

Joint Local Plan Review for West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland

DORCHESTER BACKGROUND PAPER
PREFERRED OPTIONS CONSULTATION VERSION

AUGUST 2018

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1. Introduction

PURPOSE OF BACKGROUND PAPER

- 1.1 This document is one of a number of background papers produced to support the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan Review.
- 1.2 This paper provides information about:
 - the approach taken to the future development in the town of Dorchester,
 - details of current and previous development,
 - rates of growth and how this might change in the future,
- 1.3 The paper also gives details of the site selection process including detailed considerations of environmental constraints in the area.

LOCAL PLAN AND THE REVIEW

- 1.4 In October 2015, West Dorset District Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council adopted their Joint Local Plan¹. The Local Plan sets out a long term planning strategy for the area and includes detailed policies and site proposals for housing, employment, leisure and infrastructure. The adopted Local Plan is the main basis for making decisions on planning applications.
- 1.5 In his report on the examination of the Joint Local Plan², the Inspector indicated that he considered it to be *"imperative that an early review is undertaken"* and that the review should be in place by 2021. The objective of the review is to identify additional housing land capable of meeting housing need to 2036, identify a long-term strategy for development in the Dorchester area; and reappraise housing provision in Sherborne.
- 1.6 If a review is absent, or the Local Plan becomes silent or out of date because of a lack of progress, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies and the councils would have less control in determining where development goes. Failure to undertake a review or even start it promptly would be likely to increase the risk of developers submitting speculative planning applications at an early stage.
- 1.7 At the same time as the review is underway there are opportunities to clarify the interpretation of existing policies.

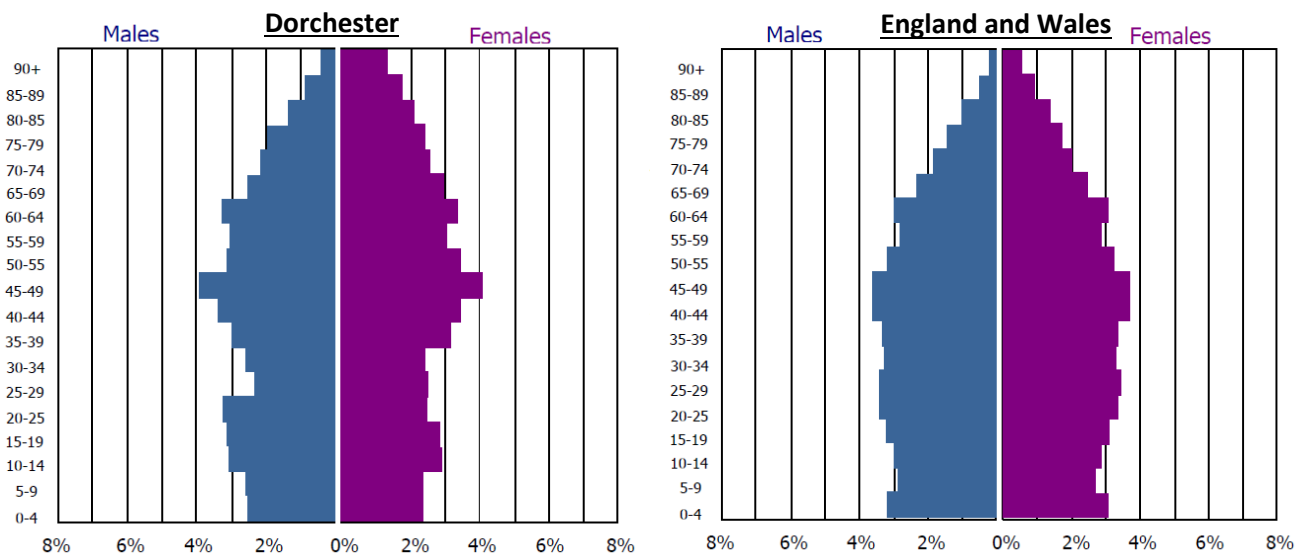
¹ <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/jointlocalplan/west/weymouth>

² <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/west-dorset-and-weymouth-portland-planning-policy/adopted-local-plan/adopted-local-plan-inspectors-report-west-dorset-weymouth-portland.aspx>

2. Dorchester in Context

- 2.1 Dorchester is the county town and an important service centre providing jobs and services for a wide hinterland. Consequently, the town relies on a much wider area (including both nearby villages and the town of Weymouth to the south) for its workforce and economic success.
- 2.2 The town has a population of 20,135³ and has rapidly grown over the past few years as a result of the development of Poundbury. This growth rate has improved the vibrancy of the town and is likely to continue for the coming years until development at Poundbury comes to an end.
- 2.3 The town currently also has around twice as many jobs (18,400) as economically active residents (9,165). Workers commute in from nearby towns (particularly Weymouth) and from the surrounding rural area. Two of the largest local employers are Dorset County Hospital and Dorset County Council, which between them employ around 50% of people working in Dorchester. There is a high level of need for more affordable housing in the town.
- 2.4 The population profile for Dorchester is similar to the national average although the 25-35 age group is less represented.

Figure 2.1: Population profile – Dorchester



- 2.5 Dorchester is the centre for many services and activities in the locality, including shopping, education, healthcare and library services. The town's leisure offer has grown considerably in recent years as a result of the development of Brewery Square.

³ 2016 mid-year population estimates

- 2.6 Dorchester has two railway stations. Dorchester South is on the Weymouth to London (Waterloo) line and Dorchester West is on the Weymouth to Bristol line.
- 2.7 The town centre has an attractive and healthy shopping core with low numbers of vacancies and a high level of demand registered from operators in the town. The area's Roman and pre-Roman heritage is a significant feature of the town.
- 2.8 Dorchester has a high level of in-commuting from other towns and villages across Dorset and has a particularly strong relationship with Weymouth. In 2011 Dorchester had 3,100 out-commuters and 10,900 in-commuters a net gain of 7,800 workers. The strongest relationship is with Weymouth and Chickerell from which approximately 3,560 workers commuted, conversely only 589 Dorchester residents work in Weymouth and Chickerell.

3. Background to the growth of Dorchester

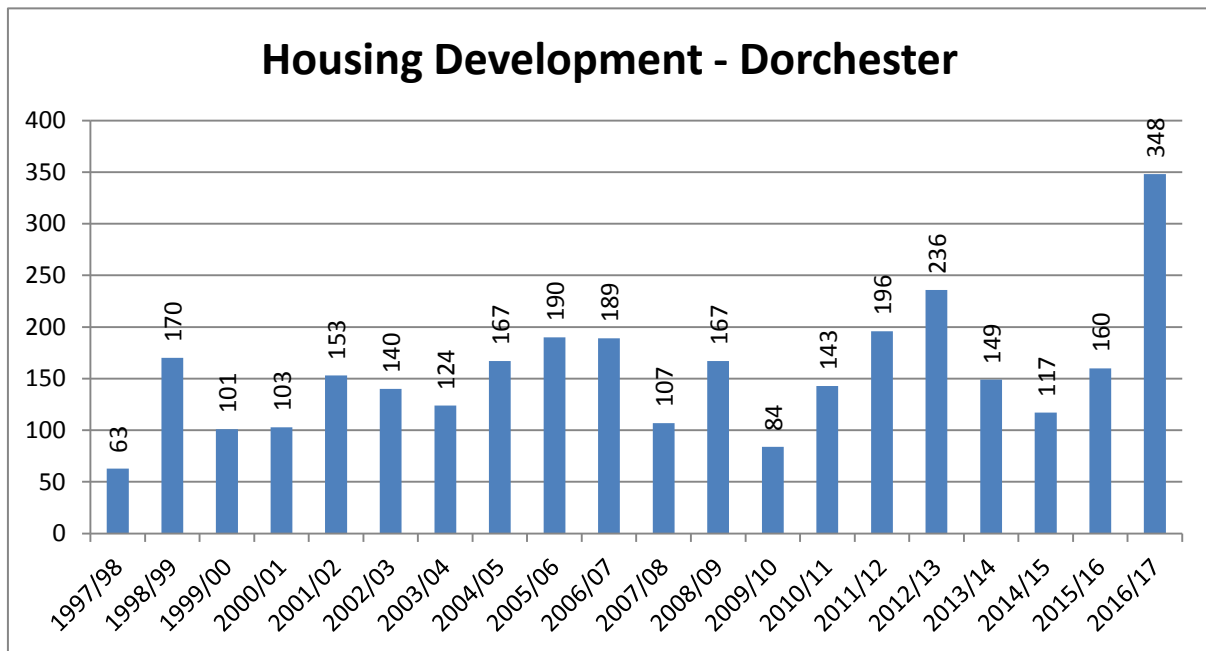
- 3.1 Between 1991 and 2011 the population of the parish of Dorchester has grown by around 26% from a population base of 15,100 persons. The most recent population estimates put the population of the town at 20,135 persons (2016 Mid-year estimates).
- 3.2 Over the past 19 years, approximately 3,100 dwellings have been built in the town. Figures 3.1 and 3.2 show how these dwellings have been delivered over time. With the local plan allocations at Poundbury, Land off Allington Avenue and Land at Land South of St George Street and the additional sites that have been granted permission in the town, it is anticipated that around 1,480 new dwellings will be built over the coming five-year period.

Figure 3.1: Housing Completions - Dorchester

YEAR	COMPLETED NEW DWELLINGS	AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMPLETIONS
1997/98	63	-
1998/99	170	-
1999/00	101	-
2000/01	103	-
2001/02	153	-
2002/03	140	-
2003/04	124	-
2004/05	167	-
2005/06	190	-
2006/07	189	-
2007/08	107	-
2008/09	167	-
2009/10	84	-
2010/11	143	61
2011/12	196	50
2012/13	236	25
2013/14	149	32
2014/15	117	44
2015/16	160	4
2016/17	348	12
TOTAL (since 2011)	1,206	167

Source: WDDC and WPBC

Figure 3.2: Housing Development in Dorchester



3.3 At the 1st April 2017, planning permission existed for a total of 1,368 dwellings around the town, all of which are expected to be delivered by 2022 with the exception of Poundbury, North & South Action Areas. The main sites are:

- Poundbury, 1,127 dwellings
- Brewery Square, Weymouth Avenue – 185 dwellings
- Dorchester Prison, 185 dwellings

3.4 Allocations in the adopted local plan at Land off Allington Avenue and Land South of St George Street are expected to contribute a further 100 dwellings. In addition, up to 2036, there are approximately 200 dwellings that could be delivered on smaller identified sites and an unidentified windfall of around 360 dwellings.

3.5 Dorchester has a reasonable record of affordable housing delivery since the beginning of the plan period and this is expected to continue through the delivery of development at Poundbury.

4. Current Local Plan for Dorchester

- 4.1 The adopted local plan identifies Dorchester and Weymouth the largest settlements and highest priority locations for new development. The approach in Policy SUS2 of the local plan indicates that a larger proportion of growth is to be directed towards the larger more sustainable settlements within the settlement hierarchy.
- 4.2 During its production, the adopted local plan considered a number of sites around Dorchester including:
- Land to the north of the water meadows - Mixed use urban extension, about 6,800 homes
 - Land to the south-east of the A35 - Mixed use urban extension, about 2,500 homes
 - Land to the west of the A37 - Mixed use urban extension, about 1,000 homes
 - Land off Allington Avenue / St Georges Road - Relatively small sites for housing or employment, about 100 homes
 - Poundbury Parkway Farm Business site extension - Small employment site of about 1ha
- 4.3 The Adopted Local Plan continues to rely on the Poundbury urban extension to provide a supply of homes, jobs and community facilities. The Local Plan promotes town centre regeneration through the development of Charles Street to extend town centre offer and the continued development of Brewery Square for new homes and retail stores. Sites of St George's Road and Allington Avenue are allocated for housing or employment uses and an extension to Parkway Farm offers further employment land. The Plan acknowledges that these sites provide development opportunities at Dorchester but fall short of meeting the needs of housing and employment towards the end of the Plan period.

5. Constraints

- 5.1 Dorchester is constrained by:
- the Dorset AONB;
 - the River Frome floodplain & SSSI;
 - scheduled ancient monuments primarily related to the town's Roman and pre-Roman heritage;
 - the Dorchester, Charminster and Stinsford Conservation Areas; and
 - Kingston Maurward Registered Park and Garden.

LANDSCAPE

- 5.2 National policy puts an emphasis on the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes. In particular, the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 stated that *"Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty."*
- 5.3 The Dorset AONB wraps around Dorchester on the towns western and southern sides. The Dorset AONB designation and management plan will need to be taken into account when considering strategic development options for the future expansion of the town. The town and its southern hinterland are located in the Dorchester Downs landscape character area. The open chalk uplands of the Dorchester Downs are characterised by large scale landscapes of rolling open hills and dry valleys with large agricultural estates mainly under arable production. The Valley Pasture to the north of Dorchester is a spate landscape character area with its own distinct identity.

HERITAGE ASSETS

- 5.4 In relation to the historic environment, the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 stated that local planning authorities should *"...recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance."*
- 5.5 Within Dorchester parish there are 293 structures that are listed by Historic England for their historic or architectural interest, including five that are listed Grade I and sixteen that are Grade II*.
- 5.6 The centre of Dorchester is a designated conservation area and further afield there are conservation areas in; Stinsford, Higher Kingston, West Stafford, Whitcombe, Winterborne St Martin and Bradford Peverell.

- 5.7 The village of Charminster is located to the north of Dorchester and has a further concentration of listed buildings and conservation area. Listed buildings include Grade I listed Wolfeton House and the Grade I listed Church of St Mary. Similarly Stinsford village to the northeast has a number of important listed buildings including St Michael's Church where the heart of Thomas Hardy is buried.
- 5.8 The site of present day Dorchester may have originally been a small garrison fort for the Legio II Augusta established shortly after the Roman conquest. When the military moved away, around AD 70, Durnovaria became a civilian settlement.
- 5.9 The town still has some visible Roman features, including part of the town walls, the foundations of a Roman town house and an aqueduct. There are also numerous buried roman features in and around the town.
- 5.10 Near the town centre is Maumbury Rings, a Neolithic henge converted by the Romans for use as an amphitheatre, and to the north-west is Poundbury Camp, another pre-Roman fortification. Maiden Castle, one of the largest Iron Age hill forts in Europe lies to the south of the town and the henge at Mount Pleasant lies to the east of the town.
- 5.11 Kingston Maurward Registered Park & Garden is situated about 2.5km east-north-east of Dorchester and immediately east of the village of Stinsford, to the south and east of the A35 road. The circa 96ha site comprises some 4ha of formal gardens and informal pleasure grounds, a circa 3ha lake, and circa 89ha of parkland. The formal gardens are situated to the west of the mansion, while informal pleasure grounds extend to the south and south-east. The parkland is situated to the north of the 18th century mansion and is in mixed agricultural use associated with the agricultural college that occupies the site.

BIODIVERSITY

- 5.12 National policy highlights the importance of designated wildlife sites and the need to provide net gains in biodiversity where possible. In relation to the hierarchy of designated sites The NPPF 2012 set out that "*Local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites or landscape areas will be judged. Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks.*"
- 5.13 The River Frome is the most westerly example of a major chalk stream in Great Britain. The SSSI section (Dorchester to Wareham) supports an aquatic and bankside vegetation which shows a downstream transition from a purely chalk stream community type to a lowland, mixed geology community in the lowermost

reaches. These plant communities are species rich compared with like communities on other rivers. The site also supports rare and scarce aquatic invertebrates, a characteristic assemblage of breeding riverside birds and a range of fish species which includes some of particular importance in a European context.

- 5.14 The Dorchester Riverside and Princes Plot, Charminster and Thorncombe Wood, Stinsford are designated Local Nature Reserves.
- 5.15 In addition to International and National designations there are several Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) a local designation.
- Maumbury Rings - Relict chalk grassland on steep slopes of an ancient monument
 - Haydon Hill – North/north-east facing slope of unimproved chalk grassland
 - Poundbury – An ancient earthwork of unimproved chalk grassland with some scrub
 - Higher Charminster Meadow – An area of hillside grassland with patches of scrub
 - Came Park – Landscaped park with lichen interest
 - Kingston Maurward Copse – A small deciduous copse alongside the river
 - Bincombe Tunnel – Chalk grassland and scrub bordering the railway line
 - Frome Meadows – A series of water meadows adjoining the River Frome
 - Maiden Castle – An area of unimproved and semi-improved chalk grassland with some scrub
 - Grey's Wood – A large deciduous woodland with a good ground flora and scarce butterflies
 - Thorncombe Wood – Mainly a deciduous woodland managed by DCC
 - Black Heath – Areas of heathland, mostly forestry clearings
 - Yellowham Wood – A large mainly deciduous woodland with a rich flora and butterfly populations

FLOOD RISK

- 5.16 National policy states that "*...development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk...*" through the application of the Sequential Test.
- 5.17 There is a large flood plain (Flood Zones 2 & 3) to the north of Dorchester associated with the River Frome. The South Winterbourne a tributary to the River Frome circles the town to the south.
- 5.18 There are a number of areas where ground water is particularly high including areas around Stadium Roundabout to the south of the town

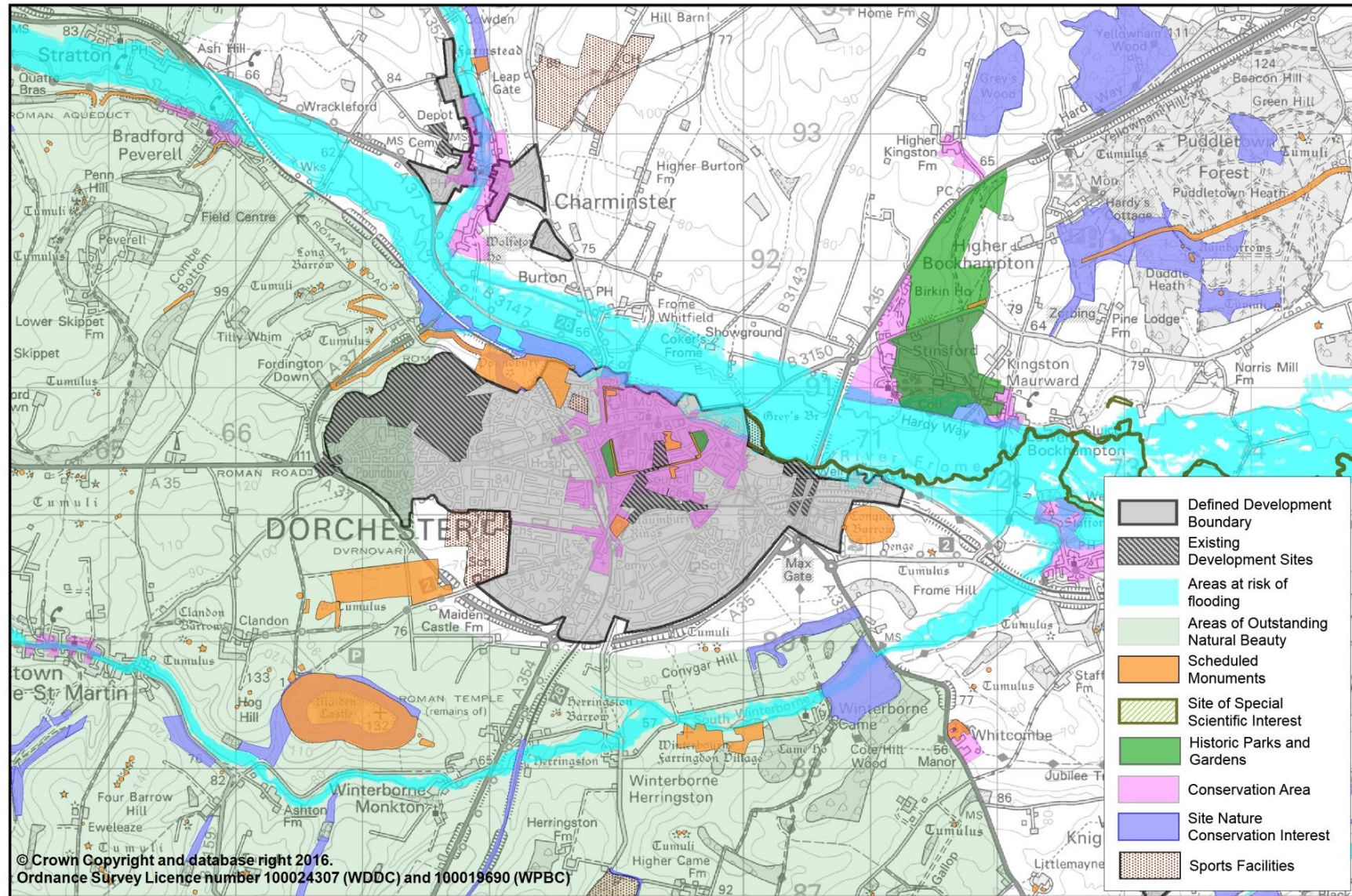
AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

- 5.19 Agricultural land is an important resource that needs to be managed in an appropriate way to underpin sustainable development. Agricultural land is important for the production of food, biomass, water storage and biodiversity.
- 5.20 National policy, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Policy Guidance indicates that agricultural land classification is a material consideration when making planning decisions and that development should be steered away from the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3).
- 5.21 The Planning Policy Guidance expands on the text within the National Planning Policy Framework stating that national policy "*...expects local planning authorities to take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. This is particularly important in plan making when decisions are made on which land should be allocated for development. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.*"
- 5.22 Land to the north of Dorchester in the Frome River Valley has been classified as Grade 4 agricultural land. There is a large pocket of Grade 2 agricultural land around Poundbury and north of Stinsford while the remaining land to Dorchester's west, south and east has been classified as Grade 3 agricultural land.

TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- 5.23 The access to everyday facilities by sustainable modes of transport is an important factor in considering the location of new development. One of the Core Planning Principles in the 2012 version of the NPPF that "*should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking*" was that planning should "*...actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable...*"
- 5.24 Dorchester has two railway stations; one is on the Weymouth to Waterloo line the other on the Weymouth to Bristol line. Bus services between Dorchester and the villages are inconsistent; some villages receive a good service and some have no buses at all.

MAP 1: ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS AROUND DORCHESTER



6. Opportunities

6.1 National policy (CD/OKP1) is clear that there are three dimensions to sustainable development, the economic dimension, the social dimension and the environmental dimension. Future growth at Dorchester will help:

Economic

- To support long term economic growth and job creation – including by providing homes for the necessary workforce;
- Diversify the town's economy;
- Act as a catalyst for improved service and facilities provision, strengthening the town's role as a centre for its wide hinterland;
- To maintain and improve the variety of shops in the town centre;
- Reinforce the town as a destination for tourists all year round;

Social

- To meet local housing need;
- Balance the level of jobs and homes to improve the town's self containment;

Environmental

- To improve transport infrastructure and reduce traffic congestion within the town;
- Enhance informal recreation opportunities around the town;
- Maintain the wider valued wildlife and the natural environment in Dorset by focusing growth at the town.

6.2 Across West Dorset the proportion of the population that are of working age is projected to decline significantly over coming years with the proportion for West Dorset expected to be around 49% by 2036.

6.3 The main implication of this change is the decline in the available workforce reducing the sustainability of the local economy overall. In addition the per-capita productivity is less than Dorset as a whole and less than nationally resulting in relatively low wages and low levels of investment in innovation.

7. Issues and Options Consultation

INSPECTOR'S COMMENTS ON GROWTH AT DORCHESTER

- 7.1 The inspector for the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Joint Local Plan considered it an *"imperative that an early review is undertaken to identify additional land"*. In reaching this conclusion, the inspector also indicated that *"a review will also provide an opportunity to consider growth options at Dorchester"*.
- 7.2 Opportunities for development at Dorchester are constrained by natural features, heritage and the town's setting in the landscape. The Inspector highlighted that considering growth options at Dorchester *"is a crucial, albeit difficult, matter for the Councils to resolve but one which it is vital to address when examining options for further growth."*
- 7.3 There is limited capacity within the town's physical boundaries of the bypass and River Frome. The inspector noted that *"Implementing options for development within existing town boundaries provides, at best, a short term solution to meeting future housing and employment needs."*
- 7.4 Development north of Dorchester was rejected during the preparation of the adopted local plan on the grounds of flooding and landscape impact. However the inspector stated that *"it is not obvious that other or better alternatives exist or indeed whether the Councils are committed to finding a solution to the longer-term expansion of the county town."* The Inspector concluded that allocating significant housing growth at Crossways was not *"a particularly sustainable option for meeting the longer term needs of the county town"*.
- 7.5 The Inspector modified the Local Plan to include a statement ensuring that "a strategy is in place to meet the long term development needs at or in the vicinity of Dorchester by 2021 and that a site or sites necessary for its implementation are identified as part of the review proposals."

APPROACH TO OPTIONS

- 7.6 In considering the future growth options at Dorchester the councils have undertaken an initial 360 degree search of all possible development site options around the town (Map 2). Unsuitable options have been discounted at an early stage through an initial site sieving exercise and sustainability appraisal.

MAP 2: BROAD AREAS OF SEARCH – DORCHESTER

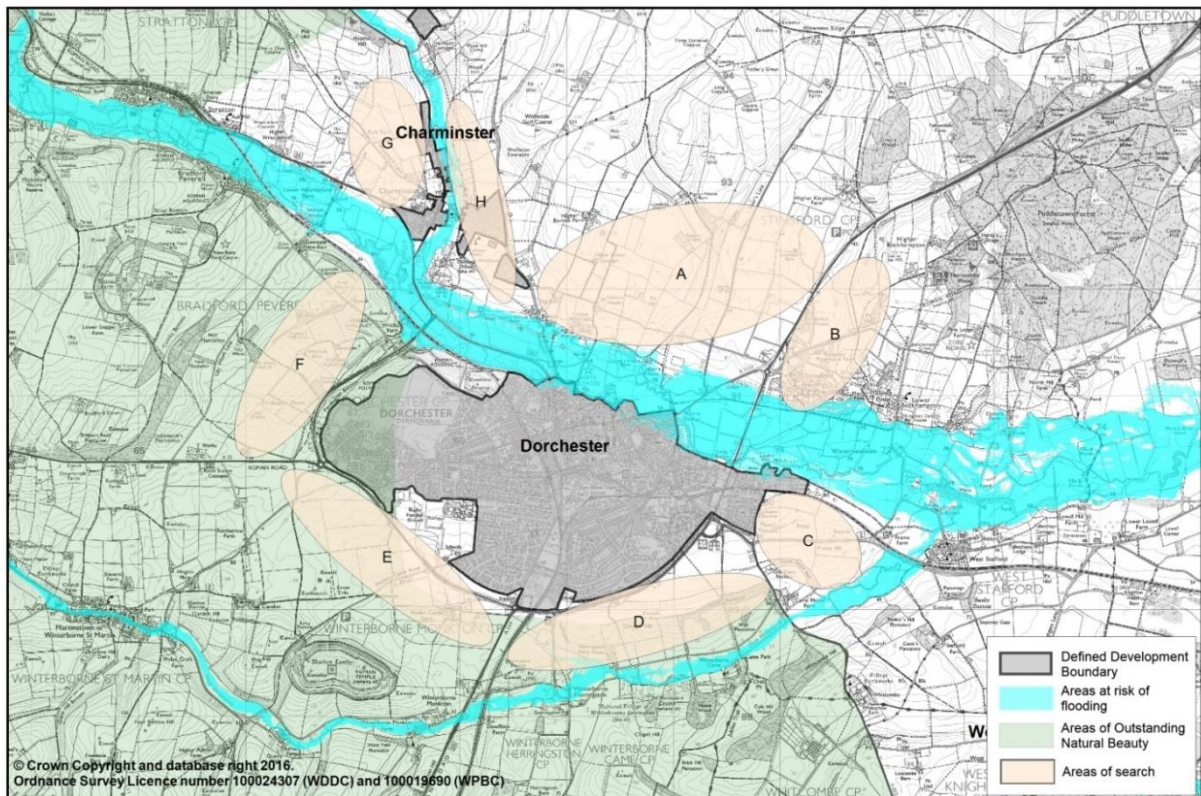


Figure 7.1: Details of each broad search area

AREA A - NORTH OF DORCHESTER	
Landscape	A substantial area with significant landscape and visual impacts upon the AONB landscape, both locally and at a wider scale. The site area is elevated and exposed, particularly to the north; characteristic of the chalk downland landscape.
Heritage	Evidence of field systems and chalk pits. Potential for impact on the setting of a number of heritage assets.
Biodiversity	Dorchester Riverside is a designated Local Nature Reserve.
Flooding	The land within the River Frome Flood Plain is located in Flood Zones 2 & 3. Above the 60 meter contour line the land falls within Flood Zone 1. There are several tendrils of surface water run off that follow several of the low lying valley's within the landscape.
Agricultural Land	Grade 4 agricultural land within the river valley, grade 3 agricultural land higher up the slopes and a large pocket of Grade 2 agricultural land to the north of Stinsford.

Transport	There is an opportunity to connect the A37 through to the A35 to create a northern distributor road for Dorchester. Development layout will need to consider the interconnection with the existing town centre and transport nodes (two train stations & bus network). To reduce reliance on cars and encourage a walkable environment, public transport facilities will need to be in place at the early stages of any development.	
Infrastructure	The area of search is on the edge of the existing settlement. There would be access to local services including schools, health facilities and retail.	
Other	None.	
Conclusion	Impacts on landscape, heritage assets and water quality will need to be addressed if this area is taken forward.	Some potential in this area (D1 South-East of Charminster, D2 North of Dorchester, west of Slyer's Lane & D3 North of Dorchester, west of A35)

AREA B – STINSFORD	
Landscape	The site option contains a steeply sloping valley that runs north / south. The land around high Bockhampton is more visually prominent.
Heritage	Kingston Maurward Park and Garden and World War 2 camp. Evidence of field boundaries and roman road.
Biodiversity	Thorncombe Wood is a designated Local Nature Reserve. Thorncombe Wood SNCI - Mainly a deciduous woodland managed by DCC. Kingston Maurward Copse SNCI - A small deciduous copse alongside the river. Black Heath SNCI - Areas of heathland, mostly forestry clearings.
Flooding	Land to the south of Stinsford is located in the River Frome flood plain. The north / south valley is prone to surface water flooding as well as the line of the A35.
Agricultural Land	Grade 3 agricultural land.
Transport	Development design will need to consider the interconnection with the existing town centre and transport nodes (two train stations & bus network). Development option would require direct access to the A35.
Infrastructure	The area of search is on the edge of existing settlement. There would be access to local services including schools, health facilities and retail.
Other	None.

Conclusion	Development is likely to result in unacceptable impacts on heritage assets, including Scheduled Monuments, Historic Park and Garden, and Conservation Area.	Little or no potential in this area – not taken forward
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AREA C - EAST OF MAX GATE

Landscape	The land to the east of Mount Pleasant is located on a higher spur of land.	
Heritage	Mount Pleasant a large Neolithic henge and two bowl barrows are scheduled ancient monuments. South of West Stafford road are a series of field boundaries and drainage ditches.	
Biodiversity	Frome River SSSI from south of Grey's Bridge, Dorchester to Wareham.	
Flooding	The site option is located in Flood Zone 1 although land to the north of the railway line and south of the 55 meter contour line along the South Winterborne Brook would be located in flood zones 2 & 3. There is an area of surface water flooding identified along the Came Withy Bed.	
Agricultural Land	Grade 3 agricultural land.	
Transport	Development layout will need to consider the interconnection with the existing town centre and transport nodes (two train stations & bus network). Development option would require enhancement of the West Stafford Road and connection to the A352.	
Infrastructure	The area of search is on the edge of the existing settlement. There would be access to local services including schools, health facilities and retail.	
Other	None.	
Conclusion	Development is likely to result in unacceptable impacts on the scheduled monuments within this area.	Little or no potential in this area – not taken forward

AREA D - SOUTH-EAST OF DORCHESTER

Landscape	Conygar Hill is a steep ridge that acts as a boundary line for the Dorset AONB which is located to the south. There is a low lying triangle of land between the A35 and A352 outside of the Dorset AONB. Land higher up	
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	the slopes of Conygar Hill would have a high landscape impact.	
Heritage	Evidence of chalk pits, historic field boundaries. There are two bowl barrows on Conygar Hill which are scheduled ancient monuments. Max Gate a Grade I listed building and the home of Thomas Hardy is located to the north of the area of search.	
Biodiversity	Came Park SNCI - Landscaped park with lichen interest. Bincombe Tunnel SNCI - Chalk grassland and scrub bordering the railway line.	
Flooding	The site option is largely located in Flood Zone 1 although there is some land in flood zone 2 & 3 at the sites western end. There is a line of surface water flooding that runs across the option from Shaston Crescent to Old Came Rectory at the sites eastern end and a further area of surface water flooding between the railway line and Herringston Road.	
Agricultural Land	Grade 3 agricultural land.	
Transport	Development layout will need to consider the interconnection with the existing town centre and transport nodes (two train stations & bus network). The development option would be best served by access onto the A352, rather than directly onto the Dorchester Ring Road (A35).	
Infrastructure	The area of search is on the edge of existing settlement. There would be access to local services including schools, health facilities and retail.	
Other	None	
Conclusion	Potential for some development on the north-eastern part of this area, adjacent to the bypass, avoiding the potential impacts on the Scheduled Monuments, Dorset AONB and SNCI.	Some potential in this area (D4 South-East of Dorchester)

AREA E - SOUTH-WEST OF DORCHESTER

Landscape	Land to the south and east of the A35 ring road is rolling countryside only broken by Maiden Castle. This option is largely located in the Dorset AONB. Land within the A35 ring road is located outside of the Dorset AONB and is well contained by the existing road.
Heritage	The area of search is located within the setting of Maiden Castle known primarily as an iron age hill fort a scheduled ancient monument. The remains of an extensive settlement, pits and field system considered likely to be of Iron Age/Romano-British date is also located in the area of

	search and a scheduled ancient monument.	
Biodiversity	Maiden Castle SNCI - An area of unimproved and semi-improved chalk grassland with some scrub.	
Flooding	The site option is within Flood Zone 1. There are several pockets of surface water flooding near Maiden Castle Farm and the remains of a settlement (North of Maiden Castle).	
Agricultural Land	Grade 3 agricultural land.	
Transport	Development layout will need to consider the interconnection with the existing town centre and transport nodes (two train stations & bus network). The development option would be best served by access either onto the A354 or A35 to the west of the Monkey Jump Roundabout rather than directly onto the Dorchester Ring Road (A35). Pedestrian trips into Dorchester may be best served using Maiden Castle Road.	
Infrastructure	The area of search is on the edge of existing settlement. There would be access to local services including schools, health facilities and retail.	
Other	None	
Conclusion	Potential for significant impacts on Dorset AONB landscape and heritage assets, though there are opportunities within the bypass.	Some potential in this area (D5 South-West of Dorchester within bypass)

AREA F - NORTH-WEST OF POUNDBURY		
Landscape	Land to the north and west of the A35 ring road is located in the Dorset AONB. The land slopes steeply down from Poundbury before being characterised by rolling open hills and dry valleys.	
Heritage	The Peverell group of Bowl Barrows and Long Barrow are scheduled ancient monuments. Remains of the Roman aqueduct are present, circa 12 miles in length, which brought water from the River Frome to Dorchester is a scheduled ancient monument. Poundbury camp a scheduled ancient monument is located on the edge of Dorchester within the by-pass. There is evidence of extensive enclosures and field systems.	
Biodiversity	Frome Meadows SNCI - A series of water meadows adjoining the River Frome	

Flooding	The site option is located within Flood Zone 1. There are some lines of surface water flooding running from Fordington Down and along the course of the A37.	
Agricultural Land	Grade 3 agricultural land.	
Transport	Development layout will need to consider the interconnection with the existing town centre and transport nodes (two train stations & bus network). The development option would be best served by access onto the A35 to the west of the Monkey Jump Roundabout rather than directly onto the Dorchester Ring Road (A35). Pedestrian trips into Dorchester may be best served using Poundbury Road or a new crossing.	
Infrastructure	The area of search is on the edge of existing settlement. There would be access to local services including schools, health facilities and retail.	
Other	None	
Conclusion	Potential for some development in the southern part of this area, avoiding the Scheduled Monuments on the northern part and impacts on the Dorset AONB.	Some potential in this area (D6 West of Poundbury)

AREA G - WEST OF CHARMINSTER

Landscape	Land between the A37 and A352 rises from Charminster village up towards Charminster Down forming an exposed slope with wider views to the south. This option is located outside of the Dorset AONB but has a strong connection with the designate landscape.	
Heritage	Evidence of strip fields and chalk pits.	
Biodiversity	None	
Flooding	The site option is located in flood zone 1. The River Frome flood plain to the south and River Cerne corridor to the options east are areas of flood zone 2 & 3. There are some small areas of surface water flooding at Park Farm within the centre of the site.	
Agricultural Land	Grade 3 agricultural land.	
Transport	Development layout will need to consider the interconnection with Charminster and the existing Dorchester town centre and transport	

	nodes (two train stations & bus network). Opportunity to enhance existing road access onto A35 via Soder Lane or North Street (A352) via Drake's Lane.	
Infrastructure	The area of search is on the edge of existing settlement. There would be access to local services including schools, health facilities and retail.	
Other	None.	
Conclusion	Potential for impacts on water quality in this area.	Some potential in this area (D7 West of Charminster)

AREA H - SOUTH-EAST OF CHARMINSTER

Landscape	The northern half of the option rises steeply from the River Cerne forming a western facing ridge. The land slopes up towards Wood Hill and Charlton Down. The southern end of the option is lower lying but generally rises in a northerly direction from the low point of the River Frome.	
Heritage	Charlton Down and Charminster Conservation Areas. Evidence of medieval field systems. Remains of the Medieval settlement a scheduled ancient monument, part of the hamlet of Burton and Military Camp, Broken Cross.	
Biodiversity	Prince's Plot, Charminster is a designated Local Nature Reserve. Higher Charminster Meadow SNCI - An area of hillside grassland with patches of scrub	
Flooding	The higher land within the site option is located within flood zone 1. The River Cerne & Frome and their flood plains are located within flood zones 2 & 3. There are small areas of surface water vulnerability within Charminster village along many of the roads.	
Agricultural Land	Grade 3 agricultural land with some Grade 4 agricultural land on the slopes of above the River Cerne.	
Transport	Development layout will need to consider the interconnection with Charminster and the existing Dorchester town centre and transport nodes (two train stations & bus network). The development option would be best served by access either onto the North Street (A352) and / or Westleaze.	
Infrastructure	The area of search is on the edge of the existing settlement. There would be access to local services including schools, health facilities and retail.	

Other	None.	
Conclusion	Potential for some development on the southern part of this area, avoiding impacts on the Scheduled Monument and SNCI to the north.	Some potential in this area (D1 South-East of Charminster)

REFINED OPTIONS

- 7.7 Having considered the constraints and opportunities associated with each broad area, a refined set of development options have been identified. These areas formed the basis for the Issues and Options consultation for the future growth of Dorchester.
- 7.8 The refined options shown in Map 3 have been identified as possible options for growth at Dorchester that merit further consideration. For each option an indicative level of development has been calculated and initial considerations on the delivery of each have been identified. This detail is included in Figure 7.2.

MAP 3: REFINED OPTIONS FOR GROWTH AT DORCHESTER

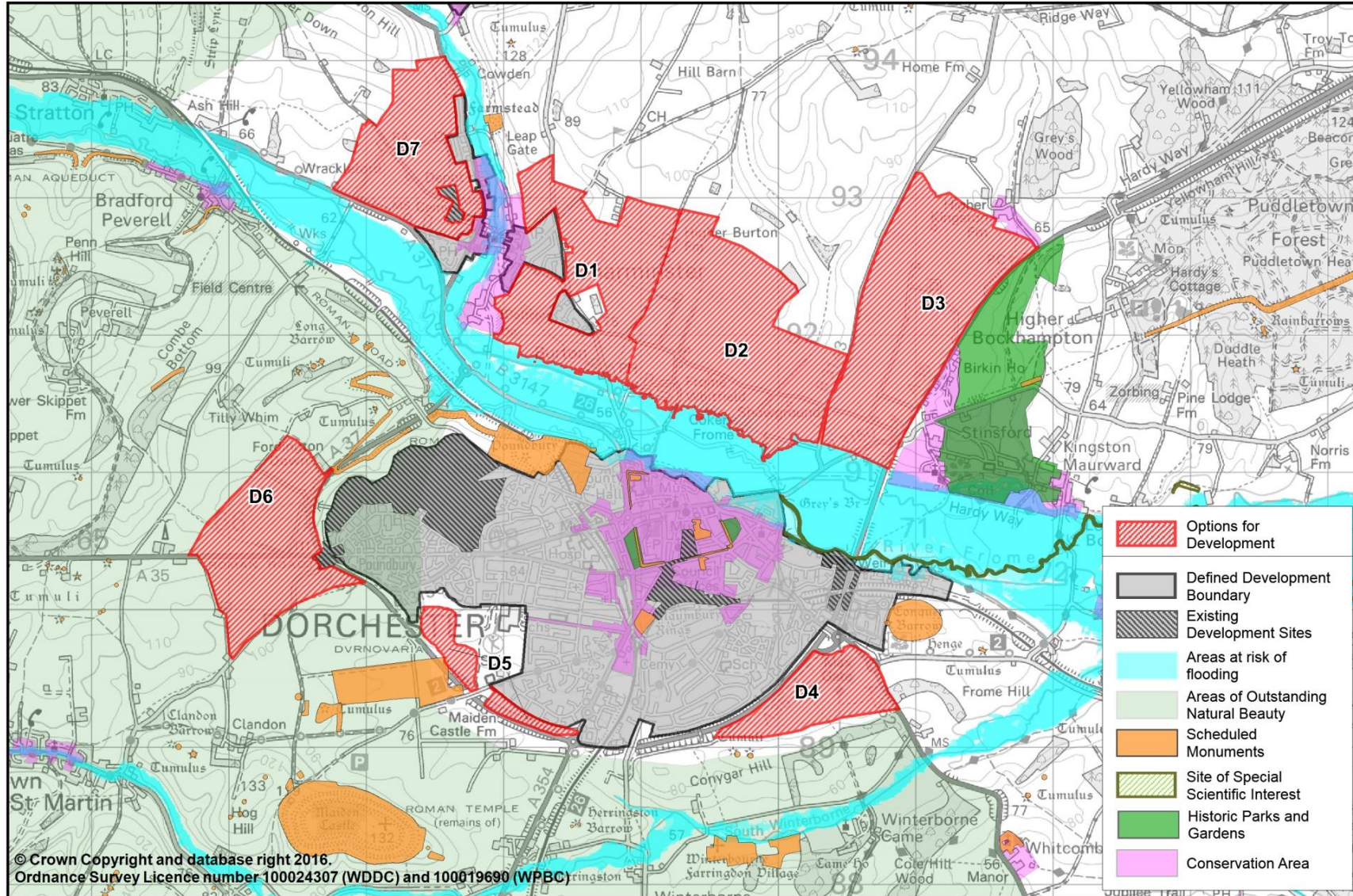


Figure 7.2: Details of refined options for growth at Dorchester

REFINED OPTION	CAPACITY / MAIN USE	DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS
D1: South-East of Charminster	2,100 homes Residential	<p>This option is located on the south east of Charminster on either side of Westleaze Road and is contained by the flood plain to the south and west. There is no clear boundary to the east and therefore the option should not be considered in isolation but should be considered in the context of other northern Dorchester options.</p> <p>The area is not subject to fluvial flooding however there may be a risk of surface water flooding associated with the lower lying areas of the site and any resulting built form.</p> <p>The site option will have major implications in respect of the A35(T). Concerns as to the likely impact of the proposal upon the local highway network and deliverability of the footway and cycle links to the Town Centre across the flood plain and highway links to the existing network. Existing routes e.g. Higher Sherborne Road / junctions also have capacity constraints. A northern strategic link road through the development is required to take traffic to and from the A37 and A35(T).</p> <p>There are small scale opportunities to distribute development around the existing Charminster urban form however larger scale development will likely have a harmful landscape impact.</p> <p>The site options could impact on the Charminster Conservation Area and listed buildings. This will need to be considered in particular impact on Little Court and structures associated with Wolfeton House listed buildings.</p> <p>The majority of the site area is currently designated as safeguarded mineral within the Minerals Strategy (adopted 2014). The MPA would wish to be consulted further should this site progress.</p>
D2: North of Dorchester, west of	3,200 homes Residential	<p>This site option is located north of Dorchester and west of Slycer's Land on land north of the River Frome flood plain. There is no clear boundary to the west and therefore the option should not be considered in isolation but should be</p>

REFINED OPTION	CAPACITY / MAIN USE	DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS
Slyer's Lane		<p>considered in the context of other northern Dorchester options.</p> <p>The site option is located on higher ground and is likely to have a negative landscape impact. Pigeon House Copse on the sites north eastern edge is ancient woodland.</p> <p>The area is not subject to fluvial flooding however there may be a risk of surface water flooding associated with the lower lying areas of the site and any resulting built form.</p> <p>The site option will have major implications in respect of the A35 Trunk Road. Concerns as to the likely impact of the proposal upon the local highway network and deliverability of the footway and cycle links to the Town Centre across the flood plain and highway links to the existing network. Existing routes e.g. higher Sherborne Road / junctions also have capacity constraints. A northern strategic link road through the development is required to take traffic to and from the A37 and A35.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to potential impact on the wider setting of Dorchester Conservation area.</p> <p>The majority of the site area is currently designated as safeguarded mineral within the Minerals Strategy (adopted 2014). The MPA would wish to be consulted further should this site progress.</p>
D3: North of Dorchester, west of A35	3,000 homes Residential	<p>This site option is located North of Dorchester and west of the A35 on land north of the River Frome flood plain. The site option is located on higher ground and is likely to have a negative landscape impact.</p> <p>The area is not subject to fluvial flooding however there may be a risk of surface water flooding associated with the lower lying areas of the site and any resulting built form.</p> <p>This site option is located in a sensitive historic context with potential for impacts on Dorchester, Higher Kingston Farm and Stinsford Conservation Areas as well as Kingston Maurward Registered Park and Garden. There is also potential impact on nearby listed buildings in particular Birkin House, Stinsford Cottages and milestone on</p>

REFINED OPTION	CAPACITY / MAIN USE	DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS
		<p>Stinsford Hill.</p> <p>The site option will have major implications in respect of the A35 Trunk Road. Concerns as to the likely impact of the proposal upon the local highway network and deliverability of the footway and cycle links to the Town Centre across the flood plain and highway links to the existing network. Existing routes e.g. higher Sherborne Road / junctions also have capacity constraints. A northern strategic link road through the development is required to take traffic to and from the A37 and A35.</p> <p>The majority of the site area is currently designated as safeguarded mineral within the Minerals Strategy (adopted 2014). The MPA would wish to be consulted further should this site progress.</p>
D4: South-East of Dorchester	850 homes Residential	<p>This site option is located in the south western corner of Dorchester to the south of the Max Gate junction of the A35(T). The site option sites in a low lying triangle of land that has a lower landscape impact than the higher ridges to the south.</p> <p>The area is not subject to fluvial flooding however there may be a risk of surface water flooding associated with the lower lying areas of the site (consider ponding & impoundment) and any resulting built form.</p> <p>The site option is located in close proximity to listed buildings - Max Gate and Old Came Rectory</p> <p>This site option has been previously assessed during the preparation of the adopted Local Plan and identified as having a trunk road (A35) impact. There will be junction improvement needed. The site will need to consider pedestrian and cycle access to the town centre and in particular bridging A35.</p> <p>There is no conflict with safeguarded mineral areas.</p>
D5: South-West of Dorchester within	350 homes Residential	<p>The site options are located within the Dorchester bypass and are therefore well contained in the wider landscape. The impact of development on nearby residents should be considered.</p>

REFINED OPTION	CAPACITY / MAIN USE	DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS
bypass		<p>The area is not subject to fluvial flooding however there may be a risk of surface water flooding. Consideration should be given to off site flooding downstream. There are particular ground water issues at Celtic Crescent.</p> <p>The site option will need to link to existing town services by bring forward pedestrian and cycle facilities. Access from Maiden Castle Road and Weymouth Avenue should be explored. Proximity of new access to Stadium Roundabout would need further assessment.</p> <p>There is no conflict with safeguarded mineral areas.</p>
D6: West of Poundbury	1,000 homes Residential	<p>The site option is located to the west of Dorchester outside of the ring road and either side of the A35. The site option is located within the Dorset AONB and any impact on Maiden Castle would need to be carefully assessed.</p> <p>There are no abnormal flooding or surface water concerns.</p> <p>In respect of sustainable transport provision this site option is not favoured due to severance caused by the bypass, and detrimental impact on Monkey's Jump Roundabout. Consideration would also need to given to pedestrian, cycle, bus links. A crossing from the development to the town would need to be of high quality.</p> <p>No conflict with safeguarded mineral.</p>
D7: West Charminster	1,550 homes Residential	<p>The site option is located to the northwest of Charminster between the A37 and A352. The site option is located on a south facing slope would need further assessment to determine landscape impact.</p> <p>The site options impact on the setting of Charminster Conservation Area and listed buildings in Charminster should be considered.</p> <p>The site option will have major implications in respect of the A35 Trunk Road. Concerns as to the likely impact of the proposal upon the local highway network and deliverability of the footway and cycle links to the Town Centre across the flood plain and highway links to the existing network. Existing routes e.g. higher Sherborne Road / junctions also have capacity constraints.</p>

REFINED OPTION	CAPACITY / MAIN USE	DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS
		<p>The area is not subject to fluvial flooding however there is significant offsite flooding risk to the east.</p> <p>The majority of the site area is currently designated as safeguarded mineral within the Minerals Strategy (adopted 2014). The MPA would wish to be consulted further should this site progress.</p>

- 7.9 As Dorchester is heavily constrained and there are limited options for development without crossing the physical constraints of the bypass or the water meadows of the River Frome, there will need to be a decision made about the level of growth to be planned for at this point in time. If a lower level of growth is to be planned for, individual options could be taken forward in this plan. However, if a longer-term decision about the direction of growth is to be made at this stage which would require larger-scale growth, a combination of site options will need to be considered. For example D1, D2 & D3 could be developed as a larger scale development to the north of Dorchester. Alternative combinations could see the expansion of Charminster by bringing forward D1 & D7. The potential advantages of making a longer-term decision are that there is greater certainty about where future growth will take place, longer term infrastructure needs can be considered and the direction of growth will be established for future reviews of the local plan.
- 7.10 Inevitably different combinations of sites will have distinctive infrastructure requirements. Large scale development would require more significant infrastructure such as schools and roads where as smaller scale development would deliver less infrastructure. In addition, there may be a need to deliver land to accommodate employment uses to support additional jobs.
- 7.11 At this stage, no commitment is being made to the development of any individual or group of options. Information about the potential development options is being sought. Additional work will need to be undertaken to further refine site suitability and fully establish infrastructure requirements as well as constraints to development such as landscape or heritage impacts.

8. Issues and Options Consultation Responses

8.1 The Issues and Options consultation provided an opportunity for stakeholders and the public to give their views on the development options. Ten public consultation events were held between 20th February and 9th March 2017. It is estimated that 1,172 people attended these events.

LOCATION	DATE	ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE
Sherborne	20 February 2017	92
Weymouth	21 February 2017	72
Portland	23 February 2017	48
Charminster	24 February 2017	244
Dorchester	27 February 2017	86
Beaminster	28 February 2017	105
Lyme Regis	1 March 2017	54
Bridport	2 March 2017	127
Crossways	7 March 2017	230
Chickerell	9 March 2017	114
Total		1,172

8.2 As part of the consultation, 153 responses were received that related to Dorchester. A summary of the responses received for each of the questions asked are set out below.

7-i. Dorchester has grown at an average rate of 175 new dwellings each year over the last 5 years. Should we plan for a lower level of growth, maintain that level of growth, or take a strategic longer term view for the growth of the town?

COMMENTS RECEIVED ON QUESTION 7-I

8.3 The most prevalent view expressed was that a long term strategic approach to managing development was the best approach. There were considered to be limited sites within the existing built up area and therefore greenfield expansion would be necessary. A longer term strategic approach would help to maintain the

- vitality, viability and function of the county town and seen as the most appropriate way of managing the growth within the constraints that exist around the town.
- 8.4 It was suggested that the town was the most sustainable settlement within the area and therefore a suitable location for development. The approach of longer term strategic development was given support by Natural England, Highways England and the Town Council.
- 8.5 Development seen as a route to tackling the affordability issues that exist in the town which currently force families to live in less expensive, more peripheral locations around the area. A priority was therefore seen as the delivery of more housing for families and more affordable housing.
- 8.6 The need for further growth was considered to be inevitable but it was seen as essential that any development was accompanied by the necessary infrastructure. To this end several comments suggested the strategic approach should be guided by a long term forward looking vision for the town.
- 8.7 It was suggested that a balance of site sizes is needed to provide short, medium and longer term options and to bring a range of housing products onto the market and have less of an impact. Reliance on long-term options can lead to a shortfall in supply. It was however also suggested that housing growth does not necessarily regenerate a town.
- 8.8 A smaller number of responses suggested that development rate should be maintained at the current rate and a few responses suggested a reduced rate. The main reasons for these two opinions were similar and related to the need for the impact of Poundbury to 'bed down' over the coming years. It was suggested that growth should be at the rate that meets the towns needs and should be properly evidenced. The growth rate should be influenced by the availability of land rather than purely on past delivery.
- 8.9 The main concerns raised related to the increase in traffic that would result from development and the need for additional jobs for the new population particularly in the light of public sector cuts. There was also a concern about the appetite of central government to fund essential infrastructure. Securing the necessary infrastructure through developer contributions was seen as having the knock on effect of reducing affordable housing provision.
- 8.10 Further comments raised concerns over the degradation of Dorchester's character through poorly designed, large scale development. An important character of Dorchester is the surrounding countryside and nearby smaller settlements. The character of these should be respected. There was however also a suggestion that settlements in the vicinity of Dorchester should grow in their own right with Charminster and Crossways specifically mentioned in this respect.

HOW THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

- 8.11 As the Local Plan review progresses, consideration will be given to the level of growth appropriate for the town. Generally, strategic infrastructure is easier to deliver through larger coordinated developments however there is also a need to have a range of smaller sites to maintain the supply of housing and to provide a range of different housing products for the local market. For Dorchester, there are a number of larger pieces of infrastructure needed to enable growth. This would lead towards a larger scale of development rather than solely relying on smaller sites within the existing settlements.
- 8.12 The current local plan chapter for Dorchester includes a vision for the future of the town. This vision will be updated, taking on board the relevant elements of Dorchester Town Council's vision and the views expressed through consultation on the Local Plan. Large scale future development at the town will be guided by this vision and by a separate place making vision for the development site. It will also need a development masterplan to set out the parameters for and guide the development of the site.
- 8.13 Comments suggesting that there was a need for infrastructure to accompany development are correct. There is an established need for new schooling for the town and the existing junctions on the A35(T) are often congested at peak times. Other infrastructure will also be necessary to support growth in the area.
- 8.14 The countryside around Dorchester is an attractive feature of the town as are the heritage assets within the town itself. If the town is to be successful in the longer term, any development will have to be planned to be successfully accommodated within this character and designed to complement the existing town. It should also respect the identity of the existing villages whilst enabling them to grow.
- 8.15 There is an acute need for affordable housing in the town as house prices are higher in the town than in many surrounding villages and Weymouth. The result is that many people who work in the town live in less expensive areas and commute into the town. Addressing this issue through housing development and the provision of more affordable housing will help people to live closer to their place of work.

7-ii. Are there any issues related any of the site options that are not mentioned here?

COMMENTS RECEIVED ON QUESTION 7-II

- 8.16 There were seven separate options around Dorchester that formed part of the consultation. The key messages from the consultation for each site are

- summarised below. Where comments have been received on groups of sites (eg Sites D1, D2, D3 and D7) these have been grouped together.
- 8.17 Several comments raised did not specifically relate to any of the sites but were of a more general nature. The more general comments repeated several of the points made under Question 7-i including the need for nearby villages to grow in their own right and the need for a comprehensive masterplan for the town.
- 8.18 General comments highlighted the character of the town and surrounding countryside. One of the town's valued features was its relative compact nature with ease of access to the surrounding open countryside. The water meadows were seen as a natural barrier which constrained the town to the north whilst the bypass to the south was considered a man-made barrier. The water meadows were also seen as a significant opportunity which could be secured as a publically accessible wildlife corridor connecting Charminster to Kingston Maurward. Flooding associated with downstream settlements was a concern.
- 8.19 The heritage associated with the town and surrounding countryside was highlighted as a constraint but also an asset. There are a number of historic houses and associated parks around the town which are reflected in Hardy's novels – the area is of international renown. The heritage around the town should be considered in a strategic way to enhance the appreciation of it. There should be a focus on asking what future development can deliver for Dorchester through the enhancement of the town's heritage.
- 8.20 It was suggested that the characteristics of the area, settlements nestled in valley bottoms with either expansive rolling hills or small scale and therefore sensitive to large scale development. Extending development northwards onto higher land would have a greater landscape impact.
- 8.21 Although there is limited capacity within the existing built up area, it was suggested that the Territorial Army barracks on Poundbury Road and other brownfield sites could be developed. There was however concern over the loss of any town centre car parking.
- 8.22 To help with the provision of jobs and skills, it was suggested that employment land should be provided as part of any development site and that links between developments and Kingston Maurward should be exploited.
- 8.23 In relation to transport, it was highlighted that existing traffic has a detrimental impact on the town and that this should be mitigated through any new development including a focus along the railway lines that feed the town. It was suggested that the scale of development necessary to fund the required highways mitigation may result in a significant landscape impact. The master planning of

growth in the area will help to tackle many of the transport issues including the creation of walkable neighbourhoods within any development sites.

- 8.24 It was suggested that development around the town should be aimed at meeting the needs of local people as a priority rather than for attracting retirees. A range of house types and sizes are necessary for families, downsizers and for first-time buyers.
- 8.25 Historic England suggested a focus on existing sites within the bypass and at Charminster appear to be the most suitable in heritage terms. It was also suggested that development at Crossways should be considered as an alternative to the environmentally constrained sites at Dorchester.
- 8.26 A suggestion of an area of search of villages within 6 miles of Dorchester would be appropriate along with recognition of the links between Dorchester and Weymouth. Other comments suggested that an approach that sought to enlarge villages would be a poor option especially with the lack of facilities and public transport.

NORTH DORCHESTER – SITES D1, D2, D3 AND D7

- 8.27 With the North Dorchester area, comments were received about the area as a whole rather than the separate areas suggested as development options. Comments received on these four areas have therefore been grouped together except for some comments which were specifically concerned with are D7.
- 8.28 Concern was expressed about the impact of development in this area on various heritage assets within and in the vicinity of the option. Historic England specifically highlighted the possible impact on Kingston Maurward park and garden, the impact on the Hardy Landscape including Hardy's birthplace and Stinsford Church and especially the areas flanking the A35(T).
- 8.29 The heritage impact not only includes the designated heritage assets but also those non-designated assets (such as the Hardy Landscape and the areas of historic significance around Frome Whitfield House), buried assets (such as the Neolithic remains and abandoned medieval settlements) and the setting of these. It was suggested that the design of any development of this area would need to incorporate heritage considerations within the scheme.
- 8.30 The historic water meadows were highlighted as an important asset with their role as part of the sharp transition between the town and countryside being particularly valued. It was suggested that an urban park in this location would be detrimental to the character of the area.
- 8.31 On top of the numerous historic features of the area, the landscape was seen as sensitive. The scale of the site when taken as a whole was considered likely to increase the appearance of the town from within the AONB. Views from within the

- AONB should be protected. A landscape led masterplan was therefore considered important to mitigate this impact. The design would need to use the natural features of the area (undulations in the landscape, trees, hedgerows, copse, etc.) to minimise the landscape impact.
- 8.32 It was suggested that development should not take place on the lower slopes south of 'Cockers Frome Lane' to preserve the connection of farmland with the water meadows. This separation would result in a separate North Dorchester settlement but it was also considered as an important part of the open space associated with any development, linking the water meadows to the town.
- 8.33 If the area was to be considered as a whole, it was considered that the villages of Charminster and Stinsford should be kept separate to maintain their separate identity. The open views of the countryside from within Dorchester were considered important feature worth preserving.
- 8.34 Transport concerns related to the ability of the existing road network to cope with the additional traffic arising from any development. Particular concerns included East Hill, Charminster; High Street, Dorchester; Slyer's Lane / Cockers Frome Road; and both the Sherborne top (C12) and lower (A352) Roads and the associated listed structures and conservation areas.
- 8.35 Dorset County Council as the Highways authority highlighted the need for a link road between the A35(T) and the A37 to relieve pressure on the town's bypass and to offer alternative routes for traffic passing through the town heading towards Yeovil.
- 8.36 It was also highlighted that there would be a need to include public transport, footway and cycle links to the existing town to offer alternative to car use. Minimising car use into the town was considered difficult to achieve but would lessen the impact on existing town centre car parks and help improve air quality.
- 8.37 Flooding was a concern with a fear that flood risk downstream would be increased as would pollution of the river as a result of surface water runoff. The impact on the boreholes in the area was raised as was the loss of high grade agricultural land and the need for sand and gravel extraction.
- 8.38 It was highlighted that larger sites can be more difficult to deliver than smaller sites however it was also pointed out that delivery of larger infrastructure items are easier through bigger developments. The master planning of any development was seen as essential in this respect. Responses highlighted the need for additional provision of doctors, schools, shops and employment space. There was also concern over the loss of the informal recreation space associated with the area.
- 8.39 The river corridor area is currently used for recreation and for tourist walks; this would be altered by development. It was also seen as an important asset for

biodiversity and an opportunity for enhancement as a result of development. The water meadows could become a high quality nature reserve and offer enhanced recreation opportunities.

- 8.40 Other points raised included concern over the size and type of housing, the potential for urban sprawl and the impact on nearby ancient woodlands and the River Frome. It was suggested that there was some capacity within the Kingston Maurward College estate for small scale development to facilitate the long term future and expansion of the college and help to deliver economic growth.

WEST CHARMINSTER – SITE D7

- 8.41 Comments specific to the option West Charminster (site D7) raised similar points to that for North Dorchester (sites D1, D2, D3 and D7) as set out above. However some comments were specific to the West Charminster option and are detailed here.
- 8.42 The area to the west of Charminster was considered likely to have a greater impact on the AONB than areas within the North Dorchester option with particular concern raised about the higher ground that forms the ridge between the rivers Frome and Cerne.
- 8.43 There was concern about increased traffic and road safety through the village. Generally there was some support for development of West Charminster as long as the separate identity of the village was maintained the necessary infrastructure was provided.

HOW THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

- 8.44 To inform the selection of preferred options, evidence has been gathered to identify the sensitivity to development of the historic environment and the landscape. More detail on the results of this evidence assessment, and the need for further detailed assessments, are included in Section 9 of this paper. The heritage and landscape considerations are written into policies for the development of sites around the town. Master planning of the site will necessarily reflect the heritage and landscape sensitivities of the area with a view to minimising the impact.
- 8.45 For the North Dorchester and West Charminster area, landscaping could include the reinforcement of existing cops and small woodlands in and around the site, planting of new copse and woodlands to strengthen these landscape features, the planting of trees throughout the built form (e.g. along streets within the development) and the retention of the existing significant hedgerows and trees.
- 8.46 It is important to note that heritage assets cannot be recovered once they are lost. It is therefore important that the masterplan is informed by a detailed assessment of the heritage present and associated with the site. This is particularly important due to the tourist economy associated with the Hardy Landscape.

- 8.47 In relation to transport, a transport model has been produced to assess the impact of the development on the existing road network and to highlight where road improvements are necessary. The development of North Dorchester and West Charminster would need to include significant pedestrian, cycle and public transport infrastructure to minimise the use of private cars. Transport mitigation will be developed in coordination with the Highways Authority and Highways England.
- 8.48 Within any development proposal, there would be a need to avoid areas at risk of fluvial flooding and incorporate measures to manage surface water flows; development of North Dorchester and West Charminster would be no exception to this. Similarly, it would be necessary to provide infrastructure as part of the development including new school provision, open space, health care provision employment space and shops.
- 8.49 A policy reflecting the aspirations of Kingston Maurward College will be developed alongside the college and recognising the sensitive historic estate that the college sits within.

SOUTH EAST OF DORCHESTER – SITE D₄

- 8.50 The landowner of the option suggested South East of Dorchester indicated through the consultation that there was no intention to see the site developed at this point in time. This option will therefore not be deliverable and therefore cannot be included as a preferred option.
- 8.51 Comments and concerns raised about this site included a need for the very sensitive historic environment and landscape to be fully understood before development was proposed. This includes an understanding of the interrelationship within the landscape of the scheduled monuments within the site and those nearby, the links between significant listed buildings in the vicinity of the site (Cam Rectory and Max Gate House) and the links with Hardy and the tourist economy of the area.
- 8.52 There was concern raised due to the site being on the outside of the bypass and the fact that any development would be severed from the town necessitating new linkages across the bypass for pedestrians and cyclists. The existing Max Gate junction on the A35 would also need to be reconfigured. The impact on traffic through nearby villages was also a concern as was the impact upon wildlife.

HOW THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

- 8.53 As the area is not available, the site has not been proposed as a preferred option for development.

SOUTH WEST OF DORCHESTER WITHIN THE BYPASS – SITE D5

- 8.54 This option is in two parts; the landowner has indicated that the norther part is not available for development but that the southern part (known as the Castle Park strip) is available. Additional land was suggested for development along the eastern edge of Thomas Hardy School playing fields. It was pointed out that as these area is a relatively small piece of land, it is readily deliverable to complement larger development sites. The focus is therefore on the Castle Park Strip area.
- 8.55 The main comment about the Castle Park Strip related to groundwater flooding. It was stated that currently, groundwater is pumped away from the area on a regular basis to reduce the risk of flooding to existing properties in the area. If development was to take place, it would be likely to make this situation worse. This position was confirmed by Dorset County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority.
- 8.56 Other comments received suggested that as the area was contained by the bypass, it would be a natural expansion of the town however traffic along Weymouth Avenue and within the Castle Park estate is an existing issue.

HOW THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

- 8.57 As the area to the north is not available, the site has not been proposed as a preferred option for development. Similarly due to the flooding issues associated with the Castle Park Strip, to which there is currently no workable solution available, this option is not proposed as a preferred option for development.
- 8.58 The area adjacent to Thomas Hardy School, a relatively small area capable of delivering around 50 new dwellings and additional facilities for the school, does however have some potential. Due to the size of the development and its close relationship to the school, this has not been proposed as a preferred option as development proposals could be considered under the policies in the adopted local plan.

WEST OF POUNDBURY – SITE D6

- 8.59 The land to the West of Poundbury sits on a relatively high and prominent piece of land within the AONB either side of the A35 Bridport Road and outside of the Dorchester bypass. To the south is Maiden Castle and to the north are a number of scheduled monuments including the remains of Dorchester’s Roman Aqueduct. Due to its visibility within the landscape Historic England, Natural England and the Dorset AONB all objected to the development of this site in line with national

policy. It was suggested that development of the site would have a significant deleterious effect on Maiden Castle, on the nearby scheduled monuments and other features within the AONB.

- 8.60 Other comments received highlighted the distance from the site to the town but noted that there were some facilities at Poundbury. It was suggested that would be a logical extension to Poundbury however the bypass would also act as a barrier to pedestrians and cyclists.

HOW THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

- 8.61 Due to the likely significant impact on the landscape and on the historic environment of development in this location, the site has not been proposed as a preferred option for development.

7-iii. What are the infrastructure requirements for the development of the site options, individually or in combination with others?

COMMENTS RECEIVED ON QUESTION 7-III

- 8.62 Comments about infrastructure provision around Dorchester were often more about infrastructure provision for the town more generally rather than site specific. Where site specific comments were made, they related to the North Dorchester option only. General points were made that a more comprehensive approach to development was more likely to deliver the necessary infrastructure rather than piecemeal development. Concern was however expressed over the amount of infrastructure likely to be needed early in the development of a site to support the growth of the town including schools, roads and health services.
- 8.63 A recurring theme in comments about how development could take place related to the need for a comprehensive and robust master planned approach especially should the North Dorchester development take place. It was seen as a requirement that development should tackle some of the existing problems within the town such as the environment of High East/West Street; public transport and parking provision; improved cycling and walking opportunities; links between High East/West Street, South Street and Brewery Square and an overall reduction in traffic congestion.
- 8.64 It was suggested that a masterplan for the development of North Dorchester should tackle issues including:
- the quality of the buildings;
 - open spaces and their management;
 - how buildings and open space come together to create unique places;
 - built form in relation to history, culture and landscape;

- provision of services;
 - economic and financial realities;
 - affordable housing;
 - housing to meet differing needs;
 - the urban form;
 - local vernacular and materials;
 - links to Dorchester; and
 - community services
- 8.65 Specific points raised included the need for enhanced recreation opportunities around the town including linkages with the sensitive historic environment and landscape, making the most of these as opportunities for people to enjoy. These features should however not be harmed by the development.
- 8.66 A specific area where infrastructure was considered necessary was highways / transport. The following elements were mentioned in responses to the consultation:
- Mitigation of impact on the A35(T) junctions;
 - A link between the A35(T) and A37;
 - Regular cheap public transport around the expanded town
 - Parking provision in the town centre
 - Clear and convenient pedestrian and cycle links to the existing town
- 8.67 It was also suggested that pedestrian and cycle links across the water meadows would be difficult to achieve successfully especially in winter.
- 8.68 It was highlighted that any development would need to be nitrogen neutral to minimise the impact on Poole Harbour. The creation of a high quality nature reserve along the Frome Valley floodplain will help to preserve the heritage, wildlife and recreational value of the area as well as provide space for flood mitigation.
- 8.69 Several comments suggested that schools in the town were at capacity and increased provision would be necessary. This view was confirmed by Dorset County Council. It was suggested that the lack of higher and further education opportunities has led to an under representation of young people in the town and this could be addressed.
- 8.70 The County Council also highlighted the need for contributions towards new waste facilities to serve the town including a new waste transfer facility and household recycling centre.

HOW THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

- 8.71 It is accepted that due to the scale of development possible at Dorchester, and the need to consider growth at the town for the longer term, that a masterplan is

essential. The requirement for development to be in accordance with a masterplan will be written into policies for the town.

- 8.72 Due to the sensitive nature of the areas around Dorchester, there will be areas that cannot be developed due to the presence of heritage assets or due to landscape impact. These areas have the potential for formal and informal recreation and offer opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.
- 8.73 The need for improvements to the highway network is acknowledged and a transport model has been produced to evaluate exactly what improvements are necessary to support development. In addition to highway improvements there will be a need to ensure that good cycle and pedestrian links are created between development sites and the existing town.
- 8.74 Flooding in and around Dorchester occurs from a number of sources including the rivers Frome, Winterborne and Cerne and from high ground water levels. In addition, surface water flows during heavy rainfall can increase flood risk. Areas that are known to flood will be avoided and surface water flows will be mitigated through an on-site deliverable drainage strategy.
- 8.75 As the existing schools in the town are at capacity, any new development will need to make provision for schooling. The County Council have identified a preferred approach of delivering this new school provision as a new 10ha school campus.
- 8.76 Dorset County Council as the Waste Authority have indicated that there is a need for contributions towards improved waste facilities at the town including the provision of a reconfigured or new household recycling centre. It would be possible for a new site to be provided within a new development site especially a development of scale.

9. Evidence Gathering

- 9.1 To support the selection of preferred options, evidence has been gathered to investigate further relevant issues. A summary of the results of the evidence is included here.

THE JOINT RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL LEISURE STUDY

- 9.2 The Joint Retail and Commercial Leisure Study was produced for the councils by Carter Jonas and published in March 2018. It included a health check of each town within the plan area and projected forward the need for additional retail floorspace to 2036.
- 9.3 Within the town of Dorchester, the assessment identified Dorchester town centre and Poundbury Queen Mothers Square District Centre as 'town centres' in planning terms. Dorchester town centre sits at the top of the retail hierarchy alongside Weymouth and should therefore be the focus for retail development to serve Dorchester. Poundbury Queen Mothers Square sits lower in the hierarchy as a secondary focus for retail development within the town. There were no local centres identified in Dorchester.
- 9.4 The healthcheck of Dorchester town centre concluded that the town centre is a vital and viable centre and it has benefited from recent investment. The Key strengths and weaknesses included:
- The towns historic character and museums
 - The pleasant environment
 - A below average vacancy rate
 - Having good range of non-food stores and banks
 - The leisure provision Brewery Square
 - Relatively poor linkages between Brewery Square and Primary Shopping Area
- 9.5 The assessment made recommendations on the definition of the primary and secondary shopping frontages, the primary shopping area and the town centre boundary. These definitions have been included as preferred options for consultation.
- 9.6 The projection of future retail needs for the town indicated that there was limited need for large scale food (convenience) shopping capacity however there was need for additional non-food (comparison) shopping capacity. National policy indicates that the projected needs, set out in Table 9.1, should be met in full.
- 9.7 The assessment also looked at potential sites for meeting this projected need. The three development opportunities considered were:
- Acland Rd Car Park, Charles St

- Trinity St Car Park
- Fairfield Car Park

9.8 It was also noted that these three sites currently provide the bulk of town centre parking, something that is important to the future success of the town as a destination. If parking provision was to be lost as a result of new town centre development, it would be likely that alternative arrangements and additional provision would be necessary across the whole town centre.

9.9 The main issues identified with the Acland Road, Charles Street site was the presence of archaeology under the site. As a result, the developable area is likely to be reduced lending the site to convenience (food) retail provision and car parking.

Table 9.1: Projected food and non-food retail capacity need.

	2026	2036
CONVENIENCE (FOOD)	365 m ²	570 m ²
COMPARISON (NON-FOOD)	3,305 m ²	6,860 m ²

9.10 The Trinity Street car park was found to have a number of potential issues. The site's configuration does not lend itself to large format retail provision especially as there is limited frontage onto Trinity Street itself. The inclusion of a number of listed buildings within the site and its location within the conservation area restrict capacity. There are also unstable ground conditions which would increase development costs. It is likely that this site would provide limited additional retail space and would most likely serve the town centre better as a car park.

9.11 The Fairfield car park site is on the edge of the town centre and therefore the Acland Road and Trinity Street sites are sequentially preferable for town centre development. The site is the largest of the three options and adjacent to Brewery Square. The weekly market is held every Wednesday on the part of the site closest to the town centre. For the site to be developed, the existing uses would need to be relocated. This includes the weekly market and associated café, Dukes Auction House and the 500 or so car parking places.

9.12 The Fairfield car park could however have a negative impact on the existing town centre due to its location away from the current main chopping area. The draw of trade to the south, along with the draw associated with Brewery Square, may have a negative impact on the uses at the northern end of South Street/Cornhill. Further work will be necessary to assess the potential impact should development take place at Fairfield.

9.13 To minimise any impact on the existing town centre, the Preferred Options consultation document suggests that the Acland Road, Charles Street and Trinity Street sites should be developed before any development takes place on the

Fairfield car park unless the scale of development need could not be accommodated on these sequentially preferable sites due to the site-based constraints.

STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE AND HERITAGE STUDY

- 9.14 A Strategic Landscape and Heritage Assessment has been produced to look at the sensitivity of the landscape and historic environment to development. The assessment looks at the areas around the main towns where development will be focused.
- 9.15 The assessment was undertaken in two stages. Stage 1 looked at broad areas at a high level as an independent review of the areas considered at the Issues & Options consultation stage. This stage recommended which areas did not warrant more detailed assessment and areas that needed further more detailed assessment at Stage 2.

Table 9.2: Stage 1 – Broad Areas not taken to Stage 2

BROAD SEARCH AREA CODE & NAME	NOTES
Scoped out on landscape/heritage grounds	
B: Stinsford	The whole of this area is excluded on heritage grounds.
C: East of Max Gate	The whole of this area is excluded on heritage grounds.
D: South-East of Dorchester	The majority of this area is excluded on both landscape and heritage grounds.
E: South-West of Dorchester	The majority of this area is excluded on both landscape and heritage grounds.
F: North-West of Poundbury	All of this area is excluded on heritage grounds.
H: South East of Charminster	Part of this area is excluded from further assessment on landscape grounds. This is the area of steeply sloping land to the north of Charminster.
Scoped out on other grounds	
E: South-West of Dorchester	Part of this area is excluded as due to recreational use.

- 9.16 The Stage 2 assessment looked in greater detail at the refined areas and concluded on their sensitivity to development. For each refined area, the key landscape and heritage sensitivities were identified along with guidelines for development.

Table 9.3: Stage 1 – Broad Areas taken forward to Stage 2

BROAD SEARCH AREA CODE & NAME	NOTES
A: North Dorchester	The whole of this area is to be taken through to Stage 2 assessment. Stage 2 Area Dorchester 1.
B North and South of Bockhampton Cross	This is an alternative area located immediately to the east of the original Broad Search Area. Stage 2 area Dorchester 2.
D: South-East Dorchester	A small part of this area is to be taken through to Stage 2 assessment. This is the flat land adjacent to the A35. Stage 2 area Dorchester 3.
E: South-West of Dorchester	A small part of this area is to be taken through to Stage 2 assessment. This is the area of land inside the arc of the A35. Stage 2 area Dorchester 4.
G: West of Charminster	The whole of this area is to be taken through to Stage 2 assessment. Stage 2 area Dorchester 5.
H: South East of Charminster	Two parts of this area are to be taken through to Stage 2 assessment. The first is the area south of Charminster; the second is the flatter area of land immediately to the north of the settlement. Stage 2 area Dorchester 6.

- 9.17 The headline conclusions from the stage 2 assessment categorised the sensitivity of the Landscape and Heritage of each area to development. These are shown in Table 9.4.
- 9.18 The key sensitivities within the Dorchester 1: North Dorchester area include the prominent sloping landform and sense of openness, the views to the landmark buildings within Dorchester and further afield to the AONB. The importance of the area to the setting of Dorchester's conservation area, to Poundbury Camp, Kingston Maurward Registered Park & Garden and Stinsford conservation area were highlighted as significant.
- 9.19 Within Dorchester 2: North and South of Bockhampton Cross, the key sensitivities include locally valued ancient woodland linked to the strong hedgerow network

and the influences of the Kingston Maurward Registered Park & Garden and Stinsford conservation area.

Table 9.4: Stage 2 headline results

STAGE 2 AREA NAME	LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY RATING	HERITAGE SENSITIVITY RATING
Dorchester 1: North Dorchester	M-H	H
Dorchester 2: North and South of Bockhampton Cross	M-H	M-H
Dorchester 3: South-East Dorchester	M	H
Dorchester 4: South-West of Dorchester	L-M	M-H
Dorchester 5: West of Charminster	M-H	M
Dorchester 6: South and East of Charminster	M-H	M-H

- 9.20 The key sensitivity issues for the Dorchester 3: South-East Dorchester are the sense of containment provided to the existing limits of Dorchester and the open views across the town. In heritage terms, the existence and interaction of the nearby scheduled monuments are of significance as are the important links between Max Gate and Old Came Rectory.
- 9.21 For area Dorchester 4: South-West of Dorchester, the key sensitivity relates to the nearby heritage assets however the relatively sub-urban feel of the area reduces this area's sensitivity. Within part of the site is an area designated as a Scheduled Monument.
- 9.22 The area Dorchester 5: West of Charminster covers an area of prominent slopes within the landscape which provide setting to the historic core of the village including the setting of the conservation area. The area is also relatively open in character.
- 9.23 The area Dorchester 6: South and East of Charminster is characterised by a sloping and visible landform which contributes to the setting of the Charminster conservation area and has a strong indivisibility with Dorchester conservation area and the AONB. The area provides an important separation between Dorchester and Charminster. Development in the southern part of this area would result in harm to designated heritage assets including Poundbury Camp. There are also medieval field systems in the northern part of the site which would constrain development.

STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT – LEVEL 1

- 9.24 The strategic flood risk assessment assessed the risk from all sources of flooding across the plan area. The report was primarily a desk based assessment and is accompanied by a series of maps showing the flood risk from all assessed sources. This report has been used to help inform site selection and policy writing for the preferred options document.

SPORT AND LEISURE FACILITIES NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 9.25 This study provides a detailed assessment of the current provision of indoor and built sports facilities for West Dorset identifying needs and gaps in provision. It also provides detail as to what exists across the plan area, its condition, location, availability and overall quality and considers demand for facilities based on population distribution, planned growth etc.
- 9.26 The evidence underpinning the assessment will be used to both identify and justify the provision of developer contributions across the area.

DORCHESTER TRANSPORT MODEL

- 9.27 During Spring 2017 Dorset County Council collected traffic data to enable an update to the SATURN model for the town. One of the reasons for updating the model was to enable the testing of development options around the town and to ensure that this testing was as robust as possible. In addition, the Highways England Paramics model was updated to enable prediction of flows at the junctions of the A35(T).
- 9.28 Once the model had been prepared, the baseline growth level was added to give the position should no further development be allocated to Dorchester. This Baseline Growth Scenario (SC₀₀) included all known development sites that either had planning permission or were allocated within the adopted Local Plan.
- 9.29 On top of the Baseline Growth Scenario, additional scenarios were tested. These scenarios were:
- Scenario 1 (SC₀₁): a total of 7,700 additional dwellings are allocated in the Dorchester Area (comprises 3,500 north of Dorchester, 1,150 at Charminster, 100 within Dorchester urban area, 1,600 at Moreton / Crossways and 850 within the Weymouth / Portland / Chickerell area)
 - Scenario 2 (SC₀₆): a total of 6,600 additional dwellings are allocated in the Dorchester Area (comprises 3,500 north of Dorchester, 550 at Charminster, 100 within Dorchester urban area, 1,600 at Moreton / Crossways and 850 within the Weymouth / Portland / Chickerell area) with the North Dorchester development being accessed via a new junction off of the A35(T).

- Scenario 3 (SCo6_5A): is a modification of SCo6 with the development being accessed via a five-arm Stinsford Roundabout.
- Scenario 4 (SCo6_BP): is a modification of SCo6 with the development being accessed via a the new junction on the A35(T) plus a northern bypass.

9.30 The main conclusions that can be drawn from testing these options are:

- The introduction of the North Dorchester development with the connecting link road (Scenario 2) generally reduces delays
- Accessing the North Dorchester development via a five-arm Stinsford Roundabout increases delays around the development and on the existing network
- The inclusion of a northern bypass reduces delays on the network except on the A37 approach to Monkey's Jump Roundabout.

9.31 Further work is necessary to establish a full package of highways measures to adequately mitigate the impact on the local and strategic road network. This will include amendments to existing junctions and the inclusion of a new connecting route between the A35(T) and the A37. The form of this route will be established through this modelling work and will be included in the submission version of the Local Plan.

10. Changes to National Policy and Guidance

- 10.1 Since the adoption of the Joint Local Plan in October 2015, there have been a number of changes to National Policy. Some of these changes are in effect and influence how decisions are made now and others were in draft form at the point of preparing the Preferred Options document for consultation. The changes, relevant to the selection of preferred options for Dorchester are outlined here.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK 2018

- 10.2 Due to the physical constraints that exist around Dorchester, there is a need to consider either small scale growth over the coming years or larger development to meet the longer term growth of the town. In referring to the delivery of housing, the NPPF 2018 suggests that: *"The supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities."*
- 10.3 It then goes on to highlight a number of items that should be considered when planning for such large scale schemes. These include:
- b) ensure that their size and location will support a sustainable community, with sufficient access to services and employment opportunities within the development itself (without expecting an unrealistic level of self-containment), or in larger towns to which there is good access*
 - c) set clear expectations for the quality of the development and how this can be maintained (such as by following Garden City principles), and ensure that a variety of homes to meet the needs of different groups in the community will be provided*
 - d) make a realistic assessment of likely rates of delivery, given the lead-in times for large scale sites, and identify opportunities for supporting rapid implementation*
- 10.4 The NPPF 2018 also highlights the importance of smaller sites in maintaining the supply of housing.
- 10.5 Paragraph 11 and Footnote 6 of the NPPF 2018 highlights that: *strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless: i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area.* The policies referred to where development should be restricted relevant to Dorchester include those relating to designated SSSI, AONB, designated heritage assets and areas at risk of flooding.

- 10.6 In addition to direct impacts on these designated areas, impact on the setting of heritage assets and on the setting of the AONB needs to be minimised as does the impact on designated SSSI.

11. Preferred Options Consultation

- 11.1 The responses to the Issues and Options consultation along with the evidence gathered and changes to National Policy have helped to establish the preferred options for the Local Plan Review.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 11.2 As part of the Issues and Options Consultation, six potential development areas were considered. As a result of this consultation, and through consideration of the evidence collected, some areas are not considered suitable for development at this point in time. The areas ruled out along with a summary of the reasons are:
- **D4: South-East of Dorchester:** Significant impact on historic environment, provides containment of the existing town within the landscape. Landowner indicates that the site is no longer available for development.
 - **D5: South-West of Dorchester within bypass:** For the northern part of this site, the landowner has indicated that the land is no longer available for development. The Southern part of this area suffers from high groundwater levels. National policy indicates that development in areas at high risk from flooding should be avoided and therefore this area has been discounted.
 - **D6: West of Poundbury:** This area is prominent within the AONB, within the setting of Maiden Castle, Dorchester's Roman Aqueduct and other nearby heritage assets. Development of this area would have a significant impact on the AONB and on heritage assets and therefore has been rejected.
- 11.3 The remainder of the sites have been considered further as a coordinated larger scale development to provide for the longer term needs of the town. There are however a number of concerns associated with these areas which have helped shape the policy for the area. The issues highlighted for the future growth of Dorchester as part of the Issues and Options consultation include:
- The need for a link between the A35(T) and the A37 to facilitate any further growth at Dorchester
 - The sensitive landscape around much of the town especially the areas to the south and west designated as AONB
 - The sensitive historic environment especially the numerous scheduled monuments (such as Maiden Castle and Poundbury Camp), the conservation areas of Dorchester, Charminster and Stinsford, the numerous listed structures and Kingston Maurward Registered Park & Garden. There are also a number of non-designated heritage assets which are of importance including the literary associations with Thomas Hardy.
- 11.4 The sites that warranted further consideration are:

- D1: South-East of Charminster:
- D2: North of Dorchester, west of Slyer's Lane
- D3: North of Dorchester, west of A35
- D7: West Charminster

11.5 Sites D1, D2 and D3 were considered together as a single larger allocation due to their interconnectivity. By considering these areas as a larger single site, a more coordinated and comprehensive approach could be taken.

PREFERRED OPTIONS

11.6 Within the Preferred Options consultation document, the existing allocations were carried forward and updated to reflect the position as at 1 April 2017. In addition, a policy allocating the former Dorchester Prison for residential development was included to reflect the extant consent on the site.

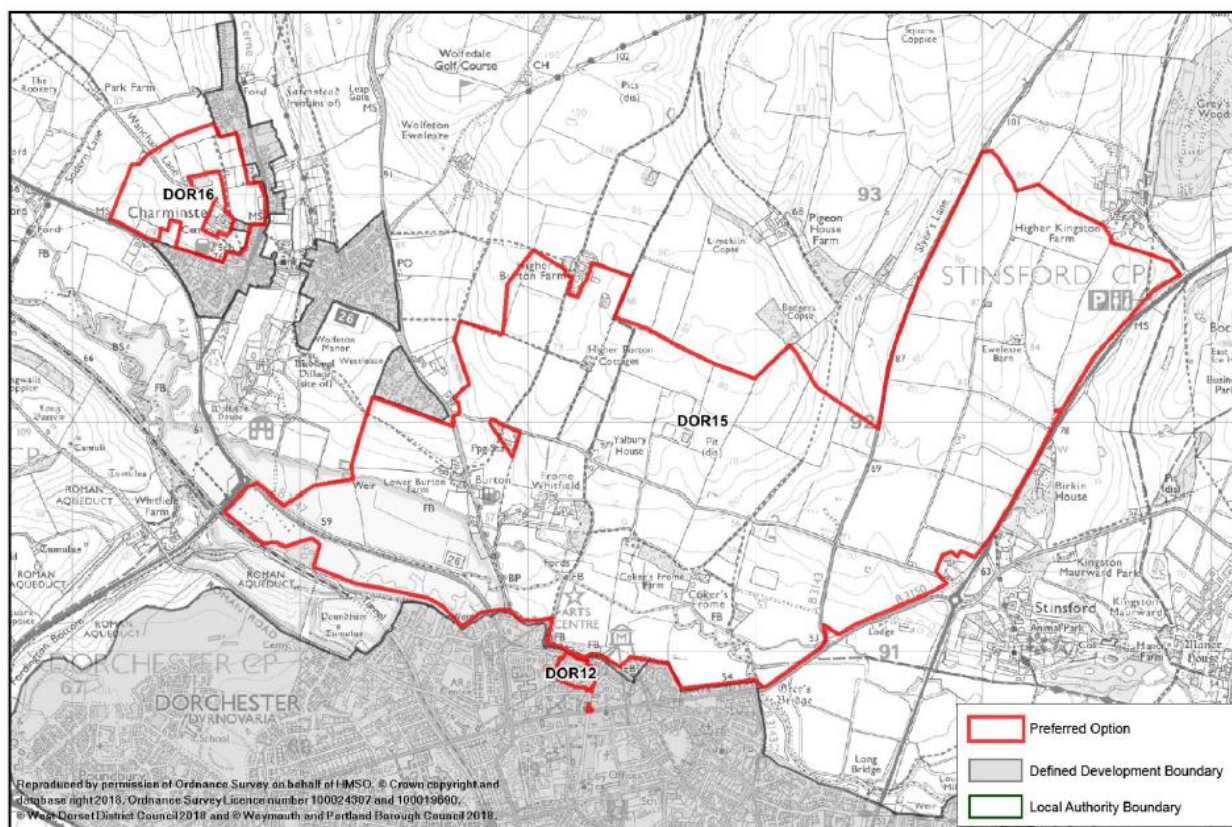
11.7 In response to the Issues & Options consultation and in further discussions, Kingston Maurward College have signalled their intent to expand their education provision within their estate. The college estate is however home to a number of listed buildings, the Kingston Maurward Registered Park & Garden and partly within the Stinsford conservation area. A policy (DOR13) has been presented to enable the expansion of the college within these heritage constraints and in accordance with an agreed masterplan.

11.8 The Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has commenced a review of the way healthcare across Dorset is provided. This will have an impact on Dorset County Hospital and will require modernisation and reconfiguration of existing facilities. Part of the hospital campus was occupied by the recently vacated Damers First School which offers an opportunity for development. A masterplanned approach to development within the hospital campus is supported through a new policy (DOR14). This prevents retail development due to its location away from the existing town centre and the likely detrimental impact retail development may have on the existing centre.

NORTH DORCHESTER AND CHARMINSTER

11.9 The land to the north of Dorchester is being suggested as the preferred option for accommodating growth in the Dorchester area. The allocation is anticipated to deliver around 3,500 dwellings and covers the area from the A35(T) stretching towards Charminster and from the northern edge of Dorchester northwards. In addition, an area to the west of Charminster is allocated and anticipated to deliver around 320 dwellings. The boundaries of the North Dorchester and West Charminster Preferred Options sites are shown in Figure 11.1.

Figure 11.1: North Dorchester and West Charminster Preferred Option



- 11.10 In preparing the currently adopted local plan, the North Dorchester area was considered as an option for the future growth of the town. It was not taken forward primarily due to the cost of infrastructure, landscape and heritage impacts and due to the availability of alternative development options that were considered more suitable.
- 11.11 As part of the local plan review, the North Dorchester area (including sites to the West of Charminster) has been reconsidered and as a result, a number of issues have arisen that will need to be tackled as part of the sites development. It has been realised that the site has significant capacity for development as a large extension to the town. The possible scale of development increases its complexity as the impacts and infrastructure requirements become wide-ranging. For this reason, the preferred options policy requires a comprehensive approach to the site’s development and commits to the production of a masterplan. A similar approach to place-making has delivered positive benefits for the town through the development of Poundbury.
- 11.12 The overall vision for the development of the site will be as a stand alone development that links closely to Dorchester and is dependent on Dorchester for many of its higher level services such as comparison (non-food) retail and

healthcare. The main issues for growth at Dorchester that have been identified through the analysis and evidence gathering include:

- **Heritage:** The rich heritage around Dorchester includes a number of designated and non-designated assets of significant importance to the town. These include assets from the pre-Roman era, from the Roman era and more modern features such as the former designed landscaping at Frome Whitfield House. In addition the connections with Thomas Hardy are of importance to the town both culturally and for the town's tourist economy. These assets should be seen as opportunities for enhancing the character of the development with the development form responding to the historic context within which it sits.
- **Landscaping:** Due to the proximity of the site to the AONB and the topography of the land as it rises above the River Frome, there is a need for a comprehensive approach to landscaping. The policy suggests extensive tree planting along streets to break up the urban form and to mirror that which exists within Dorchester itself. It is also suggested that additional copse planting should be incorporated within the development to further break up the urban form in long distance views.
- **Highways Infrastructure:** Junctions along the length of the town's bypass are at or near capacity in their current form. It will therefore be necessary for improvements to the junction to enable development. The transport modelling work undertaken for the Dorchester area has highlighted the need for a link road between the A35(T) and the A37 to help relieve pressure on the bypass. Further work will be needed (in conjunction with Highways England) to develop a comprehensive package of mitigation measures to enable the development to take place without causing significant detriment to the existing road network.
- **Green infrastructure:** The areas associated with the water meadows are at risk of fluvial flooding and hence is not developable. These areas are also important for wildlife and contain many non-designated heritage assets including the designed landscape around Frome Whitfield House and links with Thomas Hardy. The main areas of green infrastructure associated with the water meadows are therefore likely to become a local nature reserve offering enhanced public access as well as areas for wildlife. In addition, flood risk can be mitigated through the incorporation of features within the green infrastructure that can manage the flow of surface water. To enable this, the 'dry valleys' that run through the area have been deliberately identified as not developable.
- **Other Infrastructure:** As part of the development there will be a need for further school provision across all three tiers of schooling (first, middle and high). The County Council's preferred approach to delivering this is through a new 10

hectare school campus. In addition, new healthcare facilities will be necessary however the exact for of this provision will need to be informed by Dorset CCG and Dorset County Council Adult Social Care. There will be a need for some employment space to be created within the development including provision of convenience retail space in the form of a small supermarket to meet the day to day needs of the future residents. Upgrades will be necessary to the town's sewerage network to meet the needs of the development.

- 11.13 The areas to the West of Charminster are likely to be developed in the short to medium term but should adhere to many of the principles of the North Dorchester site. Separate policies have been developed for the two areas.

CONSULTATION

- 11.14 The Preferred Options consultation provides an opportunity for stakeholders and the public to give their views on the preferred development options. The questions relating to Dorchester are set out below. After the consultation process has ended, this background paper will be updated with a summary of the responses.

DOR15. LAND NORTH OF DORCHESTER (PREFERRED OPTION)

- i) **Land to the north of Dorchester will be developed in accordance with a masterplan produced for the site.**
- ii) **The development will form a mixed use extension to the town delivering around 3,500 new homes, at least 10ha of employment land, and additional school provision for 4 forms of entry across the three tiers of First, Middle and High schooling.**
- i) **A road link between the A35(T) at Stinsford Hill to the A37 (via the B3147 between Weirs Roundabout and The Grove) will be provided as part of the development.**
- ii) **The homes provided should meet the needs of the town with a focus on families and younger people of working age with a view to supporting the local economy. This should include at least 35% of the homes as affordable housing.**
- iii) **Between the new development area and the historic town, at least 3 pedestrian and cycle links will need to be provided to facilitate ease of access between the existing town and the newly developed area.**
- iv) **A local centre will also be provided containing small scale retail units including a small supermarket, to meet the day to day needs of local residents. Minimal impact on the vitality and viability of the existing town centre will need to be demonstrated.**

- v) The development should offer opportunities for additional healthcare provision on site in a form that meets the needs of Dorset CCG.
- vi) The development will contain significant copse planting to break up the built form in views from the AONB. Streets will be tree lined to create a softer urban form.
- vii) The special historic environment within which the site sits will help to deliver local character to the development. Significant harm to designated and non-designated heritage assets should be avoided. Opportunities exist to enhance and better reveal significance of the heritage assets adjacent to the developable area including experiences of the literary connections with 'Hardy's Landscape' and these should be utilised within the development.
- viii) Areas at flood risk from all sources will be avoided. The development will deliver a flood mitigation strategy which makes best use of the opportunities on the site with a viable and deliverable flood mitigation strategy being implemented.
- ix) The development should be at least nitrogen neutral. Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement on the site should be capitalised upon.
- x) A Local Nature Reserve (LNR) should be provided at the water meadows as a key part of the green infrastructure network for the development. This should incorporate improved recreational access, opportunities for greater appreciation of the areas rich heritage and for heritage led tourism, biodiversity enhancement and wetland features.
- xi) Key design requirements for the site will be established through the masterplan. The development should however be grounded in its local context taking design cues from Dorchester and the surrounding villages and make the most of the landmark buildings and features that exist in the area.

11-ii New Policy DOR15 proposes significant expansion of the town on land to the north of the water meadows including the delivery of a link road between the A35 and A37. The proposal includes new homes, employment land and new school provision. Do you have any comments on new Policy DOR15?

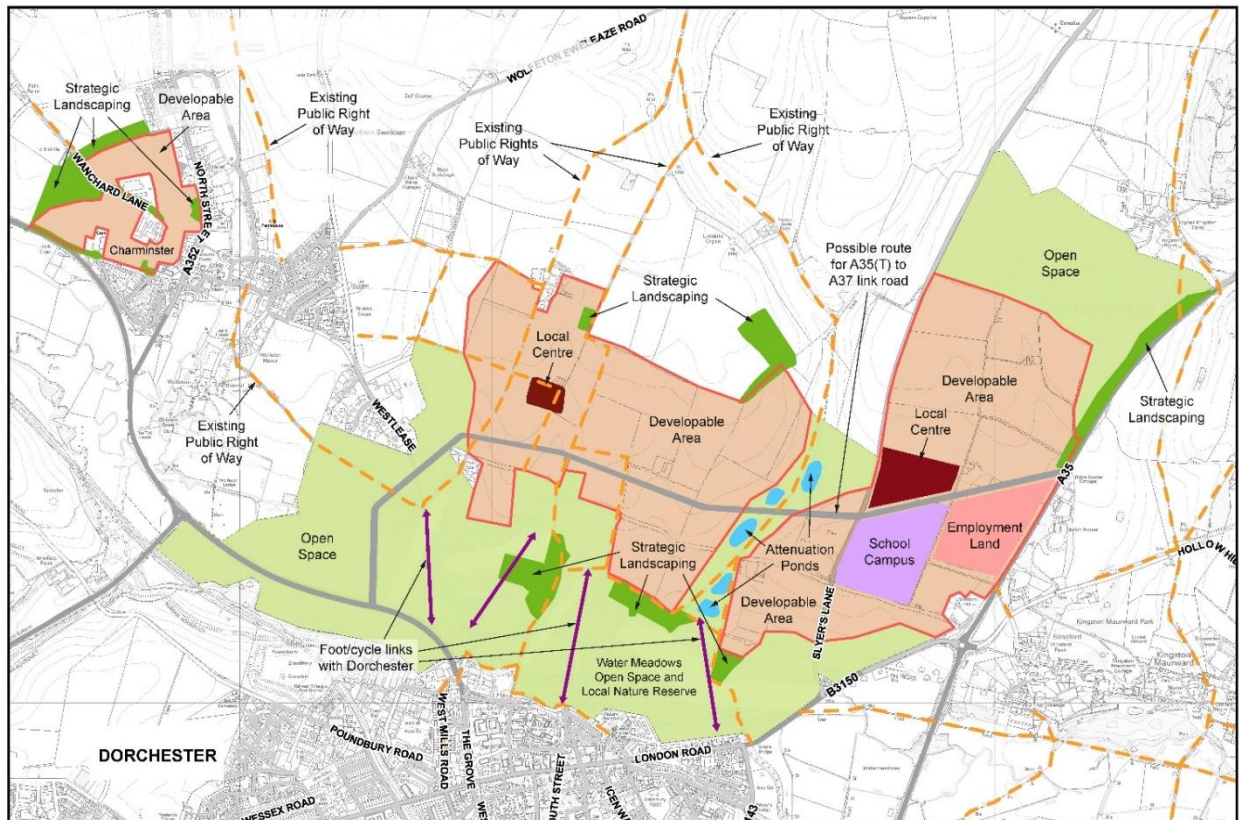
DOR16. LAND TO THE WEST OF CHARMINSTER (PREFERRED OPTION)

- i) Land to the west of Charminster is allocated for residential development to complement the growth at North Dorchester.
- ii) The development will deliver in the region of 320 new homes offering a mix of tenures including affordable homes. The priority should be to meet the needs of families and the working age population.
- iii) Development to the west of Charminster should be served via improved access off the A37. Appropriate highway linkages should be developed which prevent increased use of East Hill and West Hill in Charminster minimising impact on the Conservation Area.
- iv) Links between the developments and nearby cycle routes must be established to facilitate ease of travel to Dorchester by alternative to the car. Enhancements to the Frome Valley Trail will be required including removing the route from the highway where possible.
- v) The development will contain measures to soften the western edge of Charminster in views from the AONB.
- vi) Impacts on nearby heritage assets will need to be minimised including any impact on Charminster Conservation Area and the setting of Poundbury Camp. Any residual impact would need to be clearly justified.

11-iii New Policy DOR16 proposes housing development on land to the west of Charminster. Do you have any comments on new Policy DOR16?

11.15 In addition to the Preferred Options policies, an indicative layout has been produced (Figure 11.2) to graphically represent the development proposals for the site.

Figure 11.2: Indicative Layout for North Dorchester and West Charminster



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