



Dorchester Town Council

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5 September 2018

Agenda for the special meeting of the **Planning and Environment Committee** which will be held in the **Corn Exchange, Municipal Buildings, Dorchester** on **Monday 10 September 2018 at 7.00pm.**

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

Public Speaking at the Meeting

Members of the public who have registered to speak, up until 9am on the day of the meeting, will be allowed to address the Committee, with the agreement of the Chairman, for up to three minutes each. There will be a limit on the length of time for public participation and this, along with all other matters relating to public participation, will be at the Chairman's discretion. If you wish to speak at the meeting, please register with the Town Council by emailing the Clerk to the Committee, on the email address above, identifying the issue you wish to raise.

Member Code of Conduct: Declaration of Interests

Members are reminded that it is their responsibility to disclose pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests where appropriate. A Member who declares a pecuniary interest must leave the room unless a suitable dispensation has been granted. A Member who declares a non-pecuniary interest may take part in the meeting and vote.

Membership of the Committee

Councillors C. Biggs, R. Biggs (Vice Chairman), A. Canning, T. Harries, J. Hewitt, S. Hosford, S. Jones, F. Kent-Ledger, T. Loakes, R. Potter (Chairman), M. Rennie and D. Taylor (the Mayor ex-officio)

1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

It is recommended that any twin hatted Dorchester Town Council and West Dorset District Council Councillors make a statement regarding their participation in the consideration of planning applications at this agenda item.

2. WDDC Consultation on the Local Plan Preferred Options – Policy DOR. 15

To consider the report by the Town Clerk (attached) and to make a recommendation to Council on the Town Council's response to WDDC's Consultation on the Local Plan Preferred Options Policy DOR. 15.

3. WDDC Consultation on the Local Plan Preferred Options – Other Policies

To consider other policies in WDDC's Preferred Options Document and to make a recommendation to Council on the Town Council's response to these other policies.

WDDC Consultation on the Local Plan Preferred Options – Proposed Policy DOR. 15

Background

1. In 2015, the Local Plan Inspector approved the West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan. In doing so he required that West Dorset District Council bring forward “a strategy that is in place to meet long term development needs at or in the vicinity of Dorchester by 2021 and that a site or sites necessary for its implementation are identified as part of review proposals”.
2. In 2017, the District Council published a document, the “Initial Issues & Options Consultation” identifying potential areas of land for housing in the immediate vicinity of Dorchester, including sites to the north of the town across the River Frome. The Town Council’s Headline Response to the consultation is attached at Appendix 1 and is worth re-reading at this point.
3. Having considered responses from all quarters, the District Council launched a new document, the “Preferred Options Consultation”, in August 2018, requesting responses by 8 October 2018. This is the final opportunity for Dorchester Town Council and other parties to express their views before the District Council formulates its final submission to go before the Planning Inspector.

Analysis of Policy DOR.15

4. There are a number of policies that members of the Committee may wish to comment on, and these will be considered later on the agenda. This report focuses on Policy DOR.15, which is explained on pages 232 – 239 of the document, with the Policy itself being proposed on pages 239 – 240 (included at Appendix 2).
5. The Policy proposes a development of c. 3,500 homes to the north of Dorchester, which is a town of c.10,000 homes at present. This represents an increase in the town’s size of c. 35%; it should be noted that this is additional to outstanding approved planning permissions within the town (Poundbury, Brewery Square, HM Prison and Red Cow Farm) will already add an extra c. 1,000 homes. The Policy also includes commercial, community and public realm space.
6. In the wording of DOR.15 the District Council has picked up on a number of the concerns raised by this Council and others and the policy contains references to some very important issues. In doing so, however, it has to be recognised that the demands being placed on the site create a very real risk that the development proposed will not be viable:
 - The DOR. 15 site proposed is, in part, being brought forward because of the willingness of land owners to see their land developed in exchange for financial reward. They will have developers and builders on board who will also anticipate the same;
 - The list of on-site community benefits addressed in the Policy is extensive and will need to be paid for from the development, in particular:
 - The homes needed should meet the needs of the Town with a focus on families and younger people of working age, with a view to supporting the local economy, with at least 35% of the homes as affordable housing as required by Policy HOUS. 1;

- School provision for four forms of entry for c. 12-14 years of schooling, around 1,200 school places in 3 schools, plus additional local healthcare facilities;
 - A road link (exact role and categorisation unspecified) between the A35(T) at Stinsford Hill and the A37 (via the B3147 between Weirs Roundabout and The Grove);
 - At least 3 pedestrian and cycle links to the town, tree-lined streets, copses and a Local Nature Reserve with a range of features, the whole development being nitrogen neutral – i.e. significant landscaping costs;
 - Flood mitigation on a site next to the water meadows;
- The Policy does not itself address significant known and potential off-site costs that need to be anticipated:
 - The A35 is already suffering major capacity issues, particularly at the Stinsford roundabout, with traffic movements already on an upward trend – the cost of increasing its capacity will be significant;
 - The role of the link road within the site is unclear – is it a “northern bypass” that will help relieve the flow of north to east traffic through the town centre? Or just a service road that meets the needs of the local community?;
 - The town centre’s internal road network is struggling to cope with current traffic volumes. It could not cope with the additional demands created by a 30%+ increase in the population, both in terms of additional volume and parking;
 - While many community venues and organisations have benefitted from the recent release of s106 funds from the Poundbury development, again they will struggle to cope with the additional demands created by a larger town; there is still no clear way forward to increase cultural capacity in the Town.
 - Finally, while the masterplan that will be created will need to recognise that the construction period is likely to be c. 15 years. Much of the public infrastructure will be required up front and services such as education and medical provision will not be fully utilised for many years. These add many layers of complexity to the viability equation.
7. At present there is no clear evidence of whether the development of the site can be achieved and deliver all of the above. It may be that the planning authority will argue that it is not the role of the development to resolve problems that it exacerbates off-site, but these problems will not go away and need to be addressed comprehensively. Members should consider viability in their response and be clear about which of the items listed in item 6. are the priorities, should they take the view that the development might be unable to deliver them.
8. It is also worth noting that while the Local Plan policy might identify proposed community benefits, recent experience of developments within the Town have been that such benefits are not always delivered. The affordable housing policy (HOUS. 1) was not observed at the Prison site and it is being argued that another housing site on London Road should not be subjected to providing on site affordable housing. As yet, despite the best efforts of the developer, both the Maltings Arts building and improvements at Dorchester South Railway Station remain to be delivered at Brewery Square.
9. The Policy is very specific (para iv.) about the aim of the development. It is focused on meeting a need that the Town Council has emphasised i.e. families and young workers. It has to be

recognised, however, that the statements included in a Local Plan do not control the housing market; Dorchester, in common with many other towns in the south west, has seen its new homes market dominated by the demands of older non-working age residents coming from outside the area. While the Policy identifies that a masterplan will be put in place to govern planning development, it makes no reference to how the statement at para iv). will be turned into reality.

Options for the Committee to consider

10. Firstly, no attempt has been made, in this report, to evaluate the impacts of the development of site DOR.15 on the environmental or heritage value of this site. The Town Clerk takes the view that there are both statutory bodies and local groups who are more qualified to play this role. Notwithstanding this, the Town Council may wish to consider any available written comments produced by others in its final submission.
11. It would be unfair to say that West Dorset have not listened to the views of those concerned with the Town's long term growth. However the drafting of DOR.15 has exposed how difficult it will be to combine the future needs of the Town with the demands of the local planning process.
12. This report has focused on the practicalities of delivering DOR.15. On the face of it there are three options open to members of the Committee
 - To welcome the Policy proposal as outlined, recognising it as the long term plan to meet the needs of the Town;
 - To offer amendments to the Policy, recognising that it could meet most/some of the Town's needs and seeking to strengthen wording where there are gaps;
 - To object to the Policy, recognising that this specific site carries a significant level of risk that it will fail to address the local needs of the Town, nor will it produce a comprehensive, relevant, viable and sustainable development that supports the area's future rather than destabilising it.
13. The Committee is invited to use one of the bullet points in paragraph 12. to act as the basis for its recommendation to Council. The Town Council's staff and advisors, Feria Urbanism, will then work with the Chairman to create a more detailed recommendation to be considered by Council on 25 September 2018.

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL HEADLINE RESPONSE TO THE WDWP INITIAL ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION

1. All alternative options must be fully assessed

It is not clear that all alternative options have been fully assessed with the intensity or rigour required to dismiss them. The current issues and options work appears to have settled on a preferred scenario where the majority of new development is in and around Dorchester, in particular to the north of the town. However, it has not been sufficiently demonstrated that alternatives to this scenario have been subject to the required level of scrutiny.

2. Developing adjacent to Dorchester will not be straightforward

Qualified local support for the proposed development scenarios is only likely to be forthcoming once these other alternatives have been more fully explored. Once a preferred position is established, there are a series of fundamental planning and design challenges facing any development north of the water meadows. Early master planning work will be vital to demonstrate how these challenges can be overcome.

3. We want to take a leading role in the process

Growth of the town on the scale envisaged will require significant partnership working to achieve the right outcomes. Land owners, developers and a range of public sector organisations must all work together. Dorchester Town Council wishes to have a leading role in the process to ensure that the views of the local community are fairly reflected in the work that lies ahead.

DOR15. LAND NORTH OF DORCHESTER (PREFERRED OPTION)

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

impact on the vitality and viability of the existing town centre will need to be demonstrated.

- vii) The development should offer opportunities for additional healthcare provision on site in a form that meets the needs of Dorset CCG.
- viii) The development will contain significant copse planting to break up the built form in views from the AONB. Streets will be tree lined to create a softer urban form.
- ix) The special historic environment within which the site sits will help to deliver local character to the development. Significant harm to designated and non-designated heritage assets should be avoided. Opportunities exist to enhance and better reveal significance of the heritage assets adjacent to the developable area including experiences of the literary connections with 'Hardy's Landscape' and these should be utilised within the development.

- x) Areas at flood risk from all sources will be avoided. The development will deliver a flood mitigation strategy which makes best use of the opportunities on the site with a viable and deliverable flood mitigation strategy being implemented.
- xi) The development should be at least nitrogen neutral. Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement on the site should be capitalised upon.
- xii) A Local Nature Reserve (LNR) should be provided at the water meadows as a key part of the green infrastructure network for the development. This should incorporate improved recreational access, opportunities for greater appreciation of the areas rich heritage and for heritage led tourism, biodiversity enhancement and wetland features.
- xiii) Key design requirements for the site will be established through the masterplan. The development should however be grounded in its local context taking design cues from Dorchester and the surrounding villages and make the most of the landmark buildings and features that exist in the area.

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

Dorchester Town Council

Special Meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee – 10 September 2018

Agenda Item 3. - WDDC Consultation on the Local Plan Preferred Options – Other Policies

Background

14. In 2017, West Dorset District Council published a document “Joint Local Plan Review for West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland (Initial Issues & Options Consultation)” identifying potential areas of land for housing in the immediate vicinity of Dorchester, including sites to the north of the town across the River Frome. Having considered responses from all quarters, the District Council launched a new document, the Preferred Options Consultation in August 2018, requesting responses by 8 October 2018. This is the final opportunity for Dorchester Town Council and other parties to express their views before the District Council formulates its final submission to go before the Planning Inspector.
15. One of the key policies impacting on Dorchester is Policy DOR.15 and the Town Council’s response to this policy will have been considered by the Committee under agenda item 2. There are a number of other policies that are of interest to the Town Council and all Councillors have been asked to consider the relevant ones, the response received is detailed below. This response will form the basis of the Committee’s discussion.
16. The Chairman of the Committee is proposing to deal with these policies by exception i.e. unless there are particular issues relating to the individual policies, raised in advance of the meeting, it is intended that they will not be discussed.

Comments on WDDC Preferred Options Consultation Policies and Questions

Dorchester	
DOR. 3	Fairfield Car Park 11-i Agree - with the caveat that little or no expansion is likely anywhere at present!
DOR. 6	Dorchester Transport and Environment Plan Park and Ride site should be removed from South of Town and allocated to the area covered by DOR. 15
DOR. 12	Former Dorchester Prison Why is this site designated as a ‘Preferred Option’ when is already has an approved planning permission on it?
DOR. 14	Dorset County Hospital iv) Could not some limited retail development be supported?
DOR.16	Land to the West of Charminster Will need to pay careful attention in particular to policies ENV. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, COM. 7 and HOUS. 3 Recognises that Charminster is to be kept separate from Dorchester but yet demands facilitating ease of travel to Dorchester. These seem incompatible.

11. Introduction (to Introduction)	
1-i	Yes
1-ii	In paragraph 1.2.19 add “and this is expected to continue” 1.2.12 significant investment in transport network and other infrastructure is needed
1-iii	“Strategic Priorities” need greater prominence within the plan and greater weight given to realistic ways of meeting them. ADD ‘Retention of good agricultural land’.
1-iv	Balance between “needs of the present”, “of future generations” and of “local circumstances” should be made more explicit so that prospective developers, local residents and the local planning authority have a clearer perspective about what should happen.
	INT 1 should include “Permission will not normally be granted when it is conflict with policies in this document”
Environment	
	Policies acceptable and questions to be answered positively except:- Table 2.2 in Green Infrastructure - Policy references need renumbering
2-xi	Policies should be included NOW!
Sustainable Pattern of Development	
SUS. 1	The Level of Housing and Economic Growth 3-i Do we have any choice?? Do we have any way of ensuring that the land we supply will be developed to reflect local needs rather than those of a developer?
	3-ii Infrastructure needs and connectivity must be addressed more carefully to ensure our needs are met - not the developer’s. “Number of dwellings” should be broken down by type and size. HOUS3 must be rigorously applied
	3-iv Employment- flexibility of provision is needed
SUS. 2	Spatial Strategy 3-v Refers to “needs of the local area”. How local??
SUS. 3	Re-Use of Buildings Outside Defined Development Boundaries 3-vi May be too restrictive, encouraging dilapidated buildings to be allowed to decay further when an alternative use is possible
SUS. 4	Neighbourhood Development Plans 3-ix Again, is there any mechanism for assessing more carefully the type of housing needed locally and including a policy to ensure such needs are addressed?
Economy	
ECON. 1 & 2	Provision of Employment/Protection of Key Employment Sites OK
ECON. 3	Protection of Other (Non-Key) Employment Sites 4-iii Should this apply to retail? E.g. closure of shop
ECON. 4	Retail Need and Provision 4-iv we can only provide, not develop. At present there is little or no prospect of sustainable development
ECON. 5	Retail Hierarchy, the Sequential Test and Impact Assessments 4-v Should be Table 4.3
ECON. 6, 7 & 8	Protection of Retail Frontages/Hot Food Takeaways/Markets Agreed
ECON. 9 & 10	Tourism Attractions and Facilities/Built Tourist Accommodation “Adequate visitor facilities” needs clarification
Housing	

HOUS. 1	Affordable Housing 5-i Add to iv). detailing which elements are contributing to the claim of non-viability. Planners must be robust in examining carefully any claim of non-viability and offer alternative ways of reaching viability
HOUS. 2	Affordable Housing Exception Sites 5-ii Good
HOUS. 3	Open Market Housing Mix 5-iii Delete “whenever possible” ADD Residential development should include an appropriate mix of size, type and affordability of dwelling, taking into account the likely need in that locality.
Community	
COM. 1	Making Sure New Development Makes Suitable Provision for Community Infrastructure 6-i The trend at present is for more space for informal leisure/play rather than playing pitches. However, this may well change. How can the need for flexibility in provision be accommodated?
COM. 2 to COM. 6	New or Improved Local Community Buildings and Structures etc etc OK
COM. 7	Creating a Safe and Efficient Transport Network 6-iii ADD ‘Proposals which would have a negative impact on access to sustainable transport solutions will not be supported.’
Policy Maps	
Policy maps (currently un-numbered) in the Policies Map Amendments Document August 2018 should be numbered to fit with their respective description in the main Consultation Document.	
Dorchester	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remove secondary shopping frontage on Eldridge Street, Brewery Square as this is now has approved residential use - Add area of Nappers Court and shops at the end of Hardye Arcade/Charles Street to secondary shopping frontage 	
Poundbury	
This map indicates that the area around Queen Mother Square is designated as being part of the ‘Town Centre Boundary’ – should this area be treated as a ‘District’ or ‘Local Centre’ for the duration of this Local Plan? See the description in Poundbury Urban Extension paragraph 11.4.19. – seems to conflict.	