areas. However, a too restrictive approach may well harm the rate of delivery of housing in the town resulting in a lack of affordable homes. It is therefore likely that some greenfield development will be needed to maintain an appropriate rate of housing delivery.

Greenfield sites offer opportunities that are not available on brownfield sites. These include, space for SuDS to reduce flood risk, opportunities to build-in measures to reduce heat stress and opportunities for larger areas of green space. In Sturminster Newton, both the town centre regeneration sites and any greenfield expansion can be achieved on land away from river floodplains. The main flood risk is therefore related to surface water flooding and therefore SuDS should be incorporated into all development sites.

The regeneration of the town centre and nearby brownfield sites is unlikely to impact negatively on the urban biodiversity. However, the development of land north of the livestock market could impact on existing features such as hedgerows and trees and indirectly

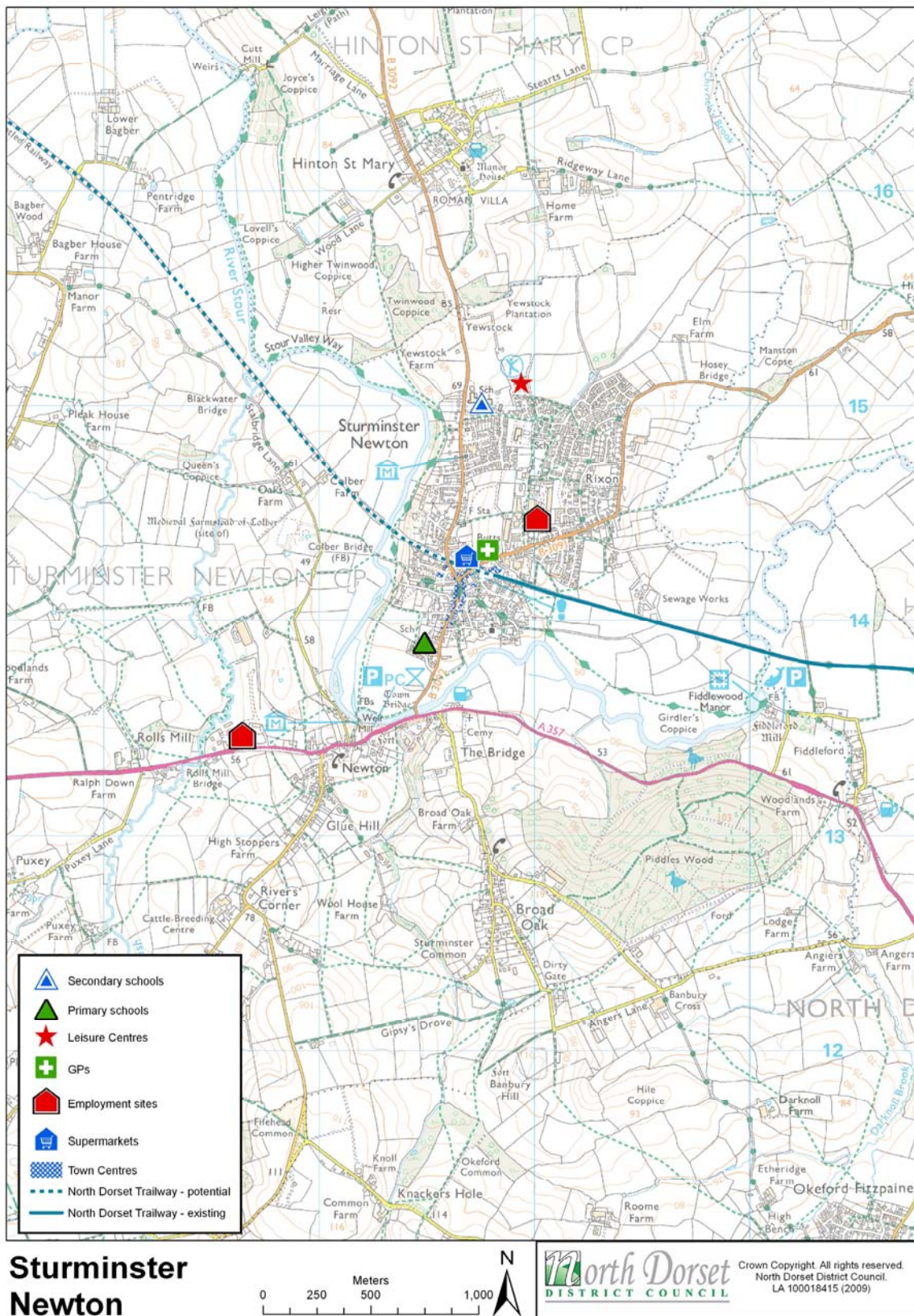
on the wildlife interests of nearby Butts Pond Nature Reserve (including Badgers and Great Crested Newts). It is therefore important that developments make space for biodiversity and create wildlife corridors through the town.

The rural market town character of Sturminster Newton is one of its major positive features. Any development therefore needs to consider this in its design so that the density, scale and height of the development is in keeping with this rural character. Greenfield developments will have to create “soft” edges with the countryside especially the proposed site between the town and to the north of the Trailway. Strong support is therefore given to the inclusion of allotments or other open space on the eastern part of this site.

Due to the relatively small size of the town, all sites are relatively close to the town centre and therefore will result in good use of the existing infrastructure and facilities. It is however important that in both the regeneration sites and greenfield sites that cycling and walking links are created between the town centre and the northern parts of the town. It is also important that the Trailway is considered and linked into any developments in the town.

Conclusion

Regeneration of the centre of Sturminster Newton and development within the settlement boundary will offer a number of benefits including the provision of jobs and housing but also in improving the appearance and connectivity of the town. Housing delivery is however also important and therefore regeneration of the town and limited greenfield development will be the best option.



Policy 18(1)	Sturminster Newton		Option 18(1)a Confine development to town through regeneration	Option 18(1)b Allow for small scale expansion sites and regeneration
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	-	+
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	+	+
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	?	o
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	+	o
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	+	+
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	?	+
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	-	-
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	+	+
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	o	-

Policy 18(1)	Sturminster Newton		Option 18(1)a Confine development to town through regeneration	Option 18(1)b Allow for small scale expansion sites and regeneration
SA Objectives				
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	+	-
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	+	-
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	o	o
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	?	o
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	++	+
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	o	o
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	o	o

Core Policy 19: Stalbridge and the larger villages

Outside of the main towns, Stalbridge and a number of larger villages have a reasonable level of service provision and a reasonably large population. These are therefore considered as suitable places for limited development to support their role as local centres.

What options were considered?

Option 19(1)a: Restrict growth to within the current settlement boundaries.

Option 19(1)b: Permit limited greenfield development to more closely reflect need at the settlements.

Option 19(1) – Distribution of development

The demand for housing in rural locations is always likely to be greater than the level of housing that a settlement can support without harming its character and removing its rural nature. Development in a village will however help to improve the viability of village services. If too much development is placed in a village, the number of people in the district experiencing poor accessibility will increase causing greater reliance on the private car. The policy does not promote sustainable travel nor does it encourage local needs to be met locally and therefore inclusion of cycling and walking links within and between settlements is important to provide easy to use sustainable travel options.

Permitting development in one of these settlements will help to encourage small scale business to locate at them however it is not possible to ensure that people who work in a village will also live in the village. There is however a limited level of growth needed in a village to support existing businesses and to support the natural population growth of the settlement. If no development was permitted in a village, people who have ties to the village will be disadvantaged and would have to live in a town and travel either to work or visit their family.

The level of development in these settlements therefore needs to be carefully managed to ensure that harm does not come to the character of the settlements through increased size or through over intensification from infill developments. The production of design guidance for all villages, probably in the form of a village design statement, should be encouraged to identify areas and characteristics that are important and that need protecting.

Greenfield development will result in the permanent loss of farmland and loss of the biodiversity associated with it. It is therefore important that such losses are minimised and that the most valuable habitats and soils are protected. It is also important that views into and out of villages are not harmed significantly by greenfield development and that such developments incorporate retention of landscape features such as trees and hedgerows.

In addition to the inclusion of cycling and walking links within and between rural settlements, it may be appropriate to incorporate higher energy efficiency and renewable energy targets for developments in these locations. This would help to offset the higher greenhouse gas emissions due to poor accessibility and other negative impacts associated with a rural development.

Conclusion

Development within the existing settlement boundary should be the priority with small scale greenfield development on the edge of settlements being the last option considered. Such sites should be well located relative to the facilities within the settlement. Development on infill plots should also not harm the character of the settlement. For many settlements, greenfield sites are likely to be needed to deliver an appropriate rate of housing to support each settlement.

Policy 19(1)	Stalbridge and the larger villages		Option 19(1)a Confine development to within settlement boundaries	Option 19(1)b Allow small scale greenfield development, to reflect need
SA Objectives				
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	-	+
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	+	?
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	o	o
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	?	+
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	?	+
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	o	o
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	o	-
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	-	o
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	o	-

Policy 19(1)	Stalbridge and the larger villages		Option 19(1)a Confine development to within settlement boundaries	Option 19(1)b Allow small scale greenfield development, to reflect need
SA Objectives				
<i>Prudent use of natural resources</i>	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	-	-
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	+	-
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	?	?
<i>Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment</i>	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	o	o
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	-	-
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	-	+
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	o	o

Appendix D: Area based Policy Matrices

- D 1. The following matrices detail the potential impacts of implementing the strategy for each of the towns. A summary of these potential impacts is included in Section 6.0 of this report with the detailed assessment included below.
- D 2. For all of these matrices, the following scoring has been used to indicate the direction (positive or negative) and the magnitude of the potential impact of implementing the policy.

Key

++	=	Strong positive impact
+	=	Positive impact
o	=	Neutral or no impact
-	=	Negative impact
--	=	Strong negative impact
?	=	Unknown or uncertain impact

SA Objective		Blandford	Gillingham	Shaftesbury	Sturminster Newton	Stalbridge and larger villages	The Countryside
<i>Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone</i>	1 Provide housing that is affordable and that meets the needs of the community	++	++	++	++	+	++
	2 Provide balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	++	++	++	++	++	+
	4 Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	++	?	+	++	?	-
	3 Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	++	++	?	+	?	o
	5 Improve quality of life through well designed developments	+	+	++	++	o	o
<i>Effective protection of the environment</i>	6 Reduce the impact of Climate Change, including flood risk and make the best use of opportunities that arise	-	+	-	+	o	o
	7 Protect and where opportunities arise enhance habitats and biodiversity	-	+	+	++	+	o
	8 Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinctive townscapes	+	++	++	++	o	o
	9 Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	+	+	++	+	+	-

SA Objective		Blandford	Gillingham	Shaftesbury	Sturminster Newton	Stalbridge and larger villages	The Countryside
Prudent use of natural resources	10 Reduce impacts on the environment	-	-	-	+	-	+
	11 Reduce pressure on the District's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	++	+	+	+	-	?
	12 Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	-	-	-	-	-	-
Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment	13 Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	-	+	+	+	-	o
	14 Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	++	++	+	+	+	-
	15 Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and rural areas creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	+	++	+	++	?	o
	16 Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	?	+	++	?	+	o

Blandford

- D 3. The Policy for Blandford sets out how the town will grow over the coming years. It not only identifies the preferred locations for development but also the supporting infrastructure that will be needed to enable this growth to take place in a sustainable way.
- D 4. The preferred residential development sites are those in locations close to the town centre which should help reduce the need to travel by car and encourage walking and cycling. The Strategy also highlights the need for cycling and walking links to be provided between the town centre and other parts of the town such as the leisure centre. In addition, the regeneration of the brewery site through redevelopment will enable the barrier between Blandford town and Blandford St Mary to be removed.
- D 5. There is however a need to ensure that flood risk is avoided and the strategic nature of the Core Strategy means that it is where decisions on the location of development need to be taken to reduce flood risk. The preferred development sites avoid flood prone areas and therefore will help to reduce the impact of flooding however the town centre is at risk from flooding. It may be more appropriate to concentrate expansion of the town centre onto higher ground to the north of its current boundary although most of this area is already built up.
- D 6. As with all development proposals, the biodiversity in an area needs to be a consideration. This is particularly important in Blandford as there is a resident population of Greater Horseshoe Bats in close proximity to the town and they may use areas close to the town for hunting. The act of development could potentially harm this bat population.
- D 7. The strategy for the town seeks to enable housing growth to be met through greenfield expansion and infilling. The level of greenfield expansion should help to prevent loss of town character through a reduction in unsuitable intensification within the existing town. In addition, the renovation of the Corn Exchange as an important community building will make good use of this site. The redevelopment of the brewery will also help to improve the town through improved permeability of the site and through the reuse of previously developed land.
- D 8. In addition to the minimal impact on the built form of the town, it is important to minimise the impact on the landscape in which the town sits. The town sits between the Dorset AONB to the south and west and the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB to the North and East. The boundaries of these two AONB are drawn closely to the built up area of the town on most sides. The preferred development sites seek to avoid impact on the landscape and the AONB by developing in areas sheltered by topography or within the existing confines of the town (the bypass and the River Stour).
- D 9. There are however no efforts made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the town other than through the encouragement of

cycling and walking. Greater reduction in greenhouse gas emissions could be achieved through improved energy efficiency in new build developments and also through achieving consequential improvements when planning permissions are granted on the existing dwelling stock.

- D 10. To support economic activity within the town, sufficient land needs to be made available. In addition, connections to the strategic transport network need to be improved. Links to this network needs to be provided in a more sustainable way for example, links to the railway line (Weymouth to London) could be improved through the provision of a high frequency bus route to Poole Station. The strategy for the town does not promote such options other than through the promotion of cycling and walking links between the town and neighbouring villages.

Gillingham

- D 11. The strategy for Gillingham is to encourage town centre regeneration in the period up until 2016 with some limited greenfield development also taking place. This may limit the delivery of housing in the short term but should improve the town overall. This approach should help to ensure that regeneration takes place providing the town with supporting infrastructure.
- D 12. The regeneration of the town centre should improve the linkages between the residential areas and the town centre and also between the different parts of the centre itself such as the leisure centre, the railway station and the retail area. It is also important that development improves linkages across the railway line as this acts as a barrier between the north and south of the town to encourage greater use of walking and cycling in the town.
- D 13. The regeneration of the town needs to avoid those areas in the town centre that are prone to flooding to enable flood risk to be minimised. In addition, the regeneration should make best use of the listed buildings and other historic assets to provide an enhanced built environment.
- D 14. The strategy for the town also makes provision for large scale growth of the town in the period after 2016. The majority of this growth will be on greenfield land and due to the scale of this development it is important that it is designed to an exceptionally high quality. As part of this, it will be important that the landscape impacts of the large scale greenfield development are minimised through the inclusion of green infrastructure such as trees, hedgerows and open space. This green infrastructure has the potential to enhance amenity and biodiversity through the inclusion of space along the river corridors within the town.
- D 15. One of the main negative points about the policy is the lack of efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Due to the large amount of greenfield development that is set to take place at the town and the economies of scale that would result, there is likely to be significant potential to install renewable energy schemes. In addition, the

economies of scale associated with the large scale development would make the installation of energy efficiency measures more feasible.

- D 16. Along with the town centre regeneration, measures to support the growth of the town include the provision of land for employment uses. This includes the designation of a business park to encourage large high quality employers to the town. In addition, a new link road to the south of the town is proposed to ease traffic congestion in the middle of the town. The intention of these measures is to improve the economic competitiveness of the town and improve the incomes of the residents. Only time will tell if this can be achieved however without measures such as these, the economic prospects of the town are likely not to keep pace with the rate of housing development.

Shaftesbury

- D 17. The strategy for Shaftesbury recognises the lack of developable land at the town. This will result in a slowing down of growth over the plan period and a lower rate of housing delivery than in other towns. This may harm the prospects of the residents of the town and create barriers to community cohesion.
- D 18. Development in the town will be primarily to the east. The current town centre is mainly to the west of the town and therefore it is important that links are made between the new developments and the current town centre and that the town centre is expanded in this direction. The promotion of a site to the east of the town centre as a community hub will help to make links between the new development and the older parts of the town.
- D 19. Economically, Shaftesbury is likely to be secondary to Gillingham due to the more limited amount of land where economic development can take place. In addition Gillingham is relatively unconstrained and has a railway station, both of which will aid its economy to grow. For this reason, it is important that good links are maintained between the two towns (such as the high frequency bus route) and that they do not compete with each other for economic and social infrastructure and development.
- D 20. In Shaftesbury, fluvial flood risk is not an issue due to its hill top location. However, surface water flooding both within the town and in areas at the bottom of the slopes can be a problem and needs to be considered in development proposals through the inclusion of SuDS. This will help to reduce the impacts on the River Avon SAC due to low flows as SuDS enable groundwater recharge.
- D 21. In addition to the potential impacts of development on the River Avon SAC, development in the town has the potential to have a more local impact. The commitment to the designation of Castle Hill as a Local Nature Reserve will help to reduce the local impacts however, the slopes in Shaftesbury are an important feature and part of the heritage of the town and therefore they all need to be protected.

- D 22. Another aspect of the hill top nature of the town relates to the promotion of walking and cycling. Due to hills, it is more difficult to provide useable and safe cycle routes to the town from neighbouring villages. For this reason good bus links are essential and all other efforts should be made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions such as improved energy efficiency and higher renewable energy requirements.

Sturminster Newton

- D 23. Sturminster Newton being a smaller town will receive less growth than the three larger towns in the district. This lack of growth will limit the amount of new housing in the town. It is therefore important that the rate of housing delivery in the town is maintained at a reasonable level to provide housing for the towns growing population.
- D 24. It is however also important that the regeneration of the town goes ahead to provide an enhanced town centre and therefore provide the facilities the town needs. In addition, North Dorset Business Park needs to be developed to provide employment opportunities in the area. If both of these schemes take place, the town will become more sustainable and more self contained.
- D 25. The development of facilities and employment opportunities at the town will enhance the town's role as a service hub for the rural west of the district. The proposal for a "food hub" at the business park includes provision for training in the food industry. This would improve the employment opportunities and skills of the local population.
- D 26. To improve accessibility to North Dorset Business Park and between the neighbouring villages and the town the extension of the Trailway is proposed. This will need to include a bridge across the River Stour and therefore will require significant investment. If this takes place, cycling and walking to and from the town will be encouraged, reducing car travel.
- D 27. The proposed food hub at North Dorset Business Park fits with the towns Cittaslow status. This seeks to reduce the impact of a settlement on the environment through efforts such as local food production, and the promotion of cycling and walking. Many of the criteria of Cittaslow accord with the objectives of sustainable development and therefore if development in the town follows these principles, it will be to a high sustainability level.
- D 28. The landscape impact of development will be minimal as the majority of the development that is taking place at the town is within the current settlement boundary. Where development needs to take place outside of the current settlement, it will be screened by the topography of the area and therefore the landscape impact will be reduced. In addition the Town Design Statement identifies the design styles that have been used in the town over time. Development has to accord with these principles and therefore the impact on the character of the town as a result of development, will be minimised.

D 29. The Cittaslow criteria also seek to reduce pollution and encourage energy efficiency and renewable energy production. The policies in the Core Strategy also seek these goals however the Sturminster Newton policy makes no mention of them. Reducing impacts on the environment will have a positive impact on biodiversity. The designation of Butts Pond Local Nature Reserve has helped to secure the wildlife interests of this area within the town. The inclusion of buffer strips along the edge of the industrial sites in the town as part of the development of land to the north of the former livestock market will also help maintain biodiversity interests.

Stalbridge and larger villages

D 30. The strategy for Stalbridge and the larger villages is to plan for limited growth to reinforce the settlements roles as local service centres. To this end the policy aims to create balanced communities with employment and housing delivered in locations that have a reasonable level of facilities and services provision. The role of settlements will be to support the neighbouring larger settlements where the majority of facilities and services such as banks and supermarkets, are provided. An example would be the roles of Stalbridge and Marnhull in supporting Sturminster Newton as the service centre for the rural west of the district.

D 31. Housing delivery will be through small scale allocations and rural exceptions and therefore a delivery mechanism to meet needs is in place. However, the rate of housing delivery in these settlements will be low and therefore may act as a barrier to participation in community life. In addition, due to the size of the settlements it will be very difficult to make up the deficit in village services and facilities. The level of development needed to make up the deficit would adversely affect the character of the settlements and reduce their rural appeal.

D 32. A more realistic approach to improving access to services and facilities is to improve the transport options available to residents. This can be achieved through cycling and walking routes and the provision of better public transport and the policy seeks to achieve this through green and grey infrastructure provision.

D 33. The provision of infrastructure in rural settlements is however difficult to provide due to cost. For this reason, the infrastructure such as broadband, roads and other facilities that are needed to allow businesses to thrive are unlikely to be provided in these rural settlements.

D 34. Any development that does take place in these settlements will need to take full account of the importance of rural landscapes, biodiversity, built heritage and the setting of the settlements. For this reason, careful site selection is needed and the scale of development needs to be kept small.

- D 35. Due to the increased costs associated with living in rural areas (due to increased need to travel, more costly fuel types for heating etc) development in these settlements may be disadvantaging prospective residents. Generally it is more difficult to meet day to day needs in a rural settlement than it is in a larger town.

The countryside

- D 36. Development in the Countryside, outside of the towns and larger villages, will be strictly controlled. There will however be a mechanism for meeting need for housing through rural exceptions developments and provision for agricultural workers.
- D 37. Strictly controlling development in the countryside will help focus development on the towns and larger villages. This development is then more likely to be balanced with employment and facilities and services being provided in tandem. However focusing development on the larger settlements may disadvantage those who already live in the countryside.
- D 38. Due to the constraint being placed on developments in the countryside, the impact on landscape and biodiversity is likely to be minimal however, it is still important that these are considered in all developments that are proposed. In addition, energy efficiency of buildings and renewable energy needs to be promoted.
- D 39. The policy does make provision for the reuse of buildings in the countryside. It also makes provision for the expansion of existing businesses. This may have a negative impact on the countryside through the creation of small business estates in isolated locations. This would be likely to increase traffic to and from them along narrow country lanes. The improvements needed to infrastructure to enable such development would be too costly to install and therefore is unlikely to be provided.



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