



Dorset Councils Partnership

West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan Review

**Stinsford Parish Council
27 March 2017**



Outline

- Background
 - Local plans, national planning policy and housing numbers
 - The adopted plan – and why we have to review it
- Dorchester
 - Context and existing policies
 - Planning history and recent growth
- Starting the review
 - Work so far
 - What are the options for the Dorchester area?
 - The consultation

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Background



Local plans and what they are

- The local plan sets out where future development will take place and the policies to guide it
- Basis for decisions on planning applications (decisions should be in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise)
- Must be in accordance with national planning policy (the National Planning Policy Framework or NPPF)
- Goes through independent examination by Planning Inspectorate as part of preparation process – has to ‘pass the test’ of being found sound

National Planning Policy

- National Planning Policy Framework 2012
- Presumption in favour of sustainable development:
 - Local authorities should **positively seek opportunities** to meet development needs
 - Local plans should **meet ‘objectively assessed needs’**, with flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless any adverse impacts ‘significantly and demonstrably’ outweigh benefits
 - Where development plan absent, silent, or relevant policies are out of date, **permission should be granted** unless adverse impacts significantly and demonstrably outweigh benefits

National Planning Policy

- Local planning authorities should:
 - ‘**boost significantly** the supply of housing’
 - meet the full objectively assessed needs for **market and affordable** housing
 - Identify and update annually a **supply of specific deliverable sites** sufficient to provide five years’ worth of housing against their housing requirements
 - Relevant policies for the supply of housing should **not be considered up-to-date** if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable sites

Housing numbers

- Housing targets for each district were previously set in Structure Plans, and then in Regional Spatial Strategies
- District Local Plans then identified where the housing would be located
- Now the targets are set in the Local Plan – but methods need to follow national policy and guidance and will be assessed by the local plan inspector
- Must take account of economic and market factors in setting targets – our original figures in the draft of the last local plan were not considered sound by the inspector, and had to be raised to take account of economic factors

Housing numbers for this area

- Demographic projections – 554 homes p.a. across plan area
- But these are based on past trends during a time of recession, when there was a low level of economic in-migration
- Planning for this rate may not allow for enough growth in the labour force
- Local affordability concerns also justify a higher rate
- The local plan now sets targets of 775 homes p.a. across the plan area
- This is based on projections from the pre-recession years, when more younger people were moving in to work
- We are not currently developing at this rate

West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan

After the public examination in late 2014, the local plan was found sound by the inspector:

- *“This report concludes that the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Joint Local Plan provides an appropriate basis for the planning of the District and Borough Councils providing a number of modifications are made to the Plan.”*

The local plan was adopted in October 2015 including modifications

In relation to the review the inspector said:

- *“a review should be in place no later than 2021”*
- *“it is imperative that an early review is undertaken to identify additional land capable of meeting housing needs to the end of the current plan period (2031) as well as the broad location for development in the five year period thereafter” (i.e. to 2036)*

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Housing land supply

- *“there is insufficient land to meet housing needs to the end of the plan period”*

What is the shortfall to 2031?

- Annual requirement is 775 dwellings per annum (dpa)
- 20-year requirement is 15,500 homes
- Overall supply in the local plan is 14,855 homes, which is 645 short

What overall level of provision needs to be made to 2036?

- Rolling forward the annual requirement (775 dpa) for 5 more years, plus the shortfall to 2031 means looking for 4,520 additional homes in total

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Spatial strategy

- *“the LP fails to give sufficient emphasis to the sustainable role of particular settlements and the contribution they could make to meeting development needs”*
- *“a modification is required to ensure the councils identify further development options at specific settlements as part of an early review”*

Where should the councils look?

- They should *“identify a long-term strategy for development in the Dorchester area and reappraise housing provision in Sherborne”*

When does this work need to be done?

- *“the change requires that a strategy 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 the review proposals”*

West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan

Is there much brownfield potential?

- The councils should *“make maximum use of available land within existing boundaries”* (including Poundbury), but that *“provides at best, a short term solution to meeting future housing and employment needs”*

What did the Inspector say about land north of Dorchester?

- *“it is not obvious that other or better alternatives exist or indeed whether the Councils are committed to finding a solution to the longer-term expansion of the county town”*

What did the Inspector say about Crossways?

- *“Without substantial enhancements to transport links, I do not consider it is a particularly sustainable option for meeting the longer term needs of the county town”*

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Dorchester



Dorchester in Context

- County town, major employment and service centre
- Total population 19,481
- Around twice as many jobs (18,400) as economically active population (9,619)
- Significant in-commuting, much of it from Weymouth
- Surrounding constraints include AONB, floodplain, SSSI and scheduled ancient monuments
- Infrastructure constraints: trunk road (A35) capacity; town centre traffic; secondary school capacity
- Limited capacity for growth within existing built up area – any further major development would breach significant boundaries and change compact character

Vision for Dorchester in 2031



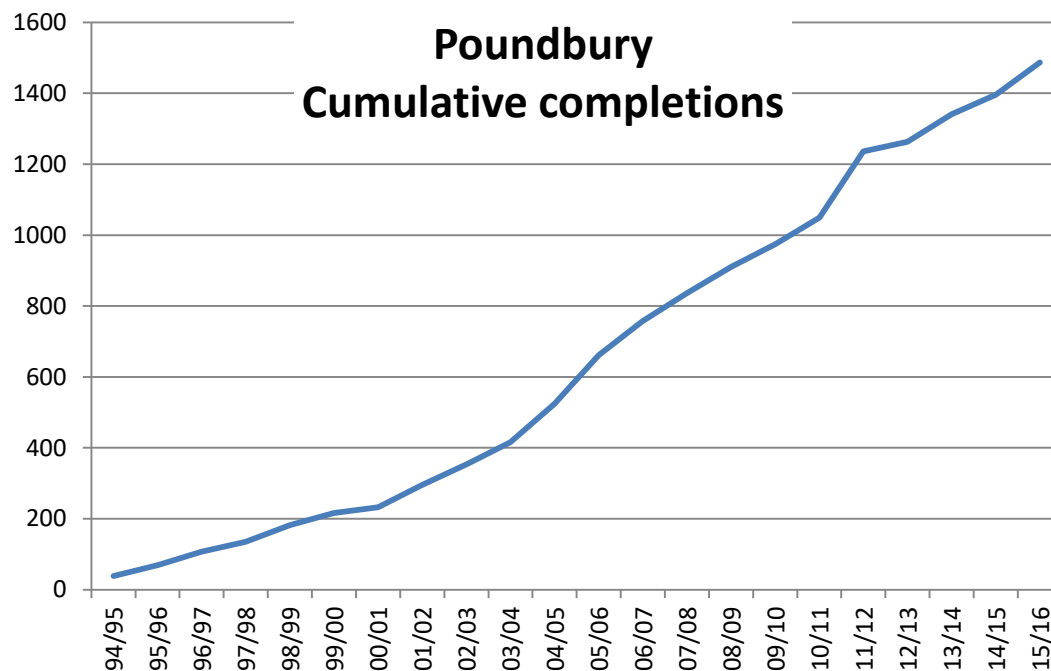
- Quality county town with significant offer of retail, health, cultural, leisure and community facilities;
- Attractive and vibrant sub-regional town centre that people come to enjoy, away from motor traffic;
- Diverse local economy with good employment opportunities;
- More people living and working locally rather than commuting;
- Good quality transport links to the surrounding towns and rural area;
- High standard of design promoting the character and heritage that is special to Dorchester;
- Make the most of the surrounding countryside, including links with Thomas Hardy, Maiden Castle and Kingston Maurwood College

Dorchester: recent planning history

- **Decision about direction of future growth (1980s)**
 - Poundbury selected – in preference to land north of watermeadows
 - Herrison Hospital site – now completed
 - Poundbury (and Brewery Square) still progressing
- **Regional Spatial Strategy (2008)**
 - Examiners proposed urban extension of 3,000 homes
 - Halcrow report prepared to look at options and infrastructure implications, for WDDC
 - RSS never adopted – change in government and planning system
- **West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2011-15)**
 - Site at SE Dorchester considered and rejected during process
 - Site north of watermeadows promoted by developers during examination
 - Small sites at Alington Avenue and St George's Road allocated
- **'Western Dorset Growth Strategy' (now)**
 - Promoting western part of Dorset, including Dorchester and Weymouth, for economic growth

Dorchester residential growth

- **Over past five years:**
- Average 175 p.a.
- 10% on sites <10 units
- 23% on Brewery site
- 50% at Poundbury
- 16% on other sites >10 units



Starting the Review



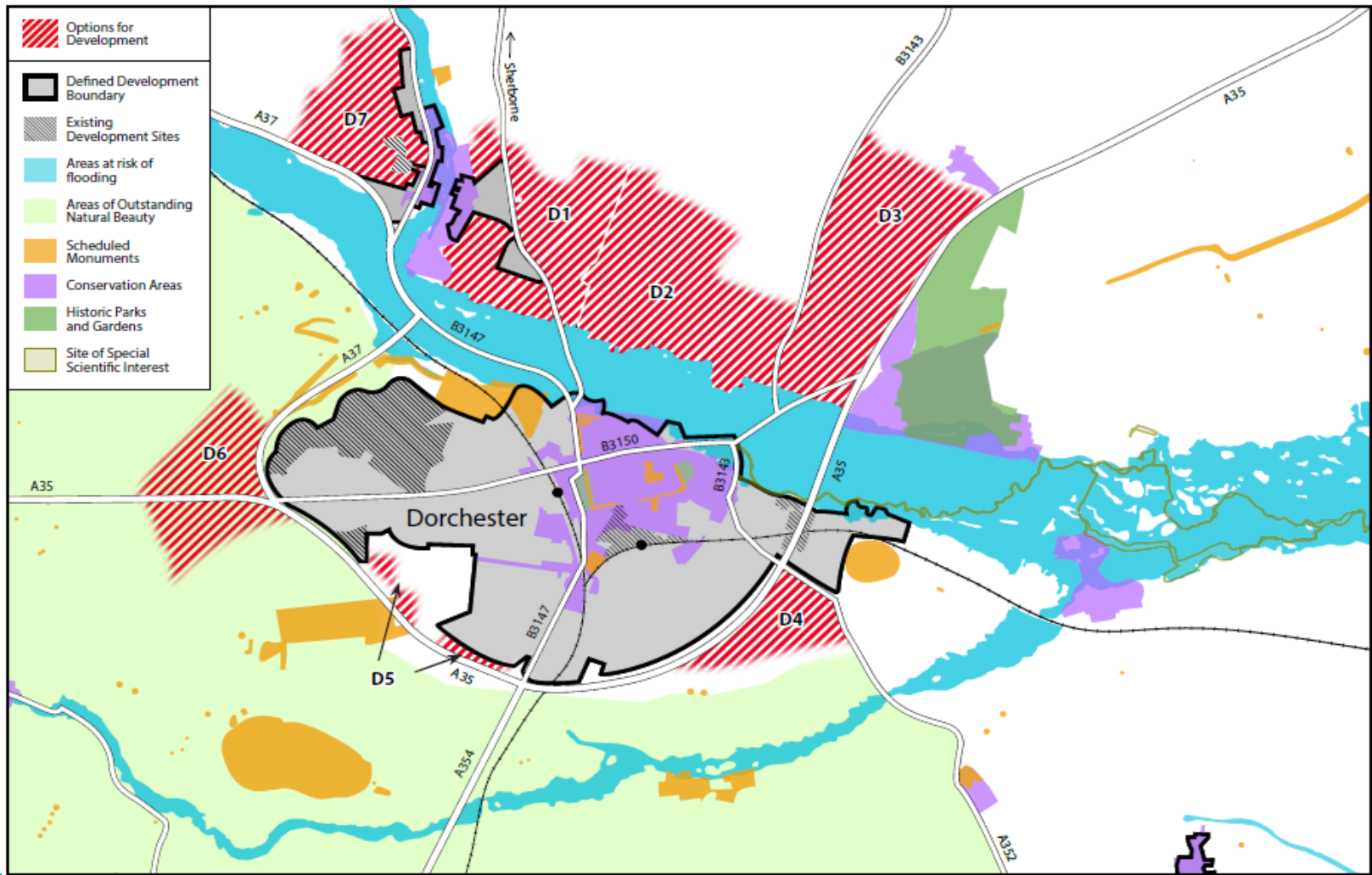
Technical work

- **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment update**
- **Landscape sensitivity**
- **Heritage assessment**
 - Building on previous work
 - In discussion with Historic England
- **Transport**
 - Studies in preparation include Dorchester town centre, and strategic road links with Weymouth
 - Need for more detailed work to assess implications for site options
 - Transport model for Crossways developed, working with Purbeck District Council and Dorset County Council
 - Transport model for Dorchester being developed
- **Retail capacity**
 - New studies to be commissioned

Site selection process

- Have considered **all** realistic options again
- 360° look at each larger settlement:
 - Dorchester and Sherborne as recommended by the Inspector
 - also Weymouth, Bridport, Beaminster, Crossways, Portland and Lyme Regis
- Refined down to broad options for consultation
- Will then be further refinement based on:
 - Further technical work
 - Responses to consultation
 - Sustainability assessment

Dorchester site options for consultation



Dorchester site options for consultation

DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS	INDICATIVE CAPACITY (DWELLINGS)	POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES
D1: South-East of Charminster	2,100	Landscape impact - Impact on Charminster Conservation Area - Impact on listed Little Court and structures associated with listed Wolfeton House
D2: North of Dorchester, west of Slyer's Lane	3,200	Landscape impacts - Impact on Dorchester Conservation area - Ancient woodland - Flood risk
D3: North of Dorchester, west of A35	3,000	Landscape impact - Impact on Dorchester, Higher Kingston Farm and Stinsford Conservation Areas - Impact on Kingston Maurward Registered Park and Garden - Impact on listed Birkin House, Stinsford Cottages and milestone on Stinsford Hill
D4: South-East of Dorchester	850	Impact on listed Max Gate and Old Came Rectory
D5: South-West of Dorchester within bypass	350	Impact on nearby residents
D6: West of Poundbury	1,000	Within Dorset AONB - Impact on Maiden Castle
D7: West of Charminster	1,550	Landscape impact - Setting of Charminster Conservation Area - Impact on listed buildings in Charminster

Issues to consider

- Where is the best direction for further development?
- How can it be integrated with the rest of the town?
- Do we want to make a long-term decision now, that will last through future plan periods, or provide just enough for the current plan period?
- What are the infrastructure needs and which sites can most feasibly provide for them?
- What sort of design is appropriate?
- What sort of households do we want it to appeal to?
- What environmental mitigation may be needed?

The current consultation

- ‘Issues and Options’ consultation on all the broad site options
- Also focusing on key policy issues that may need changing
- No decisions or preferences yet by the council
- Total options provide for more land than is needed – will not all be required
- Will not have all the technical work done yet, so won’t have all the answers
- But allows everyone to have an input right at the start of the process
- And allows everyone to compare the different options when responding

The current consultation

- Started 6 February: lasts until 3 April
- Document published online, available at offices and libraries
- Background papers and sustainability appraisal online
- Consultation events:
 - 10 events, at Sherborne, Weymouth, Portland, Charminster, Dorchester, Beaminster, Lyme Regis, Bridport, Crossways and Chickerell (between 20 February and 9 March)
 - **Charminster** event Friday 24 February 10am to 7pm (Village hall)
 - **Dorchester** event Monday 27 February 10am to 7pm (South Walks House)

Next steps

- Consultation responses and further technical work will feed into the next stage - **‘preferred options’** - later in **2017**
- Final draft local plan review prepared and submitted for examination – **2018**
- Member commitment to site allocations and revised policies sought at submission stage
- From submission onwards the process will be guided by the local plan inspector
- Adoption programmed for **2019**
- Allows flexibility to meet inspector’s deadline of **2021**

