

**Dorchester Town Council**  
**Minutes of the Planning and Environment Committee**  
**3 August 2026**

**Present:** Cllrs. R. Biggs, S. Biles, A. Canning, P. Farmer, F. Kent-Ledger, D. Leaper, R. Potter, K. Reid, M. Rennie, R. Ricardo (Chair) and D. Taylor.

**Apologies:** Councillors L. Fry (the Mayor ex-officio & Vice Chair), J. Hewitt and S. Jones.

**Also in attendance:** Cllrs. W. Gibbons, F. Hogwood and Ollie Fountain (Bidwells), Steve Jolly (Marengo), Gavin Murray (Brooks Murray) and members of the public (regarding agenda item 3).

**15. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor R. Potter declared an interest as Chair of the Dorchester Transport Action Group and advised that he would take no part in the debate or determination of the transport proposals.

**16. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3 July 2026 and ratified at Full Council on 27 July 2026 were signed by the chair.

**17. Planning Application P/OUT/2026/03215 Land west of A35 and east of Slyers Lane North of Dorchester**

The Committee received a presentation from Ollie Fountain of Bidwells and Steve Jolly of Marengo on planning application P/OUT/2026/03215.

The Committee raised concerns about the following issues:

- Unsustainable stand-alone development
- Lack of certainty on infrastructure delivery
- Inadequate active travel provision
- Highway safety and traffic impacts
- Water, drainage and hydrology concerns
- Biodiversity and ecological impacts
- Impact on heritage and archaeology

The Committee considered the application as set out in appendix 1. Councillors R. Biggs and D. Leaper abstained from voting on the application.

**18. Proposed Parking and Waiting Restrictions – Lubbecke Way**

The Committee considered amendments to existing parking restrictions on Lubbecke Way to improve road safety, visibility, access to key facilities, and enforceability of parking controls. The Committee supported the proposed changes and requested that the Clerk to the Committee inform Dorset Council of its support.

**Resolved**

That the Clerk to the Committee contact Dorset Council to confirm the Committee's support for the proposed amendments to the existing parking restrictions on Lubbecke Way.

**19. 20MPH Task and Finish Group**

The Committee received a verbal update from the chair of the 20mph task and finish group. The Committee was informed that over 2,500 responses had been received to date to the Council's proposed 20mph scheme consultation. The consultation would remain open until 7 September 2026, with opportunities for face to face engagement available alongside the online survey.

**20. Planning Applications for Comment**

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

**Resolved**

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

**21. Minute Update Report**

There were no minute updates to report.

**22. Planning Issues to Note**

There were no planning issues to report.

**Dorchester Town Council**  
**Planning & Environment Committee – 3 August 2026**  
**Planning Applications for Comment**

**East Ward (Councillors P. Farmer, S. Jones, F. Kent-Ledger and R. Major)**

No applications received.

**North Ward (Councillors S. Biles, A. Canning, V. Lloyd-Jones and D. Taylor)**

**N1. P/VOC/2026/03565 38 South Street & 5A Trinity Street Dorchester**

Formation of two residential flats (Use Class C3) across the first, second and third floors. Replace ground floor retail frontage facing South Street. Replace roof structure & erect dormer window. Replace all windows. Replace roof to rear single storey extension. (with variation of condition 2 of planning permission P/FUL/2025/07231 to add a rooflight).

No objection.

**N2. P/VOL/2026/03634 38 South Street & 5A Trinity Street Dorchester**

Rebuild the party wall between Nos. 38 and 39 South Street. Replace the ground-floor retail frontage and carry out internal alterations to create two residential flats across the upper floors. Install a new timber roof with natural slate finish and a dormer window. Replace all timber sash windows with slimline double-glazed units. Remove the external timber toilet at first-floor level and renew the rear extension roof with a flat roof. External works to include paint removal from front brickwork, stonework repairs, and replacement of rear cement render with lime render. (with variation of condition 2 of listed building consent P/LBC/2025/07232 to add a rooflight).

No objection.

**N3. P/LBC/2026/03915 1 Glyde Path Road Dorchester DT1 1XB**

Re-rendering of the South gable and additional lead flashings and weatherings to the chimney stack.

No objection.

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

**W1. P/VOC/2026/03918 Dorset County Hospital Williams Avenue Dorchester DT1 2JY**

New Hospitals Project including a new Emergency Department, a new 24 bed Critical Care Department and replacement helipad at roof level (with variation of condition 1 of planning permission P/RES/2023/03565 to amend reference to plans, sections and elevations to reflect the latest design intent).

No objection.

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

**S1. P/HOU/2026/03703 18 Kingsbere Crescent Dorchester DT1 2DY**

Replace flat roof over porch/garage with new lean-to roof. Erect a rear lean-to extension.

No objection.

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

No applications received.

**In Addition**

**P/OUT/2026/03215 Land west of A35 and east of Slyers Lane North of Dorchester**

Erection of buildings including up to 500no. dwellings, residential institutions; mixed-use neighbourhood centre including flexible employment, retail, leisure and community uses; associated infrastructure including new roads, drainage, footpaths and formal and informal open spaces, landscaping and public realm, cycle and vehicular parking and servicing, utilities and other associated works (Outline application to determine access only).

*Prepared by Jo Witherden BSc(Hons) DipTP DipUD MRTPI, August 2026 on behalf of Dorchester Town Council*

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**THE DEVELOPMENT**

The application is in outline but includes details of the proposed access arrangements and land use and building heights parameter plans which potentially could be conditioned at this stage, in addition to several other “indicative” parameter plans and illustrative masterplan. It proposes the creation of a new neighbourhood, which would contain a single centre that the application form suggests would include 1,065 sqm gross internal floorspace within use classes E, F1, F2, C1-3, sui generis, in addition to residential uses. The supporting documentation is unfortunately inconsistent in terms of the potential breakdown of this floorspace. The proposals state that 175 (35%) of the dwellings would fall within the definition of affordable homes.

The site extends to just over 24.5ha of agricultural land. The parameter plans, if accepted, would limit the buildings to an area of about 8.2ha (1.1ha for the neighbourhood centre and 7.1ha for the additional residential areas), on land to the north side of Cokers Frome Road.

The neighbourhood area would be accessed off the B3143 Slyers Lane, with an additional ‘emergency only’ access provided from the eastern section of Cokers Frome Road. The access arrangements also include the diversion of the lower end of the B3143 Slyers Lane to meet the B3150 Stinsford Road further to the east. The detailed access plans are not provided separately but are assumed to be those be found in EIA Appendix 18.1 (the Transport Assessment), and specifically: 24554-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-200 – Site Access Drawing and Slyers Lane / London Road Junction Improvement. However the plans specify “DO NOT SCALE OFF THIS DRAWING” and do not indicate any extent to which these relate to the surrounding topography in terms of any required level changes, and as such it is unclear whether these are of sufficient detail to be relied upon at this stage.

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**CONSIDERATION OF THE PLANNING APPLICATION**

Members of the Planning and Environment Committee of Dorchester Town Council met to consider the Town Council’s response to the planning application at their meeting on

Monday, 3 August 2026. Representatives from the applicants attended the meeting to present the scheme to the Council, and sought to answer questions.

The Town Council resolved to **OBJECT** to the application on the following grounds, which are detailed further in this report.

Isolated nature of the new housing, and related health and well-being issues particular for more vulnerable residents, given the need to consider this as a stand-alone application and lack agreement on any wider masterplan for the North Dorchester area.

Lack of certainty regarding phasing and delivery of infrastructure.

Lack of suitable active travel options beyond the site, such as to / from the local schools, and other community facilities in the town and also in Stinsford, as well as allowing for the potential for facilities within the development to attract visitors (such as to the outdoor sports ground and facilities within the Neighbourhood Centre, and visitors to the care home).

Traffic impacts on the highway network insufficiently addressed, including consideration of peak traffic flows from local events / shows, implications for other road users such as cyclists and equestrians.

Impact on the water system / local hydrology, and lack of detailed assessment despite previously raised concerns on water supply and sewerage infrastructure in relation to the North Dorchester proposals

Impact on biodiversity / ecology – in particular with regard to wildlife dependent on the river / flood plain and importance of the Frome as a chalk stream.

Impact on heritage and archaeology – including the lack of adequate archaeological assessment.

The Town Council was also disappointed to understand that, despite the applicant's wish to deliver houses quickly, and the rounds of pre-application discussions undertaken, various elements of the scheme were yet to be resolved, and as such they were being invited to comment on what was presented as an evolving scheme. This included statements made by the applicants' representatives that they were in the process of looking at the provision of a pedestrian crossing of Stinsford roundabout, and that they were in the process of completing a ground-based assessment to inform trial trenching locations for the archaeological assessment, yet supposedly an application for the wider masterplan (which presumably would also be in outline) should be expected 'in the coming months'.

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## STAND-ALONE NEIGHBOURHOOD

The applicant has made clear that, although they are looking to pursue the wider North Dorchester proposals, that "the scheme is being promoted as a stand-alone development". This means that there is no certainty that the scheme will form part of the wider North Dorchester proposals, or how it might relate to such a community if and when a decision on this is made. The pre-application advice provided by Dorset Council on has been consistent in raising strong concerns about this, in particular:

the limited facilities and infrastructure (active travel) that such a stand-alone community would bring, to connect to existing facilities found within Dorchester

the isolation for people living within what would be a primarily residential development, at some distance from adequate levels of facilities and services, where future residents would be dependent on driving everywhere to meet their day to day needs

the lack of certainty regarding possible benefits of forming part of a wider holistic scheme with the infrastructure and facilities necessary to achieve a genuinely sustainable form of development in this location.

The Town Council fully supports these concerns. Added to this is the lack of certainty regarding the composition of the neighbourhood centre, and the phasing of the delivery of the facilities and infrastructure that are proposed to be delivered.

In terms of the neighbourhood centre, the application form gives a figure of 1,065 sqm gross internal floorspace within use classes E, F1, F2, C1-3, sui generis. There is inconsistency in terms of what this may provide – whether this includes a nursery or health centre or both, and whether or not there would be a community hall, and how these are all provided within the suggested floorspace<sup>1</sup>. At the Town Council meeting the applicant's representative referred to there being 500sqm shops (possibly 5 units), a nursery school, and pub. No evidence is provided that any operators have expressed an interest in the scheme. Even on small matters there are inconsistencies – for example, in terms of public open space, the EIA report on water resources states that allotments would not be provided (noting that these should typically be sited outside of SPZ zones), yet allotments are shown on the indicative masterplan and referenced in the design and access statement, and were referred to by the applicant's representative at the Town Council meeting, and clearly would be needed for an isolated development of this scale.

In relation to education, whilst there is capacity in the wider catchment, there does not appear to have been any consideration of extant permissions such as development of the final phases at Poundbury, and proposed growth at Charminster, and whether (as highlighted in the Council's own pre-application response) there is a risk that associated contributions might have to be utilised elsewhere whilst the wider scheme is pending determination / implementation, resulting in imbalance within the wider scheme should it come forward in due course. The applicant's planning statement suggests that the development would contribute towards improvements at existing schools within the catchment, and that this would be discussed with Dorset Council during the application determination period and secured through an appropriate mechanism e.g., Section 106. Yet it is important that the wider public are given an opportunity to comment on any such agreement.

In terms of phasing, the application suggests that only the primary access will be operational, the woodland buffer, SuDS network and (some) green corridors will be established before the first homes are occupied. No trigger point is provided for the delivery of the neighbourhood centre. The active travel connections (limited as they may be) are proposed to be delivered in phases as the homes are built, with no consideration of wider off-site connections required.

The lack of sufficient local facilities and employment opportunities, provided in a timely manner, will have a significant and detrimental impact on those residents that do not have access to a car. This will include many of those who may be placed on the affordable rented housing, as well as the elderly residents including those in the care home provision. This isolation cannot be overcome simply through the provision of a bus service, which itself is not guaranteed to be sustained, or by the expectation that mothers with prams or elderly residents who are less able can cycle into the town.

The relevant National Planning Policy for decision-making is HC3. This expects proposals for this scale of housing to be informed by an understanding of the need for any associated improvements to community facilities and public service infrastructure, and for the development to provide for new or improved community facilities and public service infrastructure which are necessary for the development to be acceptable in planning terms. The application neither provides adequate analysis and evidence on these points, nor

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<sup>1</sup> The planning statement specifies that this has the potential for: convenience retail, community space, a nursery or health hub, a public house and flexible commercial floorspace. It goes on to note that the nursery would be a key benefit, and that a financial contribution would provide access to healthcare. The EIA refers to a mix comprising approximately 500sqm of small unit shops, approximately 375sqm for a public house and a 56-place nursery (but no healthcare or community venue). The Transport Assessment refers to 500sqm of local facilities (e.g. convenience store, hairdresser/café/ gym), 375sqm public house, 200sqm Nursery / Health use and a Community Hall (functions / meetings / exercises classes etc) – clearly exceeding the 1,065sqm.

accommodates the necessary infrastructure to ensure that the development contains a sustainable mix of uses or access to existing facilities.

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## ACTIVE TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES

Very little consideration appears to have been given to active travel beyond the site boundary. No audits are provided that examine the full route length that would be followed by residents travelling to the various facilities in the wider area.

On the basis that this neighbourhood will be reliant on Dorchester and Stinsford for many of its facilities and employment opportunities, it is absolutely critical that active travel opportunities are provided to cover key journeys. In this location, such trips would include travel to Dorchester Town Centre, the existing schools in the town, and also the facilities at Stinsford / Kingston Maurward College.

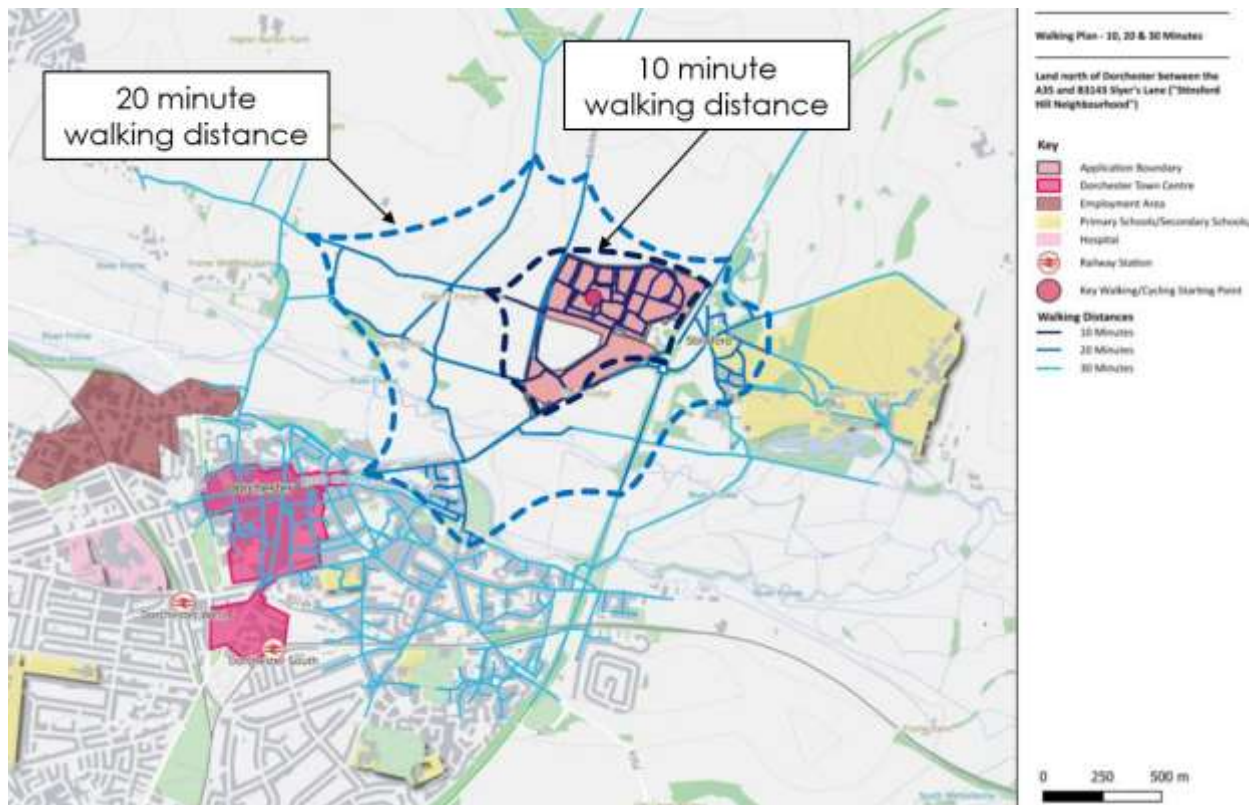
This also applies to employment opportunities. In terms of employment, the applicant calculates that 500 dwellings would be likely to accommodate about 560 people aged 19-64 (which is the principal working age cohort). Whilst not all of these would be in employment, it would be reasonable to assume that at least 75% (420 people) would be working<sup>2</sup>. Yet, following the construction phase, the applicant suggests that the development would only provide for 118 full-time equivalent jobs (50 within the Neighbourhood centre and 68 'Working from home') – meaning that about 300 residents would need to look for work outside of the neighbourhood. Whilst work opportunities are likely to be concentrated in Dorchester and Kingston Maurward, for completeness, consideration should also be given to active travel options connecting north to the employment area at Piddlehinton Enterprise Park.

It is generally accepted that a “walkable” distance for everyday facilities is around 800m (a 10-minute walk), with shorter distances for bus stops (400m). This is reflected in paragraph 63 of the National Design Guide and published advice from Active Travel England, as well as Manual for Streets. 800m or 10 minutes' walk time (which may reduce the overall distance depending on topography, route availability and quality or physical barriers) also features in the most recent NPPF glossary definition of “reasonable walking distance”.

Yet the 10- and 20-minute walking isochrones (based on the applicant's maps) show the reality of the isolation of this proposed neighbourhood.

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<sup>2</sup> Based on the UK employment rate (aged 16 to 64 years) published in July 2026 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/employmentintheuk/july2026> - and likelihood that the exclusion of those aged 16 – 18 would increase the employment rate given that many of these would remain in full-time education.



The 10 minute walk barely reaches beyond the site boundaries, highlighting the reliance on facilities within the development itself. Even the 20 minute walk only reaches the edge of the town, and does not extend to the town centre, the train stations, major employment areas such as the hospital site, or the local schools. Anyone willing to walk the considerable distance into town may also be deterred given a significant proportion of this walk would be along the side of the B3143 and B3150 London Road, not overlooked by properties and unlikely to feel safe for more vulnerable residents including women and children.

No consideration is given to the safe crossing of the junction of Grey's Bridge (where there is no provision for pedestrian or cyclist crossing at the signal-controlled junction), or the routes as they continue through the town. The same applies for cycle journeys, which given the distance would be the more viable option for those with adequate fitness levels, yet Dorchester lacks safe dedicated cycle routes. The Council may not be obliged to provide dedicated bus transport to the schools, but very few parents are likely to support their children walking and cycling these distances with the lack of safe, dedicated paths provided. This appears to be acknowledged in the applicant's own transport assessment, which does not anticipate any journeys to school on foot, and only 6 out of 323 journeys by cycle. How will the scheme ensure residents can freely, safely and easily access the town facilities, particularly children, residents in affordable housing on limited incomes, and those with limited mobility, and that this does not become a car-led development?

It is also possible that the active travel routes into Dorchester will be flooded for part of the year, and increasingly so with climate change. Access considerations should include the voluntary and free movement of people - the whole route into Dorchester (for active travel) should be considered in terms of flood risk.

No consideration is given to routes connecting south-west to Stinsford and the facilities at Kingston Maurward College (and also the bus stop on the A35). The shorter route from the site would use the eastern section of Cokers Frome Road, but there is no crossing provision proposed at this point, and no lighting or footways along the lane. Such journeys would require pedestrians and cyclists to cross the busy Stinsford roundabout. Stinsford roundabout is already extremely busy during peak periods, and the ability for pedestrians and cyclists to navigate this junction has not been adequately addressed in the application.

It is also possible that facilities within the development may attract visitors from outside of the neighbourhood (such as to the outdoor sports ground and facilities within the Neighbourhood Centre, and visitors to the care home).

Whilst the applicant states a bus service is “being considered” (suggesting possible either half hourly or hourly service Monday to Saturday, from 7am – 7pm), there is no evidence to suggest that a route would be viable, despite this being raised in Dorset Council Highways’ pre-application responses. Nor would this necessarily extend late enough into the evenings or on weekends to provide reasonable access to leisure opportunities outside of normal working hours, or (for example) visitors to the care home facility. Similarly, the potential to include a bus stop on B3150 close to the realigned junction is referenced as an option to provide access to CR8 (Blandford to Weymouth via Dorchester) and CR9 (Blandford to Dorchester via Bere Regis) services, but this is not indicated on the submitted plans.

The relevant National Planning Policies for decision-making are TR2 and DP3. TR2 states that development proposals which could generate a significant amount of movement should be in locations that are sustainable, or which can be made so, taking into account planned or proposed improvements. DP3 requires developments to provide good connections to the wider settlement (or those nearby), and prioritise walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport. Neither of these requirements are met by this development.

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## HIGHWAYS SAFETY AND CONGESTION

The transport assessment estimates that the development would generate an increase of about 165 vehicles per hour peak time, although this may well be higher if the anticipated use of active travel is not realized given the proposed levels and inadequacies of provision. Cumulatively impacts have not been properly assessed despite further growth being planned or pending decision in the wider Dorchester catchment.

Whilst the assessment considers that the impact of the development traffic on the Stinsford Roundabout is not material (as they estimate that this would only add one additional queueing vehicle on any arm), this does not negate the fact that the roundabout is shown to be approaching capacity. The lived experience of many residents is queues during peak periods back up along the B3150 Stinsford Road as far as and sometimes beyond the existing junction with the B3143 Slyers Lane, particularly when local events are planned, which in recent years seems to be becoming more regular. The Town Council notes that National Highways have already stated that insufficient information has been provided to fully understand the potential traffic impact of the development on the A35 trunk road.

The provision of a signalized junction has the potential to further complicate the queuing in such scenarios. It is unclear whether the modelling takes sufficient account of the potential back-up situations where the queues then interfere with the function of either Stinsford roundabout or Grey’s Bridge. The modelling appears to be suggesting potential queues of 12 vehicles heading into Dorchester in the morning, and 9 vehicles backing up to Grey’s Bridge in the evening. The presence of visibly long queues causes traffic to divert onto other roads within Dorchester and use the ‘back roads’ in the wider area. Driver frustration is increased adding to the potential for accidents.

The Town Council also shares Dorset Council’s pre-application concerns, that it is yet unclear how or in what form future mitigation for the North Dorchester Garden Community proposals will be implemented. It is concerning that the wider masterplanning process is being fragmented, with no clarity on how this is being coordinated given the North Dorchester Consortium’s proposals’ variance with the Council’s own draft masterplan (which extends beyond the land within the Consortium’s control) and lack of publication of landowner and developer responses to the 2025 Local Plan consultation. It is conceivable that the arrangements proposed at this stage will have to be reconfigured, and even that the highway connection that will be required to the A35 would be best routed through part of the site. There is also no clarity how or when this site would be connected via active travel to the other neighbourhoods to the north and further west.

Very little consideration, if any, appears to have been given to the impact of development on more vulnerable road users (such as cyclists and equestrians) in relation to traffic along Cokers Frome Road (to the west) and Slyers Lane (heading north). Whilst the level of traffic generated by this proposal may be considered relatively low in highways terms (peak hour increases estimated at ~16 vehicles and ~109 vehicles respectively), these roads are rural in nature and have limited width and forward visibility.

The relevant National Planning Policy for decision-making is TR6. This requires transport assessments to assess movement patterns and potential impacts, taking into account impacts at relevant times of the day, potential cumulative impacts, as well as multimodal trip generation, yet the assessment is limited in its scope and extent. It also requires development proposals to be refused if they would have a severe adverse impact on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion, including cumulative impacts), or an unacceptable impact on highway safety. Given the above concerns, it is contended that, had the assessment been sufficiently thorough, it would have indicated that severe adverse impacts are likely and that significant highway safety concerns were not mitigated.

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## WATER SYSTEM / LOCAL HYDROLOGY AND ECOLOGICAL IMPACTS

Wessex Water's response to the North Dorchester proposals (2025 consultation)<sup>3</sup> made clear that:

they continue to have concerns regarding the North of Dorchester development and the impact on the water recharge and water quality at the Eagle Lodge Source.

it is crucial that groundwater sources are protected from contamination and reduced recharge so that drinking water supplies can be preserved.

The Environment Agency's response to that consultation<sup>4</sup> also highlighted the need for further evidence in the form of a Water Cycle Study (WCS), which was required "to evaluate the impact of growth on the water environment, across the plan area and beyond, and provide the evidence needed to support the development proposed."

The Town Council notes that the applicant anticipates that all new development will be located in Flood Zone 1, with the exception of the proposed active travel mitigation and a new site access in London Road and Slyers Lane. The Environment Agency has already raised concerns regarding the adequacy of the Flood Risk Assessment. The Town Council agrees with the points raised, but would also add that the means of access to the development should include the whole route into Dorchester. Furthermore, the submitted sequential test (dated November 2025 and found in Appendix C of Appendix 20 of the EIA) does not consider comparable sites that could accommodate this scale of development, as it is based on the whole of the North Dorchester draft masterplan scheme, and is therefore flawed in its conclusions. It is also questionable whether it should be limited to the former West Dorset and Weymouth area if the proposals are purported to meeting Dorset Council's strategic housing needs.

The Environment Agency is also objecting because the risks to groundwater from the proposed development have not been demonstrated to be acceptable. The Town Council agrees with their concerns and has a number of points to make in this regard. A drainage strategy is provided, and this anticipates that all developed parts of the site would be restricted to greenfield run off rates and designed to be protective of the groundwater environment. The information provided is unclear (despite the levels of pre-application engagement) in terms of the use of rainwater (with Dorset Council encouraging rainwater harvesting to be plumbed into new dwellings so that it can be re-used for such things as

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/7122503/Wessex%20Water.pdf/5d5dfe5c-e593-be6c-a7ac-30b04888837d>

<sup>4</sup>

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/7122503/Environment%20Agency.pdf/159a19f9-32d6-ea6f-f650-2aa88d6bb0c2>

toilet flushing, which would remove this source from the potential for recharging the groundwater), the potential degree of proposed infiltration (which clearly needs to have been agreed with the Environment Agency), and what mechanisms would be used to filter out pollutants at each stage. Whilst a system designed to be protective of the groundwater environment in theory would minimise residual impacts, it does not prevent any harm. Indeed, the Environmental Statement concludes that “Should an accidental spillage occur, there is the potential for the water quality at the Eagle Lodge PWS borehole to be affected, and in a worst-case scenario having to be taken out of service”. There is no additional assessment of the implications of the loss of this “key local water supply asset” in such a worst-case scenario, particularly in terms of public water supply for the Dorchester area. The Environmental Statement cannot rule out a major adverse impact during the construction or operational phases. On this basis the applicant’s hydrological assessment and mitigation proposals appear wholly inadequate.

In addition to consideration of the potential impact on public water supplies, the changes to the water table and possible pollution also have the potential to impact on local wildlife and habitats. Whilst nutrient neutrality is considered in relation to Poole Harbour, there is no clear evidence that the ecological impacts on the River Frome as a chalk stream environment have been fully considered in terms of the water hydrology and pollution impacts. For example, implications of the drainage scheme discharging into the local watercourse (the Frome), and the extent to which this may contribute to pollution of this habitat. Town Council members are concerned that protected species such as the Atlantic salmon (known to frequent the Frome as far upstream as Maiden Newton<sup>5</sup>) will be further adversely impacted when they are already in severe decline in this area, and no mitigation has been identified due to the absence of a robust assessment.

It is also noted that feedback received from Natural England suggests that “In light of the ecological sensitivity of the southern field and its role as habitat for bats, we recommend that this area remains free from artificial lighting.” This appears to be in direct conflict with the advice on active travel and the applicant’s proposals for these routes to be lit 24/7.

The relevant National Planning Policies for decision-making are P3 and N2. Part 2(f) of NPPF P3 requires applicants to assess and mitigate impacts where the development could have an unacceptable adverse effect on water quality, especially in relation to sensitive water bodies such as chalk streams. N2 requires development proposals to minimise any adverse impacts on biodiversity, and that significant harm to biodiversity that cannot be compensated for must be refused. The lack of an adequate assessment and certainty means that avoidance, mitigation and compensation cannot be assured.

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## HERITAGE INCLUDING ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACTS

The Town Council notes that some of the key historic environment consultees have already responded to the consultation and raised significant concerns based on the inadequacy of the assessment provided. This also links with the concerns raised in respect of the landscape and visual impacts assessment. The Town Council shares these concerns.

This includes the lack of a full archaeological assessment and evaluation of the site, in light of the high potential for significant finds given the Roman presence in the area (with the Roman by-pass road running through the site) as well as the prehistoric funerary importance of the area (such as the Stinsford Barrow Group) and potential importance of connections between these and other prehistoric sites.

Another example of the lack of evaluation is in terms of the changes arising from the introduction of a signalised junction with associated lighting connecting from Dorchester along the B3150 and continuing north to this new Neighbourhood. This would clearly impact

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gwct.org.uk/media/1234772/Fisheries-Report-2020.pdf>

on the approach into Dorchester from the east, the cultural and historic significance of the watermeadows, and the setting of Eagle Lodge which is a non-designated heritage asset.

The understanding of heritage impacts is also compounded by the poor quality of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. This appears to omit visualisations for viewpoints that are 'scoped in' as potentially significant (such as the visualisation from close to Eagle Lodge) as well as failing to scope in views from heritage assets such as the Stinsford Barrow Group to the north. The LVIA itself recognises a number of limitations, despite the significance of this issue, including:

Winter views (reduced leaf cover) were not obtained for all of the baseline views due to timing of project programme;

Night-time effects have not been assessed.

The relevant National Planning Policies for decision-making are HE5, HE6, HE7, HE9 and HE10. The policies require an assessment of the effect that development would have on the significance of heritage assets (including through effects on their setting), and confirms the need for field evaluation of areas of archaeological interest when this is necessary to understand the asset's significance and the potential effect of the proposal on this.

Therefore it is critically important that the assessment is sufficiently robust. Substantial weight must be afforded to a heritage asset's conservation, and any harm to a designated heritage asset will be a matter of considerable importance and weight. Decisions on non-designated heritage assets continue to require a balanced judgement to be made. Heritage assets with archaeological interest should be preserved in situ where feasible.