



West Dorset District Local Development Framework Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper



July 2007



Working for West Dorset

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1. Introduction

Purpose of this document

- 1.1 This document has been prepared to seek your views on key issues for planning in West Dorset, as a first step towards providing a new development plan for the district. This paper raises issues and asks for your views.

How to respond

- 1.2 Please read this information leaflet and fill in the enclosed questionnaire. The questions are also shown after the relevant sections in this leaflet. Use the freepost address to send the questionnaire back to us by **28th September 2007**. Both this leaflet and the questionnaire are available to view at www.dorsetforyou.com/corestrategy/west.

New Planning System

- 1.3 The planning system governs the use and development of land. It controls which new buildings will be built and where they should go. The current system changed in 2004, when new legislation came into force. Under the new system, regional spatial strategies will be prepared for each region, and local development frameworks for each district. These will replace the previous regional planning guidance, structure plans (prepared at county level) and local plans.
- 1.4 Regional spatial strategies and local development frameworks will be the main basis for making decisions on planning applications. They are not

however restricted to dealing with matters implemented through planning alone. For example, they may include spatial matters relating to education, health, energy, and protection of the environment.

- 1.5 Arrangements have been made to try and ensure a smooth changeover to the new system. In West Dorset, the adopted Local Plan (2006) will be 'saved', for at least three years. During this transitional period, plans produced under the new system will replace all or parts of the saved plans. (For more about the documents in the Local Development Framework please see Appendix 1)

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)

- 1.6 The Regional Spatial Strategy is a key element of the new development plan system. It provides policy guidance for development in the South West region and allocates how much development should go in particular districts. Its preparation is the responsibility of the South West Regional Assembly. The RSS is subject to a public examination from April to July 2007.

The Core Strategy

- 1.7 This Issues and Options document is the first major stage of consultation for the Core Strategy. This will be followed by a 'Preferred Options' stage, which will put forward the options drawn from this consultation and from examination of the evidence base (see below). The Core Strategy will then be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination – for the timetable please see below

Public consultation on issues and options	July - September 2007
'Preferred options' report to committee – with report on consultation results	January 2008
Consultation on 'preferred options'	March – April 2008
'Submission document' to committee	December 2008
Consultation on 'submission document'	January-February 2009
Public Examination	October 2009
Adoption	May 2010

- I.8 The Core Strategy is one of the first and most important documents to be prepared. It will set out the vision, objectives and spatial strategy for the area linking with the aims set out within the West Dorset Community Plan. A separate development plan document will be published alongside the Core Strategy which will include general development control policies against which proposals can be judged. The Core Strategy will cover the period up until 2026, and all other local planning documents should conform with its policies.
- I.9 The West Dorset Partnership is a partnership of public, private and voluntary/community sector organisations who are working together to improve the quality of life for residents in West Dorset. Partners include the district and county councils, Dorset Police, Dorset Primary Care Trust, Dorset Wildlife Trust, Dorset Community Action and the Federation of Small Businesses. The Partnership has produced the West Dorset Community Plan 2006-2010 to improve the social, environmental and economic well-being of the district. The Core Strategy aims to deliver the spatial aspects of the Community Plan.
- I.10 The Core Strategy will identify broad locations for future development but will not allocate specific areas of land: this will be done later in the site-specific allocations document. The site allocations document and any supplementary planning documents must follow the broad strategy set out in the Core Strategy, therefore if you are interested in specific sites it is important that you first engage in the consultation on the Core Strategy, including this Issues and Options Paper.
- I.11 Whilst this is an informal consultation stage, responses received will assist the Council in its consideration of Preferred Options for the next stage in the process. Although this consultation on issues and options is not an opportunity to promote particular sites or boundary changes, responses may however make reference to general directions of future growth or potential strategic (broad) locations. The formal public consultation stage on preferred options, which is expected to take place in Spring 2008, will enable formal representations to be submitted through the Core Strategy process, including any relating to specific sites and particular defined development boundaries of settlements, which may illustrate or help define a particular strategy.
- I.12 In preparing the Core Strategy there are a series of planning policies at a national and regional level that the District Council will have to follow. The Council therefore has not started with a blank sheet of paper. Similarly the themes of the West Dorset Community Plan 2006-10 and its revisions have to be considered as well as the needs of the service providers such as the members of the West Dorset Partnership (e.g. the Primary Care Trust) and other key stakeholders such as town and parish councils.
- Evidence Base**
- I.13 The first stage of preparing the Core Strategy is to gather evidence and factual information to help identify the issues and needs of the area. As well as reviewing existing information and strategies that the council already has access to, a number of new studies are being carried out. These include:
- A study of villages and their residents' travel patterns and access to jobs and services (the Rural Functionality Study);
 - An Employment Land Review, looking at the need for employment development and where it is best provided;
 - An Economic Vision study for Weymouth and Dorchester (jointly with Weymouth & Portland Borough Council);
 - An audit of open space and recreation facilities;
 - A Housing Market Assessment and Housing Needs Study (jointly with other local authorities in Dorset);
 - A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment examining the relative flood risk of different areas;
 - A Retail Study (jointly with Weymouth and Portland Borough Council), looking at the need for retail development and where it is best provided;
 - An updated Landscape Character Analysis (led by the Dorset AONB Team)
 - Townscape analysis of the built up areas;
 - A Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment looking at the district's capacity for housing development including brownfield land in the towns; and
 - A review of sustainability and climate change evidence for West Dorset.

Consultation so far



Core Strategy Consultation Event at Herrison Hall

- 1.14 On the 19th January 2007, 58 stakeholders such as town and parish council representatives, the West Dorset Partnership, Dorset County Council, Natural England and the Highways Agency attended a consultation event led by an external organiser to discuss issues and options for West Dorset. Information sessions letting town and parish councils know about the new planning system were held before this event.
- 1.15 In addition to this, and to ensure that the Council consulted with all sections of the community, a number of consultations were undertaken with groups, including older people and people with disabilities. The Council also held a ‘Youth Day’ on the 13th April 2007, to gain younger people’s views on the issues facing West Dorset.



Consultation with young people at Beaminster

- 1.16 Summaries of comments from all these events can be found under the “What you have told us” parts of the following sections and also on our website at www.dorsetforyou.com
- 1.17 The results of these events and this further public consultation will be used, along with the technical evidence and sustainability appraisal (see Appendix 1), to prepare the ‘preferred options’ document that will be considered by the council before being published for further public consultation. We will also take account of the issues that have been raised in parish and Local Area Partnership plans, much of which have already been incorporated into the West Dorset Community Plan and Dorset Community Strategy.

2. The Vision

Context

- 2.1 National policy states that the purpose of planning is to deliver sustainable development. This means developing in such a way as to meet current needs without harming future generations' abilities to meet their needs, and involves the integration of four elements:
- The maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment;
 - Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
 - Effective protection of the environment; and
 - Prudent use of natural resources.
- 2.2 The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West states that the regional future that the Strategy is working towards can be summed up as one where:
- All communities enjoy the benefits of further development and where housing needs are satisfied;
 - The economy continues to prosper;
 - Rural parts of the region fulfil their economic potential with vibrant market towns at their core;
 - Growth is supported by necessary infrastructure in step with development.
- 2.3 The Community Strategy for Dorset 2004 produced by the Dorset Strategic Partnership contains a vision for Dorset which is "A living thriving Dorset where everyone has a part to play in creating a better quality of life"
- 2.4 The West Dorset Partnership's Community Plan 2006-10 has a vision of 'bringing people together to make West Dorset a better place to live and work' and is based on eight priority themes that have been identified as important by the residents of West Dorset. These priorities are:
- Housing
 - Transport and accessibility
 - Our environment
 - Local prosperity
 - Safer communities
 - Health and well-being
 - Activities and opportunities for the community
 - Equality and diversity

What you have told us

- 2.5 An exercise on a vision for the future of West Dorset on the 19th January 2007 stakeholder consultation event provided ideas which included the following:
- Housing needs are met – particularly for affordable housing.
 - People travel less as they live and work in a better balanced community.
 - Development is sustainable using local materials and integrated renewable energy.
 - More people visit West Dorset as it is a desirable location for holiday makers.
 - There is an enhanced public transport system using innovative technology.
 - Beauty of coast and countryside remains.
- 2.6 The following suggested visions have been drawn from the results of consultation and from the town and local area partnership plans for individual towns. Where the vision is drawn from such a plan it is not the intention to change what the partnerships have put forward but to ensure that these visions are appropriate for a planning document that is going up to 2026.

To answer these questions please use the questionnaire provided

- 1. Do you agree with the suggested Vision for the District?**
- 2. If no, how would you like it to be changed?**
- 3. Do you agree with the suggested local visions for the towns and rural areas?**
- 4. If no, which local vision do you not agree with? How would you like it to be changed?**

Suggested Vision

By 2026 West Dorset will be a district where:

- The beauty of coast, countryside and historic settlements remain;
- There is a range of housing to meet the needs of those on all incomes;
- People travel less as they live and work in a better balanced community;
- There is steady economic growth including higher-value sectors, a greater choice of higher paid employment and local opportunities for training;
- Tourism provides local employment and a high quality visitor experience, benefiting from and respecting the quality of the environment;
- Thriving market towns support the surrounding rural areas, and local facilities are available in villages;
- Employment and facilities are accessible by a choice of transport modes, including improved and more flexible public transport;
- Development is sustainable, using local materials, sustainable construction methods and integrated renewable energy;
- The community is safe, healthy and active.

Dorchester

Dorchester will enhance its role as county town and have a better balance of housing and jobs with less commuting. This will be achieved through further housing development (so that people working in the town have better opportunities to live close to their work), further development of retail, cultural, leisure and community facilities, including significant redevelopment at the town centre, and environmental and traffic management improvements in the town. Development will be carried out to a high standard of design that preserves the historic character of the town.

Bridport

Bridport will continue as a working town with a good balance between housing and jobs and a vibrant town centre providing shopping, cultural and other facilities to the rural hinterland. The surrounding nationally-designated landscape and floodplain will be protected, along with the countryside views and green spaces that contribute significantly to the town's character. Previously-developed land will be the priority for development, including the regeneration of the town's southwest quadrant. Development will focus on meeting local needs for jobs and housing, providing opportunities for young people to stay in the area and exploring innovative and sustainable ways of meeting these needs. The town aims to become a low impact

sustainable town, building on its reputation for local food and produce, developing sustainable tourism, and encouraging alternatives to the private car.

Sherborne

Sherborne will develop to meet increased demand for housing and jobs, and improve the balance between them. The historic character of the town and its surroundings will be protected and will be the basis for enhancing its attractiveness to visitors. Accessibility to transport will be improved and residents of all ages will be given the opportunity to use a even more diverse range of facilities.

Lyme Regis

Lyme Regis will retain its unique physical and visual character while developing to meet local needs so as to retain a viable mixed-age community. It will develop its role as a visitor and educational centre on the World Heritage Coast, with a strong identity based on its geological heritage and fossil interests. It will need to adapt to the effects of global warming, due to its position on an unstable coastline.

Chickerell

Chickerell will continue to form an outlying settlement to Weymouth, looking principally to Weymouth for its higher order needs, and also providing employment that serves Weymouth's needs, but will retain its physical separation and distinct character. Development will aim to increase the range of local facilities and meet local needs.

Beaminster

Beaminster will retain its attractive historic character and the beauty of the surrounding countryside whilst developing on a small scale to meet local needs for housing, employment and community facilities. Accessibility to facilities will be improved and Beaminster will continue its role as a local service centre to surrounding villages.

Rural Areas

Outside the towns, the countryside will be protected for its own sake and in recognition of its range of environmental designations. The farming industry will be supported, in particular through support for environmentally friendly land management initiatives and through farm diversification. Villages will continue as vibrant communities: they will be protected from development that would harm their character and lead to increased commuting, but the provision of affordable housing for local people, local community facilities and opportunities for local employment will be encouraged. The needs of the elderly, young people and lower-paid people will receive special attention.

3. Location of Development

Context

3.1 The Core Strategy must identify strategic (broad) locations for the development of enough housing and employment to meet the targets for West Dorset included in the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy.

3.2 In doing this, we must take account of:

- national policy seeking to reduce the need to travel by car by concentrating development mostly at the larger towns, where housing and employment can be located close to each other and where a range of services are easily accessible;
- national policy promoting development on previously developed land;
- emerging regional policy allocating 410 dwellings per annum to the district, 200 of them at Dorchester;
- emerging regional policy identifying job growth of 7,500 to 9,500 jobs to 2026 in the Weymouth and Dorchester area;
- environmental constraints such as floodplains and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Evidence Base

Studies on the roles of settlements in the South West, carried out to inform the Regional Spatial Strategy, concluded the following about towns in West Dorset:

- Dorchester is an important employment and retail centre and has significant in-commuting. Like Weymouth and Yeovil, it is identified as a strategically significant town in the Regional Spatial Strategy.
- Bridport, as a smaller centre, is not regionally significant but provides a service centre for the western part of the district. It is relatively self-contained in employment terms, with significant numbers of people living and working in the town. There are commuting relationships with Lyme Regis and Beaminster as well as Weymouth and Dorchester.
- Sherborne is not a strategically significant town. It has commuting relationships

with Yeovil, though with more people commuting in to Sherborne than out of it.

3.4 The **Rural Functionality Study** carried out by the Council on the role of villages in West Dorset concluded the following points:

- Supporting development in villages with facilities is more sustainable because where facilities exist in a village they will be utilised by local residents.
- Development in villages does not necessarily mean that facilities will be retained.
- A key reason for moving to West Dorset villages is the environmental quality: being near to shops and facilities was not an important factor in people's choice.
- There is no evidence to suggest that an ageing population will form in a village where there is no development.
- There is a high reliance on the private car for journeys.
- People generally travel to their nearest larger settlement for food shopping.
- Remoter villages have a higher proportion of home working, but those who do commute to work travel longer distances.
- The settlements around Dorchester act as dormitory villages for the town.

3.5 The **Housing Market Assessment** will provide up to date information on the local housing market and the distribution of affordable housing need. The last **Housing Needs Survey** identified a very high affordable housing need at Dorchester, with significant need also at Bridport, Sherborne and Lyme Regis.

3.6 **Environmental constraints** will influence the location of development: the proportions of the district covered by various designations are shown below

Constraint	Area (ha)	% District
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	77,110	71.3%
Heritage Coast	7,945	7.4%
Internationally Important Nature Conservation Areas (including 500m buffer)	2,060 (10,318)	1.9% (9.5%)
SSSI (nature conservation areas of at least national importance) (including 500m buffer)	3,558 (20,340)	3.3% (18.8%)
Scheduled Monuments	732	0.7%
Floodplain (river and tidal)	5,515	5.1%
Combined Total (including buffers)	82,490	76.3%

What you have told us

- There should be some/limited development in the villages to help sustain and vitalise these communities.
- Need for sustainable communities including live/work units and with employment/retail/community facilities easily accessible. General support for developing near facilities/reducing travel.
- General view that development should not take place on floodplains.
- Any development within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty should be sympathetic to the landscape character and should sustain the area (e.g. new jobs, affordable housing, sustainable energy).
- Some concern about too much development being concentrated at Dorchester at the expense of other areas
- Some support for development at Bridport, Sherborne and Chickerell.
- Some support for identifying 'key villages' suitable for more development.

Priority of Development in Settlements

3.7 The Adopted Local Plan seeks to guide development towards the larger settlements that have a range of facilities and access to employment. The six towns in West Dorset are Dorchester, Sherborne, Bridport, Lyme Regis, Beaminster and Chickerell and the local plan identifies Defined Development Boundaries

(DDBs) at these settlements. In addition, DDBs are identified at several larger villages. The Local Plan policies allow for additional housing and employment within the DDBs, and allocates specific sites for these purposes within the towns, and allows limited development within the villages with DDBs.

3.8 The villages with DDBs are: Bishops Caundle, Bradford Abbas, Broadmayne/West Knighton, Broadwindsor, Buckland Newton, Burton Bradstock, Cerne Abbas, Charlton Down, Charminster, Charmouth, Crossways, Evershot, Mosterton, Maiden Newton/Higher Frome Vauchurch, Piddletrenthide, Portesham, Puddletown, Salwayash, Thornford, Trent, Winterbourne Abbas/Winterbourne Steepleton and Yetminster.

3.9 The Core Strategy must determine whether the approach taken in the Local Plan remains the best way forward to meet the development needs of the RSS. The options are fairly limited. Focusing on Dorchester and particularly on previously developed land is the most sustainable approach but will not meet the needs of the rest of the district, particularly those of the other main towns. Much of the district is covered by international and national landscape and nature designations and may not be appropriate for any development. Some larger villages may have the facilities to support more development but this may not be as sustainable as allocating development in the towns.

To answer these questions please use the questionnaire provided

5. Which of the following options do you think is the best way to provide for the majority of new housing and employment development in West Dorset?

Dorchester:

- Mainly at Dorchester (including greenfield land)
- Mainly at Dorchester (including greenfield land) plus previously developed land elsewhere

Allow new greenfield sites at the other towns:

(please specify)

- Bridport
- Sherborne
- Lyme Regis
- Beaminster
- Chickerell

Identify some larger villages as 'key villages' where expansion might be allowed: (please specify)

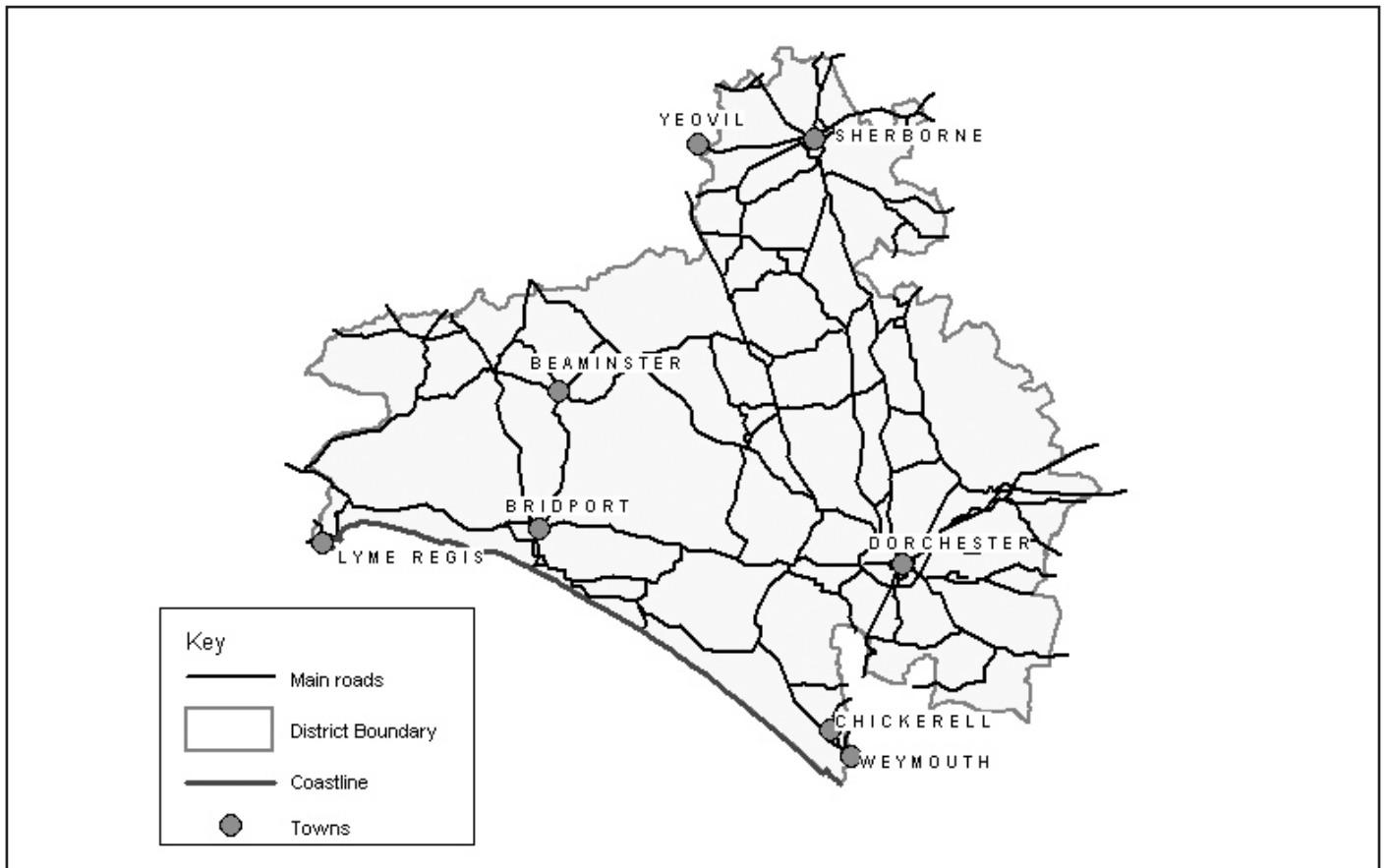
- Puddletown
- Yetminster
- Crossways
- Other (please state)

Other:

- Infill in other villages with Defined Development Boundaries
- Extend number of villages with Defined Development Boundaries (if so, please state which)

6. Please indicate your reasons - or specify if you have other suggestions.

7. Do you have any further suggestions about broad directions of, or locations for, growth?



Location Map of West Dorset

Rural Diversification

3.10 Government policy supports the reuse of appropriately located and suitably constructed existing buildings in the countryside where this would meet sustainable development objectives. Current Local Plan policy permits change of use of rural buildings under certain circumstances

primarily for local needs housing, employment (including tourism), essential rural workers' dwellings and community facilities. The decision that the Core Strategy has to make is whether to make this policy more restrictive, less restrictive or remain largely the same.

To answer these questions please use the questionnaire provided

8. What types of development do you think are appropriate in smaller settlements?

- Affordable Housing
- Employment
- Tourism (e.g holiday accommodation & attractions)
- Wind Turbines
- Community Facilities
- Rural Workers' Dwellings
- General Market Housing
- Other

9. Please indicate your reasons - or specify if you have other suggestions

10. What types of development do you think are appropriate in the countryside?

- Affordable Housing
- Employment
- Tourism (e.g holiday accommodation & attractions)
- Wind Turbines
- Other renewable energy uses (e.g. biomass)
- Community Facilities
- Rural Workers' Dwellings
- General Market Housing
- Other

11. Please indicate your reasons - or specify if you have other suggestions

4. Affordable Housing

Context

- 4.1 Affordable housing can be defined as housing that is available in the long term to those who cannot afford to rent or buy on the open market. This includes socially rented and shared ownership housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. It does not include open market housing that is of lower than average cost due to small size or low specification.
- 4.2 The need for affordable housing is strongly influenced by the relationship between incomes and house prices. In recent years house prices have risen much faster than incomes in West Dorset with the result that the ratio between them has widened considerably.
- 4.3 The Core Strategy must set out the district council's policy for the provision of affordable housing through the planning system. The existing Local Plan asks for 35% affordable housing on all new residential developments over a threshold size of 15 dwellings or 0.5 hectares, or over 3 dwellings / 0.1 hectares in the smaller settlements. (Some councils have percentages of up to 50-60%). The Council does not currently set a % target for homes adapted for people with special needs.
- 4.4 The pressing need for more affordable homes, and the constraints to development within the district, would appear on their own to justify a threshold of less than that of 15 dwellings recommended by Government guidance. On the other hand smaller sites tend to be on previously developed land where land values and construction costs are relatively high.
- 4.5 Raising the percentage of affordable housing asked for is a clear possibility to increase number of affordable homes provided. However, if the percentage were radically increased this might restrict the amount of money available to meet other infrastructure needs arising from development (e.g. transport, community facilities) or deter development altogether.
- 4.6 Government guidance advises Councils to provide different kinds of affordable housing. The main choices are between accommodation rented from a housing association or other social landlord and mixed tenure arrangements (shared

ownership) in which the occupiers contribute rent and make mortgage payments.

- 4.7 The existing local plan also allows for 'rural exception sites' for affordable housing. These are supported by national policy and allow small sites for 100% affordable housing to be developed at rural settlements where housing would not otherwise be permitted. This approach is likely to be continued in the Core Strategy.
- 4.8 Therefore in setting out our policy on affordable housing, we must take account of:
- National and regional policy for proportions of affordable housing on development sites, and allowing exception sites in rural areas;
 - Total housing development allocations in regional policy;
 - The council's statutory responsibilities towards housing those in greatest need.

Evidence Base

- 4.9 Consultants are carrying out a **Housing Needs Assessment** for West Dorset. The results of this will feed into the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper.

Issues from the West Dorset Community Plan

- Housing need not currently being met.
- House prices are too high for local wage earners.
- High number of second homes and retirement properties.
- Need for special needs housing (for example adapted to meet the needs of those who are disabled or who require particular care or support).

What you have told us

- Affordability should be retained in perpetuity, for all types including shared ownership – affordability must not be lost after the first sale.
- Affordable housing should be provided within general housing development sites rather than concentrated on separate sites.
- Support for higher affordable housing percentage ranging from 40%-50% minimum.
- Site size threshold to be lowered or

removed completely. Suggestion that local autonomy on threshold size would be welcomed.

- Rural exceptions policy is very important – it is vital for villages to remain sustainable. Local need should be a priority - very important to meet affordable housing need in the location that it arises.
- Concerns that lack of affordable housing will impact on the amount of younger carers for the elderly population.
- Need for more low cost market housing.
- More housing should be made available for people with special needs.

To answer these questions please use the questionnaire provided

- 12. Do you think that the percentage for affordable housing should be higher than the current 35%**
- 13. What do you think the percentage should be?**
- 14. In the towns, do you think the threshold for site size should be lower than 15 dwellings?**
- 15. If yes, are there any particular towns where this is needed?**
- 16. Of the affordable housing that is available, do you think more should be for rent to those most in need rather than other types of affordable housing such as shared equity?**
- 17. Do you think the Core Strategy should set a percentage for homes that should be provided for people with special needs?**
- 18. Any other comments relating to affordable housing?**

5. Employment & Tourism

Context

5.1 The Core Strategy must consider the needs for employment and tourism development in the district, identify broad locations for any significant new development, and identify criteria for the location of smaller scale development.

In doing this, we need to take account of:

- National and regional policy that takes a positive approach to meeting economic needs including those of the tourism industry. Local economic and tourism strategies also seek a positive approach.
- The need to reduce car travel between homes and workplaces – by concentrating development so that the two are close together, or where public transport can be used.
- National policy supporting the role of town centres.
- Environmental constraints such as floodplains, nature conservation sites and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- Local landscape impact – particularly of rural tourism development.
- Traffic impact, especially on rural roads.
- The risk that land that we allocate for employment may not come forward if the owners hope to gain permission for residential use in the future – as residential uses have higher land values.

Evidence Base

5.2 The **Employment Land Review**, currently in progress, will guide later stages of development of the Core Strategy although results are not available yet. The Council is also collecting together relevant information on **tourism** in the district.

5.3 The **Rural Functionality Study** carried out by the Council on the role of villages in West Dorset concluded the following relevant points:

- Remoter villages have a higher proportion of home working, but those who do commute to work travel longer distances.
- The settlements around Dorchester act as dormitory villages for the town.

Issues identified in the West Dorset Community Plan

- Shortage of labour with relevant skills
- Poor transport makes access to jobs and training difficult.
- Difficulty in accessing business support services.
- Expensive land costs.
- Lack of local work related skills training centres.

What you have told us

- Transport and congestion problems need to be addressed for better access to employment.
- Local service closures and business closures are a problem.
- The local skills base should be improved. 'Affordability Gap' needs attention to encourage skilled to stay.
- More support for rural enterprises needed. Farm diversification/building conversion should be easier.
- Smaller units are an important source of rural employment: Live work units / knowledge sector / creative industry.
- Need more employment opportunities for younger people.
- Provide opportunities for expansion of existing firms and creation of new businesses.
- Focus on small/medium enterprises e.g. Information and Communication Technology and cultural industries.
- Developments that adversely impact environment through pollution/noise etc should not be allowed.
- Encourage high quality developments appropriate to district that exploit heritage and landscape.
- Tourism attractions and hotels have an important role. Optimise heritage market and existing infrastructure.
- Allow development of rural/wildlife attractions.

To answer these questions please use the questionnaire provided

19. Which of the following types of employment would you like to see encouraged in the District?

- Higher value employment sectors (e.g. IT firms)
- Business start-up premises
- Opportunities for existing firms to expand
Hotels
- B&Bs and Guest Houses
- More self-catering holiday accommodation
- More or expanded holiday caravan/camping parks
- More tourist attractions

20. Are there any other types of employment and/or tourism development that you think are needed or should be encouraged in the district?

21. Are there any types of employment or tourism development that you think we should not be encouraging or allowing more of?

22. Are there any other issues around employment and tourism that you feel the Core Strategy should address?

important things a local authority can do to reduce the impacts of climate change.

- Homes and businesses also directly contribute towards the emissions that lead to climate change, through energy consumption - and renewable energy developments can help to provide this energy more sustainably.
- These may include a percentage requirement on new developments for renewable energy production micro-technologies such as solar panels or photovoltaic roof systems. The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy asks, as a minimum, for 20% on-site renewable energy provision on large-scale development.
- They may also include accepting – or actively welcoming – the development of larger scale renewable energy developments, such as wind turbines and biomass fuel plants.

6.3 Local development frameworks also need to include policies protecting environmental assets including the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, listed buildings and conservation areas. Nationally and internationally important environmental designations are all protected from inappropriate development under national policy, and we are not therefore asking questions about them in this issues and options consultation.

6. Environment and Climate Change

Context

- 6.1 Local authorities and others are increasingly having to take action to:
- Deal with the impacts of climate change i.e. those impacts which are occurring and will occur in the future, regardless of what we do.
 - Reduce future climate change impacts through policies and actions which help reduce carbon dioxide emissions and other greenhouse gases.
- 6.2 The LDF has a role to play in this. For example:
- The concentration of development so that homes, jobs and services are accessible by non-car modes of transport. This is one of the most

Landscape

- 6.4 West Dorset is renowned for its highly attractive landscape and coastline, much of which is covered by national landscape designations. Approximately 71% of the district is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the majority of the coastline is designated as Heritage Coast.
- 6.5 The Government advises that planning authorities should adopt a landscape character assessment based approach to ensuring the protection of areas not covered by national landscape designations. The aim of the landscape character approach is to safeguard all landscapes from inappropriate development rather than target specific sites through local landscape designations.

Evidence Base

- 6.6 'West Dorset 2000' provides a full landscape

appraisal of West Dorset, and work is currently under way to review it.

- 6.7 The **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment** will provide evidence on which areas of the district are at greatest risk of flooding, which will help to guide decisions about the location of development.

Issues identified in the West Dorset Community Plan

- Decline in landscape quality and wildlife habitat due to harmful land uses or lack of land management.
- Decline in agriculture threatens the local landscape due to lack of land management.
- Quality of built environment and public space needs improving.
- Badly managed recreation and tourism damages environmental quality.
- Development may lead to loss of local character if not sympathetically designed and located.
- Impacts of climate change.

What you have told us

- New development should be sympathetic with surroundings.
- Infill development within settlements can help to prevent the outward sprawl of urban areas, but can lead to loss of open spaces.
- Finance must be allocated to maintain play areas and footpaths.
- There are problems with concentrating tourism in coastal areas.
- Take measures to reduce flooding.
- Any building within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty should be sympathetic to the landscape character and should sustain the area (e.g. new jobs, affordable housing, sustainable energy).
- Reduce use of private cars - development to be near to public transport routes and facilities.
- Positive measures better than restrictions to reduce non-essential car journeys.
- High standards of insulation and energy efficiency are required.
- Support proactive approach to renewables but more community support for micro-renewables than

larger installations.

- Concern regarding visual impacts of renewable energy.
- Need to adapt, e.g. better land drainage, flood defences.

To answer these questions please use the questionnaire provided

23. Which of the following do you support as ways to reduce the impact that we make on the environment?

- Encourage the reduction in the use of the private car by locating development near to public transport routes and facilities
- Encourage the reduction in the use of the private car by using restrictions (e.g. parking) to discourage people making non-essential journeys by car
- Seek to make a significant change in the production of renewable energy in West Dorset and accepting a degree of visual and other impacts
- Ensure new buildings are designed to minimise energy requirements

24. Should major new development be required to include facilities to generate renewable energy to reduce carbon emissions by over the minimum of 20% set in the Regional Spatial Strategy?

25. Do you feel that it is important to define landscape character in order to help protect those features that make a place locally distinctive?

26. If you feel that an alternative approach should be used please specify what that should be

27. Are there any other issues around environment/climate change that you think the Core Strategy should take account of?

7. Shopping & Community Facilities

Context

7.1 The Core Strategy must identify the future needs for retail and community developments, the broad locations where new developments should be provided, and criteria for locating other developments. In doing this, we need to take account of:

- National policy focusing retail developments at town centres and seeking their provision in locations where they can be accessed by modes of transport other than the car.
- The realities of what the local market will support (larger shops are not feasible without sufficient local spending power to support them).
- The importance of local facilities to those who do not have access to cars.

Evidence Base

7.2 A **retail study** of the district and of the adjoining Weymouth & Portland Borough will be carried out jointly by the two councils: this will provide up to date evidence of the need for retail development and recommendations about where any new development is provided.

7.3 A **Recreation Audit** has been carried out by consultants for the District Council. The results of this will be available shortly and will feed into the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper.

7.4 Previous **town centre health checks** have indicated that the health of the town centres in the district is generally good, and the level of town centre vacancies is currently low.

7.5 The district's **village study (Rural Functionality Study)** showed that while village residents do use local facilities such as village shops, there is no evidence that further housing development makes it more likely that facilities will be retained.

Issues identified in the West Dorset Community Plan

- Difficulty of access to public services in rural areas.
- Rural deprivation.

- Difficulty of access to cultural and recreational facilities and deficiencies in provision of entertainment, art and cultural facilities across the district.
- Need for facilities for young people and old people.
- Difficulties accessing facilities from remote rural areas.
- Closure of rural post offices and retail businesses.

What you have told us

- More sporting, cultural and recreation facilities for both old and young (e.g. cinemas, swimming pools).
- Difficulties accessing facilities from rural areas, particularly in the evenings.
- Maintain local library provision.
- More flagship stores in town centres.
- More youth facilities such as skate parks.

To answer these questions please use the questionnaire provided

28. Do you consider that shopping provision in West Dorset's towns is adequate?

29. If no, why not?

30. Do you consider that the provision of community facilities in West Dorset's towns is adequate?

31. If no, why not?

32. If further provision should be made, what towns do you think should have further provision?

Dorchester

Bridport

Lyme Regis

Sherborne

Beaminster

33. What sort of provision?

34. What retail and community uses do you know people are travelling out of West Dorset to use?

35. What retail, community or other development do you feel is needed in West Dorset's villages? Please specify where.

36. Any other issues?

8. Transport

Context

- 8.1 The principal strategy for transport in this area is the Dorset Local Transport Plan 2006-2011, prepared by Dorset County Council as highway authority, and setting out proposed improvements to the local transport network. The Core Strategy however needs to consider the interaction between land use and transport, and how accessibility needs will be met in the future. Of crucial importance is the ability to influence choices between different modes of travel including car, rail, bus, cycling and walking.
- 8.2 A particular emphasis is on conflicts caused in accessing services in such a rural area. For many journeys in West Dorset, the bus or taxis are the only realistic alternative option to the private car. Bus services have traditionally been provided along set routes and timetables, so that passengers have limited choice of times of travel. This does not meet today's increasingly varied working patterns. 'Demand responsive' services, that operate more flexibly responding to passenger requests, are beginning to be introduced in rural areas of Dorset. Together with better access to travel information through home computers and mobile telephones, this will potentially provide a service that is better tailored to passengers' needs.
- 8.3 Another possible approach to addressing rural transport problems would be for rural communities to draw up their own 'travel plans'. These would be the equivalent of the travel plans prepared for workplaces. They would analyse the travel facilities that the community requires and how these can be achieved by working together and with public agencies. Solutions might include car share schemes and access to travel information.
- 8.4 Government guidance advises that park and ride schemes, in appropriate circumstances, can help promote more sustainable travel patterns, both at local and strategic levels, and improve the accessibility and attractiveness of town centres. Park and ride facilities are provided presently at the football ground on Weymouth Avenue, Dorchester, for weekday use. It may be possible to allocate a permanent site for park and ride in Dorchester, in conjunction with the county council, but decisions need to be made about where the best place for these should be.

- 8.5 Conditions in parts of the District are marred by traffic passing through and air quality in some of these locations falls below acceptable standards. Although the rural nature of the District means that the car will continue to be a very important way of meeting people's transport needs, locating new development in areas that are easily accessible to facilities without the use of the car is clearly the most sustainable option, giving people greater opportunity to make some journeys by other transport modes that have less environmental impact.

Car Parking

- 8.6 The availability of car parking has a major influence on the choice of means of transport. Even in locations well served by public transport this has a significant influence on how people choose to travel. Too much parking or poorly designed parking can reduce the density at which housing is built. This may mean that more land may need to be found for development. Under provision, on the other hand, can lead to cars being parked inappropriately and can lead to difficulties for access by emergency or service vehicles.
- 8.7 There are three components to the overall issue of provision and management of parking: the amount of car parking provided for dwellings; the availability of transport options for a particular journey; and the amount of parking provided at the destination of trips (for example workplaces, services and shopping areas). The availability of convenient alternatives to the car, and restriction of parking where there are such alternatives, may encourage these more sustainable alternatives to be used. The management of car parking to encourage a higher turnover by those making short visits can also help to make more efficient use of existing car parking.

Issues from the West Dorset Community Plan

- Lack of public transport in rural areas.
- Congestion in towns.
- Demand for more parking in several towns (though this conflicts with other aspirations to reduce the need for car use).
- Difficulty in accessing services for older, younger and disabled people.

What you have told us

- Need for an enhanced public transport system in rural and urban areas.
- Difficulty in accessing services for older, younger and disabled people – need for demand responsive schemes.
- Congestion in towns – encourage car sharing/public transport.
- Demand for more parking in several towns.
- The road systems around the towns needs upgrading to cope with additional development.

To answer these questions please use the questionnaire provided

37. Would you support the provision of more demand - responsive bus services (flexible services that respond to passenger requests) in your village or community? Have you any suggestions for areas of land that would make good passenger collection points for these services?

38. If yes please elaborate.

39. Would you support a permanent Park and Ride facility in Dorchester?

40. If more Park and Ride facilities were provided in other towns would you regularly use them?

41. Where should these be?

42. Which of the following do you support as a way to provide car parking in West Dorset:

- Limit the amount of parking provided through developments throughout the District, promoting good design and good use of land.
- Limit the amount of parking provided through developments where there is access to facilities and other forms of transport.
- Allow high amounts of parking, recognising that this will have an effect on the living environment, quality of design and the environment in general.

43. What transport alternatives would you suggest to reduce car use?

9. Design and Sustainable Construction

Context

Design

- 9.1 Recent Government guidance has highlighted the importance of good design in new development. The design of new development is crucial in ensuring that it fits in with the local character of its surrounds to provide a “sense of place”. Good design can also help make the area feel safe, pleasant and attractive – a place where people will want to live, work and socialise.
- 9.2 Good urban design should result in development which is varied – both in the type and size of housing provided but also by including a mix of uses. This not only increases the ‘vitality’ of the area with different activities going on at different times of the day but also provides the opportunity for people to live, work, shop and socialise locally. The physical form of development should be people friendly and designed in such a way that walking and cycling are encouraged as a safe alternative to using the car. New development should be well integrated with the existing settlement and community facilities. Streets should be joined-up and linked to the existing network of roads and paths to allow a choice of routes to local facilities.
- 9.3 New development should also be ‘legible’ and easily understood by the people living, working or passing through it. Landmarks, land uses and the scale and intensity of the buildings help people to orientate themselves in a new neighbourhood. Development should also reflect or enhance local identity. This can be done by acknowledging what has gone before in terms of the history of the locality, maximising opportunities for social interaction and community activities, allowing individual expression, respecting the environment and working with nature.
- 9.4 In designing liveable places it is also important that new development should provide adequate privacy and allow for the ‘quiet enjoyment’ of residential properties. The design of individual buildings and the position of doors and windows, appropriate boundary treatments, together with the position of buildings and different uses in relation to one another, can be used to ensure

that overlooking or overshadowing of private areas and noise disturbance can be avoided.

- 9.5 West Dorset has established a reputation for high quality design in towns and villages which has led to the award of Beacon status for the quality of the Built Environment in 2003/04. Examples of high quality design exist at developments at Poundbury and Charlton Down as well as smaller schemes in several villages.

Sustainable Construction

- 9.6 The construction, subsequent use and maintenance of buildings represent a major use of resources and materials. The use of non-renewable energy and the resultant by-products, produce atmospheric pollution which can affect human health, damage crops and wildlife, cause acid rain and contribute towards global warming.
- 9.7 Standards for assessing the environmental efficiency of residential and non-residential buildings include the Government's recently adopted Code for Sustainable Homes, and the BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method). BREEAM covers non residential buildings such as offices and commercial premises. Both standards assess a building's performance against a range of criteria including carbon emissions, water efficiency, materials and waste management.
- 9.8 The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy advises that all new and refurbished buildings should achieve BREEAM standard 'Very Good' or above, or at least Level 3 of Code for Sustainable Homes. The Core Strategy could ask for the highest standard of BREEAM ('Excellent') or Level 5 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, however this needs to be weighed against the costs of achieving this level and the subsequent impact on house prices and rate of development.
- 9.9 The Government have also released national guidance, presently in consultation form, on zero carbon development. Zero carbon means that, over a year, the net emissions from energy use in the home would be zero and the guidance sets targets for moving to zero carbon housing within the next 10 years.

What you have told us.

- Sustainable construction to be encouraged with enforceable targets – however may be some local opposition

based on design.

- Need for sustainable construction methods; (for example building houses that are more energy efficient and/or include facilities for the use of renewable energy, such as solar panels).
- Design should be in keeping with the locality.

To answer these questions please use the questionnaire provided

44. Should new development continue to reflect the traditional character and distinctiveness of towns and village in West Dorset?

45. If no, what would you suggest?

46. Should we try to provide more guidance on what makes places in West Dorset safe, attractive, interesting and pleasant to live in?

47. Any other comments on design?

48. Should the Core Strategy require the highest available levels of sustainable construction within all new developments, with the aim of achieving zero carbon emissions from new buildings by 2016?

49. Any other comments on sustainable construction?

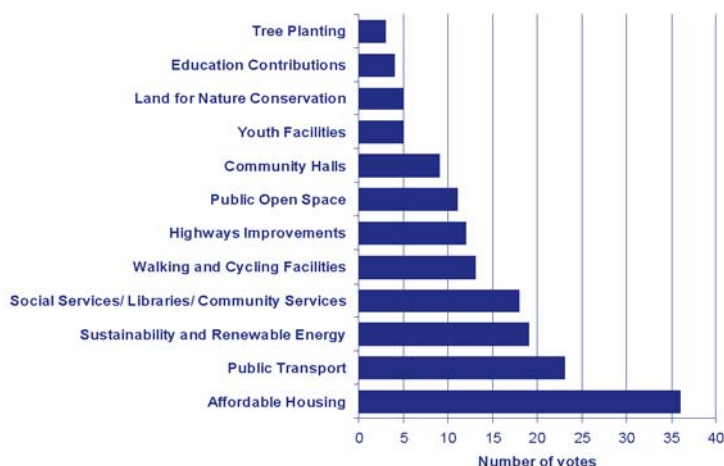
10. Developer Contributions

Context

10.1 When development takes place, improvements to existing infrastructure and facilities, or the provision of new ones, may be necessary to meet the needs of the new residents and avoid any harmful impacts of development. The Core Strategy must set out the district council's broad approach to seeking benefits (or contributions towards them) from developers, where this can help to reduce any harmful impacts or improve the beneficial effects of development. Such benefits may include a range of social, environmental and transport provisions. There are, however, limits to the amount that can be asked for from development to ensure that it is still viable so the choices have to be made carefully to make sure that the best possible contributions are sought.

What you have told us

10.2 At the public consultation on the 19th January there was an exercise where each of the attendees could vote which, out of a total of 12 options, were the 4 most important to them for the allocation of developer contributions. The results are shown in the graph below.



10.3 Consultation so far has shown that people value affordable housing as the most important developer contribution followed by public transport and sustainability and renewable energy.

To answer these questions please use the questionnaire provided

50. What order of priority would you give to these various benefits? (please show your priorities by ranking them 1 to 12 using the boxes provided with 1 as the first priority).

- Affordable Housing
- Community Halls
- Education Provision
- Highway Improvements
- Nature Conservation
- Open Space
- Public Transport
- Social Services, Libraries, Other Community Services
- Sustainability and Renewable Energy Installations
- Tree Planting
- Walking/Cycling facilities
- Youth Facilities

Appendix One

The Local Development Framework

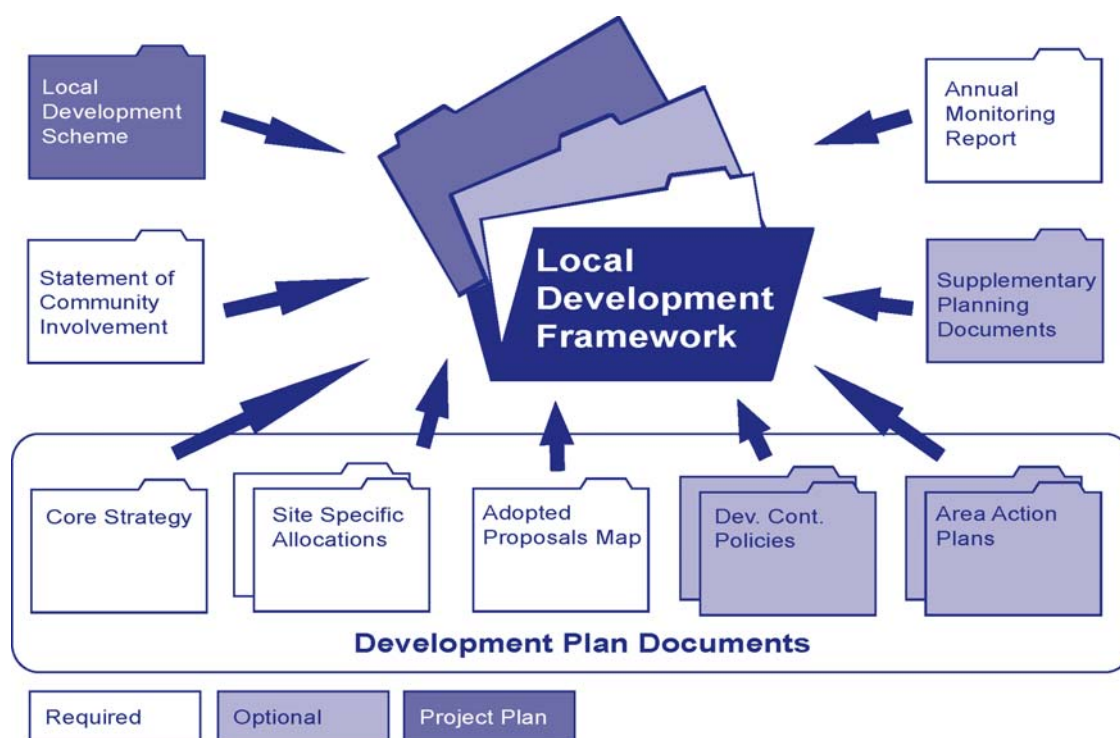
- 1.1 The planning system replaced Local Plans with a series of planning documents, collectively known as the local development framework (LDF). The local development framework will comprise a **core strategy, development control policies, site specific allocations of land**, and a **proposals map**. It may also contain **action area plans** where these are needed, and **supplementary planning documents**. All planning documents must be accompanied by a sustainability appraisal (see below).
- 1.2 The aim of separating the plan into a series of elements is that the system will be more flexible as it will be possible to review one part at a time in order to adapt to changing circumstances.
- 1.3 As part of the local development framework, councils must also prepare a **statement of community involvement** (which sets out its policy for involving and consulting the local community on planning matters), a **local development scheme** (a three-year work programme of the work and consultation that will be carried out on the local development framework documents) and an **annual monitoring report**.
- 1.4 This consultation document forms part of the early consultation on the development of the

Core Strategy and Development Control Policies for West Dorset.

- 1.5 West Dorset's Statement of Community Involvement was adopted in January 2007. The latest Local Development Scheme was approved in May 2007 and the latest Annual Monitoring Report was published in December 2006. These documents are available from the Council's website www.dorsetforyou.com
- 1.6 A site specific allocations document will be prepared in future once the Core Strategy has been adopted.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 1.7 The new planning system, introduced in 2004, aims to ensure that all new development is as sustainable as possible. Sustainable development is development that aims to meet social, economic and environmental needs in the present and for future generations. A new process, called sustainability appraisal, has been introduced to check plans. This is required of all planning policy documents. It will be carried out during the preparation of the plan to make sure that its impacts on the environment, economy and community are properly examined. The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for the West Dorset LDF was published for consultation in February 2007. This document will be used as a basis for appraising the sustainability of the proposed options in the 'Preferred Options' paper, which will be the next stage of preparing the Core Strategy.



Appendix Two: Explanation of Terms

This section seeks to give a straightforward explanation of some of the terms used in this document.

Affordable Housing

Housing that will be available to people who cannot afford to occupy houses generally available on the open market.

AONB

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are designated under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000 section 82. The primary purpose of designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape.

Community Planning

A general term for a process which helps local people to get more involved in the future of where they live, enables local agencies to be more responsive to local needs and with better co-ordination. This is often achieved through wide local consultation and involvement, developing a local Action Plan and a local partnership. Within West Dorset, this is being developed locally for each market town and its rural catchment area.

Conservation Area

An area of special architectural or historic interest, designated by the local planning authority under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

DDBs

Defined Development Boundaries specify the limits of the main settlements in order to identify the areas in which relevant Structure Plan and Local Plan policies apply. They are delineated taking into account the level of additional development appropriate in villages having regard to the retention of essential characteristics and range of social and service infrastructure.

Development

Defined by the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 as the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land.

Development Brief

A document that sets out principles, criteria and detailed guidelines for the development of a particular site.

Flood Risk Zone

Those areas that are known to have an annual risk of flooding from watercourses designated as “main rivers” by the Environment Agency of greater than 0.1% or from the sea of greater than 0.5%, as shown on indicative floodplain maps provided by the Environment Agency under Section 105 of the Water Resources Act.

Greenfield Site

An area of land on which no urban development has previously taken place.

Heritage Coast

Coastline designated by the Countryside Commission as being of outstanding scenic value and therefore in need of special protection while allowing managed public access.

Housing Needs Survey

A survey to establish the level of need for affordable housing in an area.

Infrastructure

The system of communications, utility services and transport network required to serve new development. Also used in relation to community or social services such as schools and shops.

Legibility

The degree to which an urban area is readily navigated, influenced primarily by landmark buildings and other features, road layout, and the positioning of buildings in relation to the street, which help a person identify where they are and how to reach their destination.

Listed Building

A building of special historic or architectural importance listed by the Secretary of State for National Heritage under Section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Local Development Framework

The replacement to Local Plans. The local development framework will comprise a ‘portfolio’ of ‘local development documents’, some of which have full development plan status (development plan documents) and some of which form supplementary guidance (supplementary planning documents).

Local Plan

A plan covering all of a district or borough area, which sets out detailed policies and specific proposals for the development and use of land, in order to guide planning decisions. Local Plans are required to conform to the strategic framework provided by the approved structure plan.

Park and Ride

An arrangement to provide access usually to a town centre whereby a private car is parked outside the town and the occupant(s) continue the journey by another mode of transport (usually by bus or rail).

Previously Developed Land

Previously developed land, often referred to as “brownfield”, is that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings) and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The definition covers the curtilage of the development.

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)

The strategic plan establishing the policy and broad pattern of development for the region, including the allocation of housing numbers to the districts. This will replace structure plans and regional planning guidance.

Renewable Energy

Energy forms that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment, such as wind, solar and tidal power. Energy generated from combustible or digestible waste materials is also regarded as a renewable form of energy.

Scheduled Monument

A structure or monument worthy of protection due to its historic significance that is included on a national list drawn up by English Heritage.

Spatial Planning

Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function. This will include policies which can impact on land use, for example, by influencing the demands on or needs for development, but which are not capable of being delivered solely or mainly through the granting of planning permission and may be delivered through other means.

Solar Panels

Renewable energy source in the form of either photovoltaic cells (which respond to daylight) or passive and active solar heating (which respond to sunlight respectively through location and through solar panels).

SSSI

A Site of Special Scientific Interest, identified by Natural England under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, on account of its biological or geological features. Development in or near an SSSI must be strictly controlled.

Supplementary Planning Documents

These will provide detailed supporting policy to specific policies of development plan documents or saved local plans, and must be consistent with those adopted policies. They do not require independent examination but should be produced with public involvement and consultation. They are an equivalent of current ‘supplementary planning guidance’ but have greater status as part of the local development framework.

Structure Plan

Part of the development plan which is prepared by strategic planning authorities and sets out the strategic framework against which local plans in Dorset should be in general conformity. The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan has been prepared by the Dorset County Council, was adopted in 2000 and published in 2001.

Sustainable Development

Defined by the Brundtland Commission as, development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.



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Working for West Dorset