

# Dorchester Town Council

## Minutes of the Planning and Environment Committee

2 March 2026

**Present:** The Mayor (Councillor A. Canning) and Councillors L. Fry (Vice Chair) R. Biggs, S. Biles, S. Jones, V. Lloyd-Jones, J. Hewitt, F. Hogwood, R. Major, R. Potter, D. Leaper, M. Rennie.

In Attendance

Councillor W. Gibbons.

**Apologies:** Councillors R. Ricardo, F. Kent-Ledger, P. Farmer.

**65. Declarations of Interest**

Councillors L. Fry and R. Major stated that as members of Dorset Council's Northern Area Planning Committee, they would keep an open mind on the planning applications and consider all information available at each stage of the decision process. They would take part in the debate but not vote on planning applications at this meeting.

**66. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2 February 2026 were approved by the Committee and signed by the Vice Chair.

**67. Local Plan Consultation Response to Flooding.**

The Committee considered whether to strengthen Dorchester Town Council's response to the Dorset Council Local Plan in light of the recent flooding experienced in the town.

Members discussed recent flood events, including at Castle Park and in the London Road/Kings Road areas. Councillor L. Fry updated the Committee on joint investigations with Dorset Council (DC) and Wessex Water at Castle Park. While initial checks found gullies clear and operational, the volume of water overwhelmed the system due to the ground being totally saturated. It was noted that DC would jet-clean all gullies in the affected area within 28 days and Wessex Water would conduct further investigations into drainage connections, as some surface water systems appeared to be incorrectly linked to sewage pipes.

A consensus emerged that the recent floods demonstrate that the existing approach to surface water management is no longer fit for purpose. Councillors agreed that the previous assumption that land and watercourses could absorb excess water is invalid under current conditions of high groundwater and more frequent extreme rainfall. It was noted that tankers were required to pump floodwater from roads.

Key concerns and proposed amendments to the Local Plan response included:

- **Strengthening Policy Wording:** Councillors proposed that the Council's response be 'beefed up' to be more proactive and robust, reflecting that the current drainage solutions are not working. It was agreed that the wording on the DTC response should be amended to highlight the need for careful attention to flood mitigation in light of recent events and the high-water table.
- **Groundwater Monitoring:** The Committee agreed that the policy on 'winter ground wastewater monitoring' should be upgraded from its current level to 'very regular monitoring'.
- **North Dorchester Development:** There are significant concerns that the proposed North Dorchester development would exacerbate existing problems. Councillors noted that developers' claims of managing runoff through large drains are questionable when the water is already too high to accept more water.
- **Community Support:** Councillors discussed the practical difficulties faced by residents in the East Ward (London Road/Kings Road), who were unable to access the DC sandbag depot in Charminster due to floodwater. It was suggested that future plans should include local sandbag stores in the flood-prone areas. The Committee noted that a report on sandbags is scheduled for the March Policy Committee meeting.
- **Data and Modelling:** A request had been received from a member of the public for accurate flood mapping and hydrological modelling to predict the impact of increased rainfall and development.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Vice Chair and Committee Clerk be authorised to consolidate the Committee's comments on flooding and submit a strengthened response to the Dorset Council Local Plan.
2. That a letter be written to Dorset Council outlining these concerns and requesting a more proactive and robust approach to flood mitigation in the Local Plan.

#### **68. Concerns Regarding the Upkeep of the Walks**

The Committee discussed ongoing concerns regarding the maintenance and upkeep of the Walks.

Councillors reported that the current arrangements are not working effectively. It was suggested that when Dorchester Town Council was responsible for the area, the Walks were better maintained. Specific issues included bins not closing properly – reported but not acted upon – and a general lack of proactivity. It was questioned if staff emptying the bins could also report graffiti and other issues.

A key point of the criticism was the collapsed section of the wall near the Roman Town House in Colliton Park. Members noted that scaffolding and water tanks have been in place for some time to provide ballast, but no repair work has been carried out by Dorset Council.

Despite these problems, members agreed that the Walks remain one of the town's most attractive features, with spring flowers currently on display in some sections. However, anti-social behaviour was highlighted as a recurring issue that has seen little visible action from the Police.

Councillors suggested several ways forward:

- **Improved Collaboration:** It was noted that DC has expressed a desire to work more closely with town and parish councils to improve the public realm. While one member noted that when issues are reported to DC they are often dealt with quickly, there was a consensus that earlier identification of problems by DC and DTC staff would be beneficial.
- **Asset Transfer:** The possibility of the Walks being handed over to DTC was raised, although it was acknowledged that the Walks are a Highway and any transfer would require financial support from DC.
- **Role of the Keeper of the Walks:** Questions were raised about the current role and reporting lines of the Keeper of the Walks, with a suggestion that the Clerk investigate this further.
- **Police Engagement:** It was agreed that the PCSO should be contacted regarding the lack of action in anti-social behaviour in the area and the Police Sergeant would be questioned on this at the next meeting of the full Council.

A Councillor commented that while DC is looking to improve relationships with towns and parishes, this process is taking time.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Clerk and Vice Chair write to Dorset Council requesting a meeting to discuss building a better working relationship regarding the upkeep of the Walks (Councillor Fry to confirm appropriate contact).
2. That the Clerk contact the PCSO to raise concerns about anti-social behaviour in the area.
3. That the Clerk speak to the BID to clarify the reporting lines and responsibilities of the Keeper of the Walks.

**69. Planning Applications for Comment**

The Committee considered the planning applications referred by Dorset Council to the Council or comment.

**RESOLVED:**

That the comments on the various planning applications, as set out in Appendix 1, be submitted to Dorset Council.

70. **Minute Update Report**

No updates.

71. **Planning Issues to Note**

No issues to note.

**Dorchester Town Council  
Planning & Environment Committee – 2 March 2026**

**Planning Applications for Comment****East Ward (Councillors P. Farmer, S. Jones, F. Kent-Ledger and R. Major)****E1. P/LBC/2026/00438 Max Gate Alington Avenue Dorchester DT1 2FN**

External alterations to the rainwater goods on the western elevation. Install lead flashing and other associated minor alterations to the roof. Strip slates to southern elevation bay window. Strip and replace first bay of the lead roof.

No Objection

**E2. P/LBC/2026/00493 Max Gate Alington Avenue Dorchester DT1 2FN**

External alterations to reroof the existing slate roof over the scullery including all associated works.

No Objection

**E3. P/LBC/2025/07458 94 High Street Fordington Dorchester DT1 1LD**

Retain works to install 2no. stoves & flues. Replace plaster surrounding fireplaces with lime plaster. Replacement of 10no. single glazed modern windows with new double glazed windows, replacement render, repointing of the brick gable. Installation of French drain to perimeter & the repair of two porches.

Item previously considered at meeting on 2 February 2026.

**North Ward ( Councillors S. Biles, A. Canning and V. Lloyd-Jones)****N1. P/FUL/2026/00422 & P/LBC/2026/00423 (Listed Building Consent) 64 High West Street Dorchester DT1 1XA.**

Change of use of ground floor from use class Ec1 to use class Eb cafe/bar.

No Objection

**N2. P/FUL/2025/07415 Unit 1 43 South Street Dorchester DT1 1DQ.**

Change of use from class use SG (Sui Generis) to Eb (to serve food, drink & alcohol).

No Objection

**N3. P/LBC/2026/00668 4 West Walks Dorchester DT1 1RE.**

Remodel of the lower ground floor and associated works.

No Objection

**N4. P/LBC/2026/00701 Unit 1 43 South Street Dorchester DT1 1DQ**

Install wall-mounted extract canopy incorporating a full perimeter condense channel.

No Objection

**N5. P/FUL/2025/07361 & P/LBC/2025/07362 (Listed Building Consent) 41 High West Street  
Dorchester DT1 1UT**

Alterations to facilitate the change of use & conversion from commercial premises to 3 no. flats. (Amended plans).

No Objection

**N6. P/LBC/2026/00494 8 Glyde Path Road Dorchester DT1 1XE**

Erect replacement front porch.

No Objection

**West Ward (Councillors L. Fry, J. Germodo, J. Hewitt and R. Ricardo)**

**W1. P/FUL/2026/00854 35 Maud Road Dorchester DT1 2LP**

Form new opening within the principal elevation, install a new timber hatch & erect non illuminated sign.

No Objection

**W2. P/HOU/2026/00631 76 Celtic Crescent Dorchester DT1 2TB**

Erect first floor side extension and front porch.

No Objection

**South Ward (Councillors R. Potter and M. Rennie)**

No applications.

**Poundbury Ward (Councillors R. Biggs, F. Hogwood and D. Leaper)**

No applications.