

# DORSET LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

## DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

### October 2025

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## RESPONSE TO THE MAIN CONSULTATION DOCUMENT QUESTIONS

### **Question 1:**

*Do you have any comments on the proposed vision for Dorset?*

The vision should include specific reference to the importance of the area's farmland as a source of local food and also bio-energy in reference to the rural areas.

Whilst the vision is broadly supported (subject to the above), it is difficult to see how the development of significant areas of rural Dorset, and the number of houses that are being planned for, will meet the vision of maintaining and enhancing the character of the rural areas. It seems inevitable that there will be a degree of harm, both from the impact of the new development, the construction phase, and also as a result of increasing road traffic (and impact on known congestion points) if the plan is unsuccessful in achieving a meaningful shift to public transport and providing the necessary infrastructure for greater self-containment of our neighbourhoods.

### **Question 2:**

*Do you have any comments on the proposed strategic priorities for the Local Plan?*

The fourth priority, which talks about responding to the climate and nature emergency, is drafted in terms that are not as strong as the other priorities, perhaps reflecting the Government drive for housing. It also does not reflect how the plan will ensure that the unique character of our towns and villages will be retained and enhanced, despite the vision making clear that the environmental quality of the area – its rural landscapes, its biodiversity, its rich heritage, its coast

and its picturesque towns and villages – is what makes Dorset a special place to live, work and visit.

With regard to achieving high quality homes, improving infrastructure, and maintaining essential services that are accessible, all of which are encapsulated in the first three priorities, the Council will need to be clear on costs and responsibilities as all too often these elements get watered down as a result of viability appeals. The need to coordinate and ensure the timely delivery of necessary infrastructure (utilities, transport and community facilities) would benefit from being a strategic priority in its own right, with greater discussion in the supporting text on which services are seen as essential and what is meant by accessible.

### **Question 3:**

*The proposed settlement hierarchy lists the towns and villages that will be the focus for new homes. Are there other settlements where we should plan for new homes? Do you have any comments on whether a settlement is in the right Tier or not?*

Should the North Dorchester Garden Community go ahead, it should be clearer whether this would be part of Dorchester town (and the draft Masterplan suggests it is a “sustainable mixed-use extension to Dorchester”) rather than seen as a separate entity in the settlement hierarchy.

Charminster (within Tier 3) is rightly recognised as a separate entity from Dorchester and it will be important to ensure that it remains distinct if this is to be respected. Stinsford would fall within Tier 4 but, as with Charminster, it will be important to ensure that it remains distinct from the expansion of the town if we are to respect its unique identity and heritage. It is not clear how retaining these separate identities will be reflected in the next iteration of the plan.

### **Question 4:**

*Do you have any comments on the proposed strategy for the south eastern area?*

[No comment]

### **Question 5:**

*Do you have any comments on the proposed strategy for the central area?*

The Strategy is lacking detail. It is not clear from the plan whether there will be a separate strategy and vision for all of the Tier 1 and 2 settlements, as there was in the 2021 draft plan.

The Town Council has worked on a more appropriate vision for Dorchester than the version contained within the 2021 draft plan, which has been shared with Dorset Council. This was a product of Town Council and wider public input, and sets out general aims for the town as a whole, and the priorities of our residents and distinctive elements of Dorchester. It reads as follows:

By the end of the plan period, Dorchester will:

- Have risen to the challenge of climate change, with designs based on zero carbon solutions, and wildlife friendly green spaces and tree-lined corridors that encourage walking and cycling.
- Have a balanced but diverse mix of housing and workplaces, in particular helping young people to afford to live and work locally, and flexible, adaptable premises to help businesses respond to changing economic circumstances.
- Have a vibrant and accessible town centre that people want to visit and walk around, to access local services, explore its rich history, culture and arts and enjoy its shops, museums, its historic market and its hospitality.
- Have a strong sense of community with a wide range of social and sports opportunities for all ages, accessible local centres and recreation spaces, supporting a range of inclusive and community-run enterprises.

- Have outstanding health and social care, education and training, with its schools, colleges and hospital providing choice and opportunities for a better way of life.
- Be easy to get to and around, with an extensive network of safe and attractive walking and cycling routes, linking to a network of transport hubs for trains and buses, with car and bike sharing facilities, all using low emission technology.
- Still recognise and celebrate its rich literary associations, including Thomas Hardy's Casterbridge, and the town's medieval, Roman and neolithic heritage.
- Link to the surrounding countryside, both visually and physically, valuing the tranquillity, biodiversity, productivity and timelessness of the landscapes that surround the town, including north of the watermeadows.

The Town Council would welcome close working relationships with Dorset Council and the nearby communities that look to Dorchester for their services, to help understand and shape the changes brought about by the Local Plan at a more detailed level.

The strategy refers to both Crossways and the Dorset Innovation Park at Winfrith. Whilst these do relate to Dorchester, given their location of the periphery of the area they also relate to the South-East area and this dual relationship is not clear from 3.4.1.

3.4.2 should make reference to the strong cultural associations of the area with Thomas Hardy. It should note the heritage / archaeological importance of the South Dorset Ridgeway (which is not limited to Maiden Castle). It should also note that the area around Dorchester includes a high level of productive farmland (with evidence suggesting that much of the area around the town falls within the best and most versatile farmland).

Support the plan's reference to promoting active travel, and use of public transport, as being important to realising the area's future growth potential (3.4.3) but there is limited evidence to show that this is a realistic outcome. Access between Weymouth and Dorchester is severely constrained – the South Dorset Ridgeway is a critical part of our historic landscape and must remain undeveloped. Proposals for transport infrastructure such as Park and Ride have been turned down in the past. The incentive to use buses is significantly diminished given the traffic jams around the A354, A31 and near the town centres – and it is not clear from the LTP how this can be resolved.

Challenge the phrase that “there are significant opportunities for further growth along the Portland – Weymouth - Dorchester corridor” in 3.4.4 given the environmental sensitivity of the South Dorset Ridgeway.

3.4.7 and 3.4.8 references the North Dorchester Garden Community as an area of large-scale growth, but there remain significant concerns and lack of clear evidence regarding its successful delivery without harm to the town's heritage, viability and rural landscape setting.

#### **Question 6:**

*Do you have any comments on the proposed strategy for the northern area?*

[No comment]

#### **Question 7:**

*Do you have any comments on the proposed strategy for the western area?*

[No comment]

#### **Question 8:**

*Is there any important infrastructure that needs to be delivered alongside new homes in the Western / Central / South Eastern / Northern area?*

Critical to absorbing additional growth is the transport infrastructure around Dorchester, as this allows the town to connect to its wider rural hinterland and to Weymouth. Ensuring these remain

effective is important, but how this will be achieved is challenging given the constraints – for example, the connection to Weymouth is difficult to achieve without disruption of the important Ridge landscape. It is not clear from the LTP Annex J what and where measures would deliver shorter and more reliable journey times, improve road facilities and why there is no reference to Sunday provision of bus services.

Safety improvements are required at the turning to the A352 towards Max Gate. This will become even more critical in light of the growth around Crossways and the Dorset Innovation Centre. A righthand turning should be prohibited from the A352 junction on to the A35.

The Stadium and Monkeys Jump Roundabouts are currently problematic for cyclists (they currently have to dismount to cross the roundabout N-S, S-N). To encourage sustainable travel, improvements need to be made to the site. Overall, Dorchester has been left behind in the provision of cycle routes within the town – there needs to be a clear strategy as to how these can be provided and funded. The production of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Dorchester would:

- identify preferred routes and core zones for further development
- provide a prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment
- support future funding bids for walking and cycling infrastructure
- ensure that consideration is given to cycling and walking in planning decisions

It is important to continue to improve the link between Dorchester town centre and Poundbury for walking, cycling and public transport.

Based on extensive experience across Dorset, the Town Council has no confidence in the delivery of viable public transport in the long term. More efficient timings are required for core working hours for local bus services if these are to provide a realistic alternative for users. As weekend work schedules become increasingly common, it is essential to provide services that support individuals who work Saturdays and Sundays. The traditional Monday–Friday work pattern is no longer the norm, and transport planning must reflect this shift to meet the needs of a changing workforce. The section of track from Moreton to Dorchester South remains single track and whilst a case has recently been made to upgrade this<sup>1</sup>, there is no certainty on this being funded or the timescales for its deliver. Without such upgrades, this could severely limit the ability to improve the frequency of train services east of Dorchester.

The Town Council in its response to the 2021 consultation requested that a coherent Traffic and Parking plan is produced for the town that also respects and emphasises our townscape and environment. This could be covered in part by the town centre traffic management and access improvements proposals in the draft LTP, but does not specifically address parking requirements for Dorchester. The proposal for a Park and Ride site to the south of the town has never materialised and the case for it has not been made in the latest LTP (with the only reference being to the Weymouth facility), although the suggestion for a freight alternative re-fuelling site on or close to the A35 features. The Town Council does consider that parking should continue to be considered, and that there is a clear need for alternative HGV parking (reducing the negative impacts of HGV parking at Top o' Town on the town centre) that should be properly explored within the Local Plan.

There is no reference to open space standards including the provision of allotments. These should be a requirement of any large housing development – and not limited to those areas where there is a requirement for mitigation / compensation in relation to heathlands or Green Belt.

It is disappointing that the evidence base provided at this stage does not include an understanding of population projections, and to what extent falling birthrates may be countered by additional migration. This is important to understand the extent to which local health and education infrastructure may need to extend, and where there may be pressures for closure. There are real concerns about the ability for local schools to cater for growth, and the viability /

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<sup>1</sup> <https://westerngatewaystb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Dorset-Metro-SOBC-Final-Draft.pdf>

management of the different school sizes, particularly given that the Dorchester pyramid includes input from Crossways / Woodsford, and that the Thomas Hardy school is already the biggest state 6th form in the country. A high-performing school system, with choice and certainty of school places, is a key factor in attracting families to locate here. The same applies to healthcare, both at a local (GP / Dental Surgery) level and at the hospital, all of which are dependent on securing workers and attracting high quality talent, and good access to specialist centres such as Bournemouth, Poole and Southampton hospitals.

There is a need for more supported accommodation i.e. for younger people requiring 24/7 management.

Whilst waste is planned under a separate regime, the waste water treatment plant will need to be upgraded and **a new Household Waste Recycling Centre provided** (given the poor access to and limited capacity of the current provision). It is **vitaly important** that these are considered through the Local Plan process as well as through the Waste Plan, as if we wait for the Waste Plan review to identify need for this, it will be too late to designate the site particularly when the new occupants will not want it near them (as happened in Poundbury).

Whilst not considered infrastructure, the balance with employment provision will also be critical, including opportunities for local entrepreneurs to start up and expand their businesses locally.

Should the North Dorchester Garden Community go ahead, there is no clarity as to how the transport infrastructure and other essential services will be delivered in a timely manner without threatening the scheme viability and ecological / environmental / cultural sensitivity of the River Frome and its watermeadows.

#### **Question 9:**

*The Local Plan sets out a strategy to meet the area's housing needs through allocating sites for new homes, the flexible settlements policy, new settlements and the efficient use of land. Are there any other measures could help to meet housing needs?*

Recent experience within Dorchester has highlighted the difficulties of delivering the type of housing to meet local needs alongside the necessary infrastructure. Recent experience with Dorchester's Brewery Square and Prison developments shows how these can go wrong, which undermines public confidence in the planning system and fails to deliver development that both meets local needs and respects the environmental sensitivity of the area.

Greater focus should be placed on understanding the local needs of each area, as opposed to the strategic needs, and seeking to address such needs as part of the housing mix, in a manner that encourages social cohesion (for example, through "pepper potting" of different types of housing, so that the 'affordable' is not shoved into the least desirable corner of the site.

#### **Question 10:**

*To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Plan including a lower housing target for the first few years and a higher figure towards the end of the plan period to meet housing needs?*

*a. Agree*

*b. Disagree*

*c. I have another suggestion*

a. Agree. The plan is otherwise highly reliant on the building industry (and related supply chain and skilled labour) ramping up its delivery to uncharted levels in order to maintain a healthy housing land supply and not become out-of-date. It also has the added benefit of

**Question 11:**

*Where should a policy allowing sites for only affordable homes apply?*

*a. All of Dorset*

*b. Only around those towns and villages listed in the proposed settlement hierarchy*

*c. Only in the Green Belt*

a. All of Dorset, but subject to clear criteria in terms of meeting local needs, the accessibility / settlement form and environmental considerations.

**Question 12:**

*We have suggested that the Local Plan will not include clear boundaries to define the edges of towns and villages. Instead, the flexible settlements policy would allow new homes to be built around certain towns and villages. How much do you agree or disagree with this approach?*

*a. Agree*

*b. Partially agree*

*c. Neutral*

*d. Partially disagree*

*e. Disagree*

*Please provide any further comments or reasoning...*

e. Disagree

The use of a settlement boundary is a well-established planning tool that is clearly understood by local communities. It enables clarity in terms of where new housing and other specified development is in principle acceptable, can be amended based on local circumstances, and provides greater opportunity to bring forward sites for affordable housing through rural exception site policies. It also provides reasonable certainty on the level of housing to be expected over the plan period, enabling more effective and timely planned for infrastructure delivery, and balancing this with consideration of employment opportunities.

The Dorchester bypass forms a clear boundary for much of the town – as currently worded this policy would ‘enable’ development to jump this barrier as it would be part of the “edge of a built-up area and open countryside normally defined by the curtilages of buildings, roads and field boundaries”

There is also no mechanism (other than environmental constraints) to prevent settlements from merging as a result of this policy – eg Dorchester with Charminster and potentially Stinsford.

Definitions are potentially prone to misinterpretation (picked up in Q16): what areas are sufficiently ‘densely developed’ or ‘densely populated’ to be part of the built-up area? What is ‘adjacent to’.

The Town Council would be pleased to engage with Dorset Council to identify a robust updated settlement boundary for Dorchester.

**Question 13:**

*We propose that the flexible settlements policy will include a limit of 30 homes per site. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this threshold?*

- a. The limit of 30 homes is about right*
- b. There should be less homes*
- c. More homes per site should be allowed*

*Please explain your reasoning*

Do not support for reasons above. It is also unclear how this would work alongside rural affordable housing exception sites.

**Question 14:**

*At a town/village, should one flexible settlement policy site be started, before another one is permitted?*

- a. Yes*
- b. No*

*Please provide any further comments*

Do not support for reasons above. Furthermore, given that there is no compulsion for the site to then be completed, this would not avoid Dorset Council's concerns about potential of 'gaps' being created by one site being on the far side of another such site, and no ability for this policy to address infrastructure delivery and connectivity constraints if too much building is happening at the same time in a particular area.

**Question 15:**

*We have suggested that the flexible settlements policy will only apply to the areas around certain towns and villages, these are those ranked as 'Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3' in our settlement hierarchy. What do you think about the locations where we have suggested that the flexible settlements policy should apply?*

Do not support for reasons above.

**Question 16:**

*We have suggested that the flexible settlement policy should only be applied around the 'continuous built-up areas' (i.e. 'densely populated areas with high concentrations of buildings, infrastructure and paved roads') of certain towns and villages. Do you have any comments on our definition of this 'continuous built-up area'?*

Do not support for reasons above. The proposed definition of "adjacent to" and "a densely populated area with a high concentration of buildings, infrastructure, and paved roads" does not include clear parameters and will come down to planning judgement and therefore may be interpreted differently in different locations. What is densely population / a high concentration in Dorchester may differ from Charminster.

**Question 17:**

*We have suggested that the flexible settlements policy should not be applied in the Green Belt. What are your thoughts on this?*

[No comment]

**Question 18:**

*Away from the towns and villages listed in the settlement hierarchy, there may be types of development that we could support. Do you have any comments on this approach and on the types of development that could be supported in the countryside?*

Support the provision of renewable energy generation, but this should not be on the best and most versatile (Grade 1, 2 or 3a) farmland.

**Question 19:**

*We have suggested that the flexible settlements policy should not be applied in places with a recently made neighbourhood plan which includes allocations for new homes. What are your thoughts on this?*

[No comment]

**Question 20:**

*The Local Plan will retain and protect existing key employment sites, identify new employment sites at locations close to more sustainable settlements, allow for expansion of existing employment sites and allow for new employment sites in suitable locations. Do you have any comments on this approach?*

The main thrust of the approach to employment should be in seeking to provide an appropriate balance of jobs to local residents (taking into account the settlement's hinterland). This requires consideration of employment in the wider sense – in Dorchester employment is provided through the town centre, local services (such as the local schools, County Hospital and Dorset Council) and also through the local industrial / trading estates.

The Town Council has raised concerns about the loss of employment areas as a result of permitted development rights, and that such losses should be balanced by compensatory provision of employment land elsewhere in the local area, on sites that are suitable for a range of business types, in order to provide reasonable opportunities for residents to work and establish new businesses locally thereby reducing travel to and from work.

The employment land supply report (March 2024) calculates that the current ratio of employment floorspace to dwellings in Dorchester is approximately 9sqm/dwelling, slightly below the county average of 10sqm/dwelling and substantially below the 15sqm/dwelling recommended for new settlements.

There is no clear consideration of the level of housing growth and whether this will be matched by employment at this stage – although 6.3.6 suggests that all realistic potential opportunity sites have been identified at this stage, and when demand figures are finalised at the next stage of plan production, provision will then be made in the most appropriate locations.

The focus for the Central Dorset Area's economic growth is based on delivering the Dorset Clean Energy Super Cluster (3.4.6), and it is therefore reasonable to assume that many of the jobs created will be based in and around Portland and at the Dorset Innovation Park.

**Question 21:**

*The Local Plan will enable employment land to be developed outside identified sites at certain towns and villages, subject to certain considerations. Do you agree with this approach?*

The main aim should relate to reducing travel by supporting a balance between the size of the local population and access to jobs and services. This may require a more bespoke approach that will differ between towns, or between functional areas.

Welcome recognition that consideration should be given to ensuring development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have unacceptable impacts on local roads and exploits any opportunity to make a location more sustainable. This should include a clear understanding of

likely traffic in terms of deliveries, customers and workforce, and also issues such as likely noise levels (given that tranquillity is an important characteristic of many of our rural areas).

Any criteria on this needs to be very clear, particularly with regard to what would constitute as unacceptable impact and indirect impacts such as noise and traffic generation.

Considerations would also include:

- whether the scale and type of new employment development reflect (respect) its location;
- the area's landscape qualities, tranquillity, heritage and cultural associations,
- recognition that some businesses may have specific requirements that could justify development in a particular location;

### **Question 22:**

*We have suggested that larger scale housing sites should be required to provide land for employment uses. Proposals for 300 homes or more would be mixed residential and employment developments, with a ratio of 0.25ha of employment space for every 100 homes. How much do you agree or disagree with this approach?*

- a. Agree*
- b. Partially agree*
- c. Neutral*
- d. Partially disagree*
- e. Disagree*

*Please provide any further comments or reasoning...*

- b. Partially agree**

This approach has had some successes in Poundbury, but also failures such as the loss of Dorset Cereals from their large site, who have relocated to an industrial estate in Poole.

The provision of local services should be supported, but should not undermine the role of town and neighbourhood centres.

Both mixed use and separate employment areas have a role to play in balancing employment and housing, and reducing the need to travel.

It is important to provide sufficient available premises – including small units – to allow those wishing to set up opportunities to do so, in easy reach of homes, and redress the possible loss of suitable premises when existing units convert to residential. The plan should in particular encourage the flexible design of employment areas to allow units to split / amalgamate to meeting changing needs as businesses grow. A local example of this is: Prospect House, which is well placed (so easy to find / promote), has a range of unit sizes (from a single desk space to rent to much larger configurations) and a good range of rental costs. Units should be both to rent and to buy.

The inclusion of employment land within a housing site is therefore less a matter of scale, but more to do with how the settlement operates, the site's relationship with the transport network (particularly where the business types could generate significant levels of deliveries and requires a higher profile), the site's relationship with the town / neighbourhood centres (particularly in relation to local service provision) and concepts of a walkable neighbourhood, and overall site viability. Mixed uses should therefore be encouraged at all scales subject to these factors.

The Town Council would expect large sites to be accompanied by a masterplan that considers both mix (both in uses and within the house types to ensure a healthy and inclusive mix), access and phasing, as well as design parameters to achieve high quality and locally appropriate designs.

### **Question 23:**

*We have suggested that the Local Plan should include policies to protect the most important existing 'key' employment sites.*

*a) Do you have any views on the strategy we have suggested for protecting employment sites?*

The Town Council supports the need to protect key employment sites, or compensate for their loss through alternative provision. The local industrial / trading estates include:

- Poundbury Parkway Farm Business Park
- Marabout and The Grove, Railway Triangle, Poundbury West
- Casterbridge Trading Estate
- Louds Mill
- Johnson Industrial Estate, Allington Road (NB this site is not currently shown as an employment area)

Agree that it is not necessary to protect Great Western Industrial Estate for employment.

*b) What criteria should we consider when defining 'key' and 'non-key' employment sites?*

- a. Site size*
- b. Location*
- c. Employment use type*
- d. Accessibility*
- e. Contribution to meeting economic objectives/needs*
- f. Market attractiveness*
- g. Opportunities for growth/expansion*
- h. The site's status in previous local plans*
- i. Other*

All of the above other than the site's status in previous local plans.

### **Question 24:**

*How do you think we should plan to support town centres in the future?*

Uses of town centres has changed rapidly in recent years and will no doubt change markedly in the future. Permitted development rights have also considerably removed Dorset Council's ability to manage change. For this reason, flexibility over the lifetime of the plan will be essential, focusing on how best to support change that will support the town centre as:

- a key element of the town's identity, and link to its past (its history and cultural associations)
- an important hub of activity, providing opportunities for social events and networks, and leisure activities
- a major contributor to the local economy and job opportunities
- an important transport hub connecting both to the outlying neighbourhoods and rural settlements

Redevelopment should therefore consider how to build in this flexibility, and create buildings and spaces which support these roles. Large conglomerations of superstores or super leisure facilities should be resisted as they are likely to redundancy themselves in time, with little prospect of reuse, whereas smaller units can often more easily be repurposed.

**Question 25:**

*What types of use do you think will be most important for the future of our town centres?*

*a. Shops b. Cafes/restaurants c. Leisure (e.g. cinemas) d. Offices e. Cultural (e.g. museums) f. Community (e.g. libraries) g. Hotels h. Other...*

A mix of all of the above, including residential accommodation such as 'living above the shop', or for small apartments.

**Question 26:**

*We are suggesting that retail impact assessments should be undertaken for retail development proposals outside the town centres defined in the Plan, that are over the size of a small food store (280 square metres net). How much do you agree or disagree with the introduction of a threshold of 280 square metres for retail impact assessments?*

- a. Agree*
- b. Partially agree*
- c. Neutral*
- d. Partially disagree*
- e. Disagree*

*Please provide any further comments or reasoning*

a. Partially agree. It is not clear how this would then apply in relation to local / neighbourhood centres (including local shopping parades) that are important to creating and sustaining walkable neighbourhoods. This is particularly important where the transport links (walking / cycling / bus services) from neighbourhoods into the town centres do not provide an accessible alternative.

**Question 27:**

*Should the threshold also apply to leisure uses that are net 280 square metres? Yes/No*

Yes – but subject to clarification on local / neighbourhood centres

**Question 28:**

*We are considering whether the Local Plan should include a policy which supports interim or temporary uses pending a permanent use for a vacant town centre building - we have called these 'meanwhile uses'. To what extent do you agree with the introduction of a meanwhile uses policy?*

- a. Agree*
- b. Partially agree*
- c. Neutral*
- d. Partially disagree*
- e. Disagree*

*Please provide any further comments or reasoning*

a. Agree

Vacant properties – such as Lloyds Bank, Nat West in Dorchester, do negatively impact on the town centre's attractiveness and viability. As such measures to provide temporary active uses where sites would otherwise remain vacant are welcomed. See Dorchester Prison for the way such a policy could work – with planning permission granted to use the site for airsoft games, ghost hunts and community events (tours etc) given the delays in bringing forward the approved housing scheme.

However there should also be the ability to review stalled permissions and be able to intervene to take these forward as intended. Lloyds Bank, Nat West – as vacant properties, do impact on the town centre.

Dorset Council should also consider the use of its power to initiate High Street Rental Auctions<sup>2</sup> to reduce high street vacancies, boost local economies, and empower communities to revitalise their areas.

**Question 29:**

*How else can we encourage development on brownfield land, whilst also planning positively to meet our needs for homes and employment land?*

National planning policy (NPPF 125(c)) makes clear that substantial weight should be given to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and that such applications should be approved unless substantial harm would be caused.

Dorset Council could prioritise brownfield site applications in how officer time is apportioned to encourage faster movement through the system.

**Question 30:**

*To what extent do you agree with taking land out of the Green Belt to help meet our development needs?*

[No comment]

**Question 31:**

*We have suggested that the Local Plan should include a flexible settlements policy which would allow new homes around certain towns and villages. What impact, if any, do you think the proposed flexible settlements policy might have on opportunities for self-build homes?*

[No comment]

**Question 32:**

*Is there anything else we should do to increase the supply of self-build plots?*

The Town Council maintain its previous stance that further measures are not needed, and that should specific measures be introduced, these should exclude the potential for further second home ownership.

**Question 33:**

*We have suggested that housing requirements for neighbourhood plan areas should be finalised at the next stage of preparing the Local Plan. This is likely to involve consideration of sites with planning permission, local plan allocations and unplanned development. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed approach?*

[No comment]

**Question 34:**

*Should the housing requirement figures for neighbourhood plan areas outside the Green Belt, include an allowance for sites that could come forward through the flexible settlements policy?*

[No comment]

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-street-rental-auctions-non-statutory-guidance>

**Question 35:**

*Do you have any comments on the objectives for meeting the need for Traveller sites?*

[No comment]

**Question 36:**

*To help ensure that enough pitches are provided to meet Dorset's needs, Traveller pitches could be delivered alongside homes for the settled community on large scale residential development. Are there any issues which you think we need to consider in locating Traveller pitches alongside new built homes for the settled community?*

[No comment]

**Question 37:**

*We are suggesting that 5 Traveller pitches should be provided for every 500 homes on large development sites. Is this threshold correct?*

[No comment]

**Question 38:**

*To encourage Travellers to deliver their own sites, we are suggesting that the Local Plan should include a criteria policy which takes account of the site's location, access, neighbouring development, environmental impact and management of the site. Do you think we need to add or change any of the suggested criteria?*

Some traveller sites are, or become, poorly managed and have greatly deleterious effects on their surroundings. at least partly often due to the lack of appropriate facilities at or near the site. This often causes conflict with neighbours. Is there any way of addressing such problems more quickly than occurs at present?

**Question 39:**

*We have identified opportunity sites which could deliver more homes to help meet Dorset's housing needs. Do we need to change the approach to mitigating impacts on protected Dorset Heaths habitat sites as part of planning to meet increased housing needs?*

[No comment]

**Question 40:**

*To what extent do you agree or disagree with development at Shapwick to enable the delivery of public benefits from investment in the Kingston Lacy Estate?*

- a. Agree*
- b. Partially agree*
- c. Neutral*
- d. Partially disagree*
- e. Disagree*

*Please provide any further comments or reasoning*

[No comment]

#### Question 41:

*We have outlined some areas which could be appropriate for wind turbines, ground mounted solar panels and battery energy storage. To what extent do you agree or disagree with identifying broad areas of opportunity for wind, solar and battery energy storage?*

- a. Agree
- b. Partially agree
- c. Neutral
- d. Partially disagree
- e. Disagree

*Please provide any further comments or reasoning*

b. Partially agree – this is helpful, but the resulting maps appear to be misleading, and this may be due to the high level assessment basis, particularly with regard to heritage, agricultural land and landscape character, and in relation to large wind turbines (over 100 metres). If this Plan is to provide guidance then a more informed assessment of these factors should be undertaken.

Requiring all new developments to include solar energy as standard on all roofs within the site would reduce the need to provide renewable energy on greenfield sites elsewhere.

## NORTH DORCHESTER MASTERPLAN (Q42 – 45)

### LA/STLB/006: North of Dorchester

The Town Council provided a comprehensive objection to the North of Dorchester proposal as outlined in the 2021 draft DCLP, and this objection still stands. In summary, the key areas of concern are that:

- The development would be highly damaging to the town and its rural surrounds. There would be significant landscape and heritage impacts from the proposed development, as well as loss of valuable farmland. The scale and mass of the development will fundamentally change the character of the town and its setting.
- There are inherent difficulties in providing good connections given the site's relationship with the town and the intervening watermeadows. Without a clear plan to address this barrier to connectivity, it is likely that the development would lead to more car-borne traffic. Furthermore, the creation of new infrastructure across the watermeadows, in addition to the potential for increased run-off, could cause additional impacts in relation to localized flooding that are not clearly understood at this stage.
- The Town Council has consistently raised concerns about the deliverability of the proposed development north of Dorchester, but there is no published evidence on this matter despite Dorset Council and its predecessor having funding awarded to explore these critical issues. The previous Halcrow assessment made clear that the scale of development proposed would not fund the necessary infrastructure. Site viability has not been addressed in the latest masterplanning study.

The sustainability appraisal produced to accompany this stage of the Local Plan highlights that the proposed development is one of the limited number of sites which is expected to have have significant negative effects across five or more of the SA objectives. This high-level appraisal does not reflect the likely scores based on a more detailed examination of the proposals, as explored in the table that follow:

| SA Objective      | DCLP score | DTC comments                                                                                               | Suggested score |
|-------------------|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| SA1: Biodiversity | --         | Potential significant harm to biodiversity is likely, given the site's relationship to the watermeadows of | --              |

| SA Objective                  | DCLP score | DTC comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Suggested score |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
|                               |            | the River Frome (which becomes a designated SSSI to the east of Greys's bridge) and its onward flow to Poole Harbour, in addition to the pockets of deciduous woodland. Whilst any scheme would need to demonstrate overall biodiversity net gain, this does not calculate or necessarily compensate for the indirect impacts from human disturbance, waste and light pollution on these sensitive habitats                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                 |
| SA2: Soil quality and geology | --         | The DEFRA predictive BMV land assessment map indicates that the area north of Dorchester falls within the highest classification – i.e. that there is a high likelihood that more than 60% of the land is considered amongst the best and most versatile farmland. The regional ALC map suggests this would be both Grade 2 (on land to the east) and Grade 3(a).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | --              |
| SA3: Water Quality            | --         | The site lies within an area of groundwater vulnerability, either categorised as medium-high or high vulnerability. A significant part of the site stretching from the A35 Stinsford roundabout to Cokers Frome Farm is the highest risk area for Groundwater Source protection, with land further north and to the west falling within the outer protection area. The River Frome is also classified as being of poor ecological quality with regard to the section of the waterbody to the north side of the town. As a result any additional pollution into the groundwater or discharging into the stream will be likely to have a significant adverse impact.                       | --              |
| SA4: Air quality              | –          | The air quality criteria results in no differentiation between the sites across the whole of the Central Dorset area, suggesting a lack of detailed analysis / availability of site-specific data and consideration of the scale of impact. Dorchester High Street no longer meets the threshold for a AQMA designation, but this was lifted as recently as 2025, and the failure to deliver adequate transport infrastructure could give rise to significant impacts within this area. There is no monitoring site close to the Stinsford roundabout.<br>For these reasons the suggest score should be reassessed as uncertain but with potential to have a significant adverse impact. | -- ?            |
| SA5: Climate change           | ++         | This criteria focuses on access to public transport / cycle infrastructure, recognising that other related elements (access to services, facilities and open space, and flood risk) are considered against other SA objectives. However it does not take into account the scale of the site, and appears to measure distances from the perimeter. Given the central part of the housing area is likely to be located at ~ SY702916, basing the assessment on this point (to provide a reasonable average) the criteria for                                                                                                                                                               | -- ?            |

| SA Objective                     | DCLP score | DTC comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Suggested score |
|----------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
|                                  |            | <p>access to rail should score negatively (and significantly so if accounting for the actual distance travelled as opposed to direct line distance), as should bus (given that the nearest serviced stop would be on the A35 at Stinsford) and similarly for cycle (with the NCN26 routed along the C12 through to Charminster).</p> <p>The assessment does not at this stage consider the viability of providing a district heating networks or combined heat and power. For these reasons the suggested score reflects the uncertainty and potential to have a significant adverse impact.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                 |
| SA6: Flooding and coastal change | 0          | <p>The site size measure 433.9ha as currently mapped. The area within Flood Zone 3 is not quantified in any assessment, but would appear to be in the region of 100 - 110ha, which very close to the threshold of 25% required to be assessed as having a significant negative impact. For these reasons the suggested score reflects the uncertainty and potential to have an adverse impact.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | – ?             |
| SA7: Landscape                   | – – ?      | <p>The criteria are based simply on the site's relations with a settlement and distance from national landscapes. In this case, the Dorset NL wraps around the town, and whilst the National Landscape comes closest to the site boundaries to the west, the topography is such that the site forms the backdrop to the town when viewed from the ridgeway to the south. The potential landscape impacts have previously been identified in the 2008 Halcrow Study, which flagged up: "the sensitive built and cultural heritage, the landscape assessment identified several locations where the impact of development upon the existing landscape was considered critical, notable at Maiden Castle, the South Winterbourne Valley and the Frome floodplain." And the 2018 LUC Landscape And Heritage Report, which assessed the medium-high landscape sensitivity of the site, describing it as: "The prominent sloping landform, sense of openness and unsettled character, strong intervisibility with Dorchester (with skylines marked by historic buildings within its Conservation Area), views to the AONB beyond the town, and role as a natural containment and rural setting to the town result in an overall moderate-high landscape sensitivity. Sensitivity is reduced slightly (from the 'high' rating) by the lack of historic field patterns and limited naturalistic features within the landscape itself." It is accepted that, through masterplanning, it may be possible to reduce such impacts through using landscaping, design and the topography and dips in the landform to help screen or otherwise reduce the impact of new development within the landscape, but the extent of additional lighting, noise</p> | – –             |

| SA Objective               | DCLP score | DTC comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Suggested score |
|----------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
|                            |            | / disturbance and infrastructure requirements are clearly going to have a major adverse impact.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                 |
| SA8: Historic Environment  | --         | <p>The Town Council has previously highlighted the significant heritage impacts likely to arise from this development, which are summarised below, and justify the high negative scoring.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the scale of development proposed guarantees that this extension to the town will make a historic, step change, impact on Dorchester, fundamentally changing its character</li> <li>key components of the site and its setting are associated with Hardy's works, including the River Frome water meadows, Grey's Bridge (now listed) and Ten Hatch Weir, amongst others</li> <li>the potential pre-historic significance of the area, given how the Stinsford Barrow Group (which is within the proposed development area) may have links to other Neolithic / early Bronze Age henge monuments within the Frome Valley, and be part of a northern, linear cemetery echoing the cemeteries found along the South Dorset Ridgeway.</li> <li>the potential for high adverse impacts on a number of the Listed bridges, and medium to high adverse impacts on the setting of Poundbury Camp and the Conservation Area, as well as intervisibility with Maiden Castle.</li> </ul>                        | --              |
| SA9: Health and well-being | +          | <p>The site appears to have been scored positively given its lack of public open space (as existing) and the opportunities to access the PRow network. The loss of the County Showground – which provides the site for what is a significant social event for the town, is not considered. The detailed breakdown of scoring is not provided, and access to open countryside and to the town centre does not take into account the scale of the site, and appears to measure distances from the perimeter. Given the central part of the housing area is likely to be located at ~ SY702916, basing the assessment on this point (to provide a reasonable average) the criteria for access to the town centre (taken from Cornhill) should score as a major negative being over 1.2km distance (measured in a straight line rather than the actual distance experienced). The nearest existing greenspace access point (King's Road play area) is over 800m (measured in a straight line). Whilst some of these elements can be provided within a development of this scale, the scoring is not considered accurate, and the suggested score seeks to remedy this and reflect the uncertainty and potential to have an adverse impact.</p> | – ?             |

| SA Objective                                | DCLP score | DTC comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Suggested score |
|---------------------------------------------|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| SA10: High quality homes and infrastructure | +          | The site appears to have been scored positively given its scale (as more the 100 dwellings). As with the previous points, the assessment of factors relating to distance to education and healthcare appear to have been based on measurements from the site perimeter, and are therefore scored more positively than had they been measured from the central part of the housing area. The nearest GP surgery as exists in the Fordington practice, some 1.1km distant (measured direct). Whilst some of these facilities can be provided within a development of this scale, and a new school campus is proposed as part of the masterplan to cater for first, middle and upper levels, the size of the site means that some area would still be more than 1.2km from such a facility. The suggested score therefore seeks to remedy this and reflect the uncertainty and potential to have an adverse impact on some of these elements, potentially scoring neutral overall.                | 0 ?             |
| SA11: Economy                               | -          | The negative score recorded reflects the relatively low 'job density' for the area. There has been no attempt to quantify the loss of the County Showground in terms of its wider economic impact, nor the extent to which the failure to deliver adequate transport infrastructure as a result of the environmental sensitivity of the area and associated costs may impact on the wider economy. The masterplan suggests that ~ 8ha of land could be provided as new employment areas <sup>3</sup> . This equates to an approximate density of just under 7sqm/dwelling (assuming a plot ratio of just over 0.3 floorspace to land, as set out in the Dorset Council's 2024 employment land study <sup>4</sup> ), which is below the current ratio for the town (9sqm/dwelling) and well below the recommended density of 15sqm/dwelling. The suggested score therefore seeks to reflect the uncertainty and potential to have a greater adverse impact on the economy as currently planned. | -- ?            |

If these more detailed findings are taken into account, the delivery of the site has the potential to generate significant adverse impacts across most of the sustainability criteria.

### Connectivity

There are two key issues regarding connectivity – the provision of a highway connecting around the north side of the town, to ensure that trips arising from the development do not overload the existing Dorchester bypass (which is already experiencing significant delays at local peak times as well as during the summer period, including significant queuing along the London Road /

<sup>3</sup> This is based on a plot ratio of 0.3 for E(g)(i) office, E(g)(ii) R&D, E(g)(iii) industrial uses and B2 industrial uses, and a plot ratio of 0.4 for B8 warehouse / distribution floorspace - it differs from the assumptions in the 2025 Dorchester Employment Strategy written by Vail Williams, which assumes a more favourable plot ratio of 0.5 as an average

Stinsford Hill backing up to Greys Bridge), and the need for good connections into the town for pedestrian cyclists and public transport in order that these local trips do not result in high levels of increased traffic.

The masterplan is suggesting a new primary vehicular route connecting from the A35(T) through the site and crossing the C12 to link with the A37 via the B3147, along with a package of mitigation measures at junctions in and around the town to minimise the impact on the strategic road network and local roads. There is no clarity on the volume of traffic that this route is expected to accommodate (despite modelling work commissioned by the Dorset LEP that was expected to be available February / March 2021), and what other measures may be needed. The draft LTP provides no additional clarification on or costings for these points. It is also unclear whether such a route planned through the centre would end up blighting the centre of the garden community, and undermining its credentials.

The crossing of the C12 (indicated just north of Burton) and connection on to the B3147 is particularly difficult given the flood plain (approximately 350m wide at this point) and proximity to the Grade 1 Listed Wolfeston House to the west. Access onto the A35 near Stinsford may also be problematic given the single carriageway status of this section, and relationship with Kingston Maurward and the Grade II\* parkland.

There is no detail on the public transport plans for the site, and whether these would need to be subsidised. Given that the routes are likely to be dependent on the existing highway network, there will be no obvious advantage for many residents to switch to this mode of transport.

Likewise any active travel route into Dorchester will need to cross the floodplain, and is unlikely to provide a safe and attractive option outside of daylight hours. The masterplan indicates only one such route being provided, and given the distance is unlikely to encourage a significant shift to walking and cycling for residents wishing to travel into Dorchester to visit the town centre or employment areas.

#### *Site viability and infrastructure*

In June 2019 Central Government awarded the Council £150,000 capacity funding to support the delivery of the North Dorchester site. As part of the bid, the Council had made clear its intention to undertake a high level Viability Appraisal to inform the next stage of the production of the Local Plan Review, and said that from recent experience of the Gillingham Southern Extension the Council appreciated the need to understand the cost implications of the infrastructure requirements on large scale schemes. It is therefore surprising that no such report has yet been published, particularly given the earlier findings of the Halcrow assessment that the scale of development proposed at that time (up to 6,850 dwellings) would not fund the necessary infrastructure – including the need for significant investment in the highway network in order to accommodate even modest levels of development, the limited capacity of the existing electrical distribution network and the sewage treatment works. The more generic viability evidence produced for Dorset Council in 2022 only considered sites of up to 1,000 dwellings, noting that the largest site was of marginal viability in the lower value areas, and could not be delivered in the higher value area around Dorchester if higher levels of affordable housing (40%) were required. In all of these scenarios, it only allowed for £26,000 additional site infrastructure per dwelling, whereas the earlier Halcrow report had suggested a level of supplement of between £72,000 to £118,000 per dwelling.

The Town Council's previous response referred Dorset Council to the Examiner's conclusions on several Local Plans, where the Examiners have made clear that the Plan's spatial strategy can only be justified if it can be shown that each Garden Community would be deliverable, and would include the infrastructure necessary to support its development.

It is disappointing that, at this stage, more than 5 years on from the proposal for a 'garden community' north of Dorchester, there is little evidence on the extent, cost implications and necessary phasing of the infrastructure that will be required for this scale of development. The Town Council consider, that the proposed link road is both essential and must be completed and functioning at a very early stage. Similarly, other infrastructure requirements that would support the concept of walkable neighbourhoods, such as local retail, workshops, schools, playgrounds

etc. should be delivered alongside the housing they will support – a point noted in the final report of the New Towns Taskforce published in September 2025. There have been too many examples of where developments have stalled due to infrastructure costs and resulted in sub-standard provision and failed visions - Brewery Square and the Prison site in Dorchester being examples of this from which Dorset Council **MUST LEARN**. There is also no indication as to whether Dorset Council will be seeking Section 106 Agreements or applying the Community Infrastructure Levy, or both, to ensure the best possible land use and infrastructure development – clarification on this matter would be welcomed.

There is **NO** evidence that the Garden Community status will provide any ongoing support to address the inherent challenges of this scale of development. The site has not been selected as one of the Government's new towns (as announced on 28 Sept 2024), which focuses on sites capable of delivering in excess of 10,000 new homes.

***For all of the above reasons, the Town Council continue to raise the strongest objection to the continued inclusion of this site within the Dorset Council's Local Plan. It is not supported by any evidence to demonstrate that it is sustainable, viable and deliverable.***

Supplemental questions:

**Question 42:**

*Since Roman times, the centre of Dorchester has had a prominent position in the landscape. One of the threats to this identity is at the eastern edge of the potential development area (near the A35). Would you support keeping this eastern area more green and open, even if that means fewer homes, facilities and jobs?*

- a. Agree
- b. Partially agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Partially disagree
- e. Neutral

*Please provide any further comments or reasoning...*

a. Agree. The rural approach to the town is considered to be important and would be completely undermined if the first impressions were a mass of 21<sup>st</sup> century housing or an out-of-town retail / industrial park. Furthermore, the eastern approach from the layby at the bottom of Yellowham Hill naturally focuses on the parkland and distant view towards Kingston Maurward, followed by the related estate cottages.

It is accepted that employment areas would benefit from best access to the trunk road, to avoid lorries / industry in the more central part.

**Question 43.**

*Supporting jobs, homes and services all in one place is an essential part of the health of a town. Do you see new workspaces that are integrated into walkable neighbourhoods and local centres as an attractive part of Dorchester in the future?*

See response to Q22

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/expert-taskforce-recommends-locations-for-new-towns>

#### **Question 44:**

*We believe that the valley at Pigeon House Farm can play an important role in encouraging access to nature and celebrating local landscape — What type of development, if any, do you think could help support this in a sustainable way?*

*i. A smaller scale of development*

*ii. A larger scale of development*

*iii. The use of the area as an undeveloped landscape buffer, for recreation, education and nature interpretation, without any housing development.*

*iv. A mixture of the above*

*Please provide any further comments or reasoning...*

iii. The use of the area as an undeveloped landscape buffer, for recreation, education and nature interpretation, without any housing development.

This area is more distant from the town, and as such more likely to result in any residents visiting the town centre and related areas using their car. Providing opportunities for recreation, education and nature interpretation would appear to be beneficial for health and well-being, and whilst this could include an element of built development, such as an education centre, it would certainly be necessary to impose strict, enforceable, conditions to avoid 'mission creep' and ensure that such provision comes forward in a timely manner – unlike our experience with Dorchester's Brewery Square and its promise of a new South Station plus Arts provision.

#### **Question 45: What are your priorities for a new east–west route?**

As per the section on connectivity (above):

The east-west route is needed to ensure that trips arising from the development do not overload the existing Dorchester bypass which is already experiencing significant delays at local peak times as well as during the summer period, including significant queuing along the London Road / Stinsford Hill backing up to Greys Bridge.

It is also important that this is phased at an early stage prior to any congestion issues manifesting and prior to viability of the scheme changing and requiring a reduction on this piece of critical infrastructure.

The masterplan is suggesting a new primary vehicular route connecting from the A35(T) through the site and crossing the C12 to link with the A37 via the B3147, along with a package of mitigation measures at junctions in and around the town to minimise the impact on the strategic road network and local roads. There is no clarity on the volume of traffic that this route is expected to accommodate (despite modelling work commissioned by the Dorset LEP that was expected to be available February / March 2021), and what other measures may be needed. The draft LTP provides no additional clarification on or costings for these points. It is also unclear whether such a route planned through the centre would end up blighting the centre of the garden community, and undermining its credentials.

The crossing of the C12 (indicated just north of Burton) and connection on to the B3147 is particularly difficult given the flood plain (approximately 350m wide at this point) and proximity to the Grade 1 Listed Wolfeston House to the west. Access onto the A35 near Stinsford may also be problematic given the single carriageway status of this section, and relationship with Kingston Maurward and the Grade II\* parkland.

There is no detail on the public transport plans for the site, and how these would be more attractive options than the car if using the same network.

## OTHER POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITY SITES

### LA/DORC/001 - South of Castle Park

This site has been proposed for inclusion and for exclusion in several iterations of past plans. The Town Council supported this proposal in 2021 as part of a strategy to deliver new housing for the town consistent with the town's needs. At that time the policy was suggesting:

- provision of cycle and pedestrian access onto Weymouth Avenue, linking in with existing cycle routes;
- appropriate noise assessment and mitigation related to the nearby A35(T);
- mitigation of surface water and ground water drainage issues in the area through a strategic approach to delivering flood risk mitigation; and
- appropriate screening to minimise any impact on both landscapes and on Maiden Castle.

Additional points raised at that time were the need for the integration of the site into a traffic and movement plan for the Town; and that a replacement play area be provided within the site.

The proposed approach (as set out in the DCLP Appendix A) is broadly supported, with the following comments made:

| <i>Considerations</i>                                                                                                                                                                                               | <i>Proposed DCLP Approach</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <i>DTC comments</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Specific design requirements</b><br>An edge of town location. Suburban character with increasingly rural feel to the west.                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Appropriate density of development for the location.</li> <li>○ Suggest that roofing should be similar in colour to surrounding development at Castle Park.</li> <li>○ Incorporate high degree of green infrastructure throughout development.</li> </ul>                                                                                          | The integration of solar panels on the roof should be a requirement, and as such the impact of these on views from the south will need to be considered in the overall design.<br>The green infrastructure should be planned to be multifunctional in providing landscaping, biodiversity, flood mitigation and active travel networks. |
| <b>Natural environment and ecology</b><br>Priority habitat located in the southeast corner of the site. Woodland to the south is part of the ecological network.<br>The site is within the Poole Harbour Catchment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Retain boundary hedgerows and woodland, further ecological survey to identify priority habitats.</li> <li>○ Application of the mitigation hierarchy – to avoid, mitigate, or compensate for impacts on priority habitats. Provision of an appropriate wildlife buffers.</li> <li>○ Development will need to ensure nitrogen neutrality.</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Landscape and visual</b><br>Dorset National Landscape is located 200m to the south. The site is prominent in longer distant views from the south.                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provide dense planting and improve existing screening along the southern boundary.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | This should sensitively incorporate any noise mitigation in relation to the A35, whilst providing for wildlife movement.                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Heritage</b><br>Potential direct or indirect impacts (setting) on designated heritage assets                                                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sensitive design to avoid or minimise conflict between potential development and the</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | See point under design re: solar panels.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

| <i>Considerations</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <i>Proposed DCLP Approach</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <i>DTC comments</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| including the Maiden Castle Scheduled Monument. Potential direct or indirect impacts (setting) on non-designated heritage assets including assets with archaeological interest.                                                   | <p>heritage assets designation (including its setting).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pre-determination archaeological assessment, then potential for archaeological evaluation.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p><b>Flood risk</b></p> <p>Surface water issues on the eastern parts of the site, and potential for groundwater issues.</p>                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provision of mitigation of flooding issues through an appropriate drainage solution.</li> <li>○ Locate development outside of areas affected by flood risk. Where necessary apply the sequential and exceptions test and consider measures to control, manage and mitigate flood risks over development's lifetime.</li> </ul>                                                                   | See point under design re: multifunctional green spaces.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <p><b>Amenity, health, education</b></p> <p>Adjacent to the A35 trunk road. Potential noise impacts. The site includes an existing play park and playing field. Potential need for additional school spaces in this location.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provision of appropriate noise assessment and mitigation.</li> <li>○ Retention or re-provision of the play park and playing field, subject to identified need.</li> <li>○ Delivery of additional school capacity through provision of a site and/or financial contributions to meet need.</li> </ul>                                                                                             | <p>See point under landscape re: dense planting and improve existing screening along the southern boundary.</p> <p>Checks need to be made in relation to the capacity of the Prince of Wales School and whether this would need to be expanded (which may also have implications for LA/DORC/016)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <p><b>Transport (access and movement)</b></p> <p>Need for suitable vehicular access and pedestrian/cycle connections. Need for traffic reduction measures in the area to provide low traffic route to town centre.</p>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Should access adjoin the B3147 (Weymouth Avenue), a footway will need to be provided with a crossing point.</li> <li>○ Form integrated routes throughout development to link to existing routes. Create a 'greenway' connecting into Weymouth Ave to provide a through route/safe route to schools</li> <li>○ Developer contributions towards traffic reduction measures in the area.</li> </ul> | <p>See point under design re: multifunctional green spaces.</p> <p>The connection points of any integral cycle / walking routes should be informed by a LCWIP for the Town. The provision of a cycle / footway leading to Weymouth Avenue near to Tesco's store and Stadium roundabout may be problematic due to already very high levels on Weymouth Avenue. Levels of traffic on Maiden Castle Road between Prince of Wales School and Weymouth Avenue are increasing making this on-road route less suited for cycling.</p> |

| <i>Considerations</i>                                               | <i>Proposed DCLP Approach</i>                                                                                                                       | <i>DTC comments</i> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Other issues</b><br>Within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigation and assessment to determine the potential impact of development on the water source</li> </ul> |                     |

#### **LA/DORC/004 - Damers School Site, Trust HQ & West Annex, Dorset County Hospital**

Land at DCH was proposed for inclusion in the 2021 draft plan. The Town Council supported this proposal which was based on the expansion and reconfiguration of facilities within the Dorset County Hospital site, including the adjacent former Damers School site, forming a new health campus for the town, will be supported. At that time the policy was suggesting:

- Any development should be master planned and shown to help meet the long-term needs of the hospital.
- Development may include an element of residential use, with the inclusion of extracare, supported living, and key worker housing being particularly appropriate.
- Retail development would not be supported.

Additional points raised at that time were support for key hospital worker accommodation on the basis that this would be specifically restricted to uses consistent with the needs of the Hospital, and relaxation on the introduction of retail uses where these would be consistent with and meet the needs of the Hospital community.

This site has now been permitted in outline under planning application P/OUT/2022/02977 (approved 10/07/25). The Key Worker Housing Statement submitted in support of the application confirms that the tenure of these dwellings will comprise 100% rented housing allocated for NHS key workers and those working in the emergency services and public sector.

The Town Council did not raise any 'in principle' objection, given the proposed scheme would provide 100% 'affordable' housing for key workers as described.

In matters of detailed design, the Town Council consider that the height and elevation detail of those properties that would face onto Damers Road requires careful consideration; new accommodation should be sympathetic to the existing properties in this location, and close attention will need to be paid to the green infrastructure provision which is an important part of the development which should not be overlooked.

Should the current scheme fail to materialise, additional consideration would be needed in relation to the design requirements (given the site's location next to busy hospital) and the associated traffic.

#### **LA/DORC/012 - Wessex Water Site**

This is a new potential allocation but has been anticipated by the Town Council. There is no 'in principle' objection, and the proposed approach (as set out in the DCLP Appendix A) is broadly supported, with the following comments made:

| <i>Considerations</i>                                                                                       | <i>Proposed DCLP Approach</i>                                                                                                                                                               | <i>DTC comments</i> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Specific design requirements</b><br>The site is in a built-up area within Dorchester.                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate density of development for the built-up location</li> </ul>                                                                              |                     |
| <b>Natural environment and ecology</b><br>Potential for priority species habitats and wildlife connections. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further ecological surveys, and provision of appropriate mitigation. Provide a lighting strategy to address impacts on protected species.</li> </ul> |                     |

| <i>Considerations</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <i>Proposed DCLP Approach</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <i>DTC comments</i>                                                                                                                                                        |
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| The site is within the Poole Harbour Catchment.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development will need to ensure nitrogen neutrality.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Landscape and visual</b><br>A brownfield site within the urban area.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High quality development with sensitive design to positively enhance and not challenge the local setting</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | The site is a high point in Dorchester, and is therefore very visible from many directions. The scale of development and design will therefore need careful consideration. |
| <b>Heritage</b><br>Potential direct or indirect impacts (setting) on designated heritage assets including the Grade II Listed building: Gill Water Tower. Potential direct or indirect impacts (setting) on non-designated heritage assets including assets with archaeological interest. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thoroughly assess asset's significance and potential impacts of development. Sensitive design to avoid or minimise conflict between potential development and the heritage assets' designation (including its setting).</li> <li>Pre-determination archaeological assessment, then potential for archaeological evaluation</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Flood risk</b><br>No major constraints to development with regard to flood risk, provided a surface water discharge location is identified.                                                                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surface water discharge location to be identified. Infiltration into soil may need to be investigated (including winter groundwater monitoring).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Amenity, health, education</b><br>Potential need for additional school spaces in this location.                                                                                                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivery of additional school capacity through provision of a site and/or financial contributions to meet need</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                             | The layout and design will need to be carefully considered due to its prominent position and its proximity to existing housing and the hospital.                           |
| <b>Transport (access and movement)</b><br>There are 2 options for an access off Hawthorne Road or Poundbury Crescent.                                                                                                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify preferred access.</li> <li>Utilisation of both access points would minimise vehicle movements within the site</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Other issues</b><br>n/a.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                            |

### **LA/DORC/016 - South-West of Dorchester within bypass**

This is a new potential allocation and raises concerns regarding the loss of green space beyond the existing edge of development, which contributes to the setting of the town and its relationship with the wider landscape setting to the south. The Town Council would encourage a much greater degree of investigation into the site constraints prior to making a decision on any allocation and associated assessment of capacity.

The following comments are made in relation to the proposed approach (as set out in the DCLP Appendix A):

| <i>Considerations</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <i>Proposed DCLP Approach</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <i>DTC comments</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
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| <b>Specific design requirements</b><br>An edge of settlement site to the southwest of Dorchester.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use similar roofing mixes to Poundbury and Castle Park to blend in development from views.</li> <li>○ Set development back from Prince of Wales Road, to retain rural feel.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                             | <p>The integration of solar panels on the roof should be a requirement, and as such the impact of these on views from the south will need to be considered in the overall design.</p> <p>Assume reference should have been to Maiden Castle Road (where it approaches the bypass crossing) given that Prince of Wales Road is not relevant to this site. Setting back development in this location would use more elevated land, and may not be appropriate given the wider sensitivities of this site.</p> <p>The site will relate closely to a number of other key places – open space associated with Poundbury and Dorchester Sports Centre, Thomas Hardy and Prince of Wales schools, the Parkway Farm business park, and their future expansion needs and their relationship with further development on this site requires very careful consideration.</p> |
| <b>Natural environment and ecology</b><br>The site contains areas of potentially priority habitat, such as hedgerows. The site is within the Poole Harbour Catchment.                                                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Retain boundary hedgerows, further ecological survey to identify priority habitats. Application of the mitigation hierarchy – to avoid, mitigate, or compensate for impacts on any priority habitats.</li> <li>○ Development will need to ensure nitrogen neutrality.</li> </ul>                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Landscape and visual</b><br>The site is adjacent to the Dorset National Landscape and is visible in views from the National Landscape and Maiden Castle. The site is adjacent to Centenary Field public open space, and allotments to the north, and Prince of Wales School and playing fields to the southeast. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Retain vegetation and hedgerow at site boundaries, and supplement with additional buffers between Centenary Field, Prince of Wales School (and playing fields), and allotments.</li> <li>○ Provide a high proportion of green infrastructure throughout to mitigate visual impact in views from the National Landscape.</li> </ul> | <p>Unclear what is meant by “raised and screened areas”</p> <p>Green infrastructure should sensitively incorporate any noise mitigation in relation to the A35, flood risk mitigation, whilst providing for active travel, access to the wider countryside, and wildlife movement – including links with the</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

| <i>Considerations</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <i>Proposed DCLP Approach</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <i>DTC comments</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development to be contained within raised and screened areas.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | other areas of open space and habitat that adjoin the site, and the public footpath link across the bypass to the south (S57/6).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Heritage</b><br>The Settlement remains north of Maiden Castle Scheduled Monument partially intersects to the site, and the site is in proximity to the Maiden Castle Scheduled Monument.<br>Potential direct or indirect impacts (setting) on these designated heritage assets.<br>Potential direct or indirect impacts (setting) on non-designated heritage assets including assets with archaeological interest. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thoroughly assess asset's significance and potential impacts of development. Sensitive design to avoid or minimise conflict between potential development and the heritage assets designation (including its setting).</li> <li>Pre-determination archaeological assessment, then potential for archaeological evaluation</li> </ul>                                                     | See also point under design re: solar panels.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Flood risk</b><br>The southeastern part of the site is potentially affected by surface water flooding.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Locate development outside of areas affected by flood risk. Where necessary apply the sequential and exceptions test and consider measures to control, manage and mitigate flood risks over development's lifetime.</li> <li>Surface water discharge location to be identified. Infiltration into soil may need to be investigated (including winter groundwater monitoring).</li> </ul> | The green infrastructure should be planned to be multifunctional in providing landscaping, biodiversity, flood mitigation and active travel networks.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Amenity, health, education</b><br>Adjacent to the A35 trunk road. Potential noise impacts.<br>Potential need for additional school spaces in this location.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision of appropriate noise assessment and mitigation.</li> <li>Delivery of additional school capacity through provision of a site and/or financial contributions to meet need.</li> <li>Provision of appropriate play space to meet the local need</li> </ul>                                                                                                                        | Traffic on the bypass tends to accelerate up the hill from Stadium roundabout to Monkeys Jump and means that noise disturbance is greater in relation to this site than LA/DORC/001, and should be more thoroughly investigated prior to determining whether this site is suitable.<br>Checks need to be made in relation to the capacity of the Thomas Hardy and Prince of Wales schools and whether these would need to be expanded. |

| <i>Considerations</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <i>Proposed DCLP Approach</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <i>DTC comments</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p>Given that the site abuts these two schools, consideration will also need to be given to potential noise, traffic and other disturbance arising from placing residential uses in close proximity.</p> <p>Open space requirements should also include allotments and other open space typologies (not just play space).</p> <p>The site is some distance from any neighbourhood centre – the closest being Pummery Square - and therefore access to these requires a greater level of consideration.</p>              |
| <p><b>Transport (access and movement)</b><br/>           Need to identify suitable access point, with options from Maiden Castle Road and the A35.<br/>           Need for suitable vehicular access and pedestrian/cycle connections.<br/>           Various footpaths traverse the site.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Explore suitable access point, and provide links to existing cycle routes. Providing access is adjoining Maiden Castle Road, a footway will need to be provided along the site frontage.</li> <li>○ Retain footpaths and create linkages to surrounding public routes.</li> </ul> | <p>Access directly onto the A35 is questionable/<br/>           See point under design re: multifunctional green spaces.</p> <p>The connection points of any integral cycle / walking routes should be informed by a LCWIP for the Town.</p> <p>Levels of traffic on Maiden Castle Road between Prince of Wales School and Weymouth Avenue are increasing making this on-road route less suited for cycling.</p> <p>Access via Maiden Castle Road is already difficult due to number of cars accessing and parking.</p> |
| <p><b>Other issues</b><br/>           Potential that the site is currently used informally for recreation.<br/>           Partially within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone.</p>                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Retain footpaths and create linkages to surrounding public routes.</li> <li>○ Investigation and assessment to determine the potential impact of development on the water source and to identify appropriate mitigation</li> </ul>                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |