

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 THIS LOCAL PLAN

WHAT IS A LOCAL PLAN?

- 1.1.1 The planning system governs the use and development of land. It controls which new buildings will be built and where they should go. Nationally there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and local councils are expected to plan positively for the needs of their area.
- 1.1.2 The local plan is the main basis for making decisions on planning applications. When adopted, planning decisions must be made in accordance with the local plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. And it gives local communities, developers and investors greater certainty about the types of applications that are likely to be approved. The local plan sits alongside the National Planning Policy Framework, which must also be taken into account in making decisions on planning applications and in the preparation of local and neighbourhood development plans.
- 1.1.3 Neighbourhood development plans, when adopted, will form part of the development plan. These are prepared by the local community (such as the parish or town council, or elsewhere a neighbourhood forum). These can be as simple, or as detailed, as local people want, provided that they are in line with national planning policy, and the strategic policies of the local plan. Where they are in conflict the policies contained in the neighbourhood development plan will effectively replace the non-strategic policies in the local plan for that neighbourhood. Where this plan or any development plan documents are adopted after a neighbourhood plan has been adopted, the council will issue a statement of conformity to clarify whether any policies in the neighbourhood plan are superseded.
- 1.1.4 Other development plan documents and supplementary planning documents may be produced when necessary to cover specific topics, sites or to provide more detailed guidance. These too will be taken into account in any planning decisions. All relevant planning policy documents can be seen at the council offices and on www.dorsetforyou.com.

Comment [A1]: 1.1A

WHAT PERIOD DOES THIS LOCAL PLAN COVER?

- 1.1.5 The plan period extends to 2031. However it is likely to be reviewed well before the end of this plan period, in whole or in part, to ensure that there are sufficient developable sites available for future needs. It may also need to be updated to respond to unforeseen changes.

WHO PRODUCED THIS LOCAL PLAN?

- 1.1.6 This document has been produced by West Dorset District Council and Weymouth and Portland Borough Council as the key development plan document for the area. It has been informed by both Councils' Corporate Plans and the Community Plans developed by the West Dorset Partnership and the Weymouth and Portland Partnership.
- 1.1.7 Whilst the plan has been jointly prepared, decisions on land within the boundaries of each council area have been made by the council for that specific area. Planning applications will continue to be determined by each council for its own area.

WHAT STAGE HAS IT REACHED?

Consultation on Issues and Options	Various stages on the local plan for each council, ending in a joint consultation stage carried out in September – December 2011
Consultation on 'submission document'	June-July 2012
Submission to Government	February-June 2013
Public Examination	May-September 2013
Adoption	October-February 2013/4

1.1.8 This local plan has been informed by extensive background research and information, as well as much public consultation to identify local issues and people's views on what it is important to them. For information on consultation so far you can read the consultation summary report on www.dorsetforyou.com.

1.1.9 Following this period of consultation, the plan will be formally submitted, along with all the representations received and suggested changes, to the Secretary of State. It will be independently examined at a Public Examination which is expected to take place in May 2013.

1.1.10 This pre submission draft is for public consultation from 1 June to 27 July 2012. To tell us what you think of the draft Local Plan please complete our online comments form at www.dorsetforyou.com/newlocalplan/west/weymouth. If you are unable to use the online comments form please e-mail your comments to us at s.policy@westdorset-weymouth.gov.uk or write to us at:

<p>Local Plan Consultation West Dorset District Council Stratton House, 58/60 High West Street Dorchester DT1 1UZ</p>	<p>Local Plan Consultation Weymouth and Portland Borough Council Council Offices, North Quay Weymouth DT4 8TA</p>
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1.1.11 Copies of the plan and comments form are available at these offices from 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Thursday or 8.30am to 4.30pm Fridays, and also at libraries between 1 June until 27 July 2012. Drop in events are being held so you can discuss the plan with a planning officer. Come along any time from 1pm – 7pm to these events at:

- Beaminster, Town Hall ————— 19 June
- Bridport, Mountfield ————— 20 June
- Lyme Regis, Woodmead Hall ————— 21 June
- Dorchester, Corn Exchange ————— 26 June
- Portland, St George's Centre ————— 27 June
- Weymouth, Redlands Sports Hub ————— 28 June
- Crossways, Youth & Community Centre — 3 July
- Weymouth, Community Fire Station — 4 July
- Chickerell, Willowbed Hall ————— 5 July
- Weymouth, Pavilion Ocean Room ————— 10 July
- Sherborne, Digby Hall ————— 11 July

~~1.1.12~~ As this pre-submission draft is the version that both Councils wish to take through examination and adopt as policy, it will start to gain some weight as a material planning consideration as it progresses through these stages. The degree of weight given to each draft policy will vary, depending on whether or not the issue is contentious and to what extent it is consistent with the national planning policy framework. As such, the Councils will begin to refer to this plan when the plan is published (June 2012). Policies in the emerging plan may be given some weight in decision taking after the consultation has closed, when the extent to which there are objections to those policies is known. Greater weight may be given to the policies when the plan has been agreed by both Councils for submission in early 2013.

Comment [A2]: 1.1B

GUIDE TO USING THIS DOCUMENT

~~1.1.13~~ 1.1.8 The next sections of this chapter contain an overall description of the plan area and the issues it faces (the plan's context), the overarching **VISION** and **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES** for the plan, and the **STRATEGIC APPROACH** which provides the strategic policy direction for the plan and any related development plan documents.

~~1.1.14~~ 1.1.9 This document is then split into chapters covering:

- **ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE** – which is about protecting and enhancing our natural environment, our built heritage, protecting ourselves from natural and man-made disasters and achieving high quality and sustainability in design
- **ACHIEVING A SUSTAINABLE PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT** – which sets the overall level of growth in the plan period, and the overarching approach to how this growth is distributed across the plan area
- **ECONOMY** – which looks at the need to protect existing employment sites, our approach to retail and town centre development, tourism and rural enterprise
- **HOUSING** – which considers the policies needed on providing affordable and open market housing and how this might differ depending on the location and type of units proposed, and the need for particular types of housing development such as care accommodation
- **COMMUNITY NEEDS AND INFRASTRUCTURE** – which sets out our approach to a wide range of community facilities and infrastructure, including specific policies for public open space, sport and recreation facilities, education and training facilities, transport, renewable energy, telecommunications and broadband.

For each of these themes there is the relevant excerpt from the strategic approach which sets the over-arching strategy for that topic, and more detailed policies that will be applied to specific issues or types of development.

1.1.10 Following this, there are visions and site-specific policies for each of the main towns and areas of growth, being **WEYMOUTH, PORTLAND, LITTLEMOOR, CHICKERELL, DORCHESTER, CROSSWAYS, BRIDPORT, BEAMINSTER, LYME REGIS** and **SHERBORNE**. The remaining settlements do not have specific policies but may still be covered by neighbourhood development plans prepared by that local community, which will become part of the development plan. A map of agreed neighbourhood areas will be published by each Council.

1.1.11 A glossary has been included at the back of this local plan. This explains what is meant by some of the terms used. Some of the key definitions are also included in boxes within the plan itself.

Comment [A3]: 1.1C

1.1.12 Planning policies are written in bold and are prefaced by the chapter abbreviation and policy number (eg: SUS 3). In deciding whether a planning application is in conformity with

the local plan, it is the wording of these policies that are the main focus. The accompanying text generally provides some explanation as to why the policy has been included. It may also include specifics on the type of information that may be required to help decide whether a policy test is met.

1.1.15 1.1.13 The plan should be read as a whole. Therefore policies on specific uses will not duplicate general issues such as the protection of heritage assets, nature conservation or the impact on the transport network, which are dealt with under those topic areas.

The use of the words 'will' and 'should'

Policies in the plan are written to cater for a wide range of planning applications, from small-scale domestic extensions up to large, mixed use development sites. Because of this, some flexibility needs to be built into the policy tests on occasion.

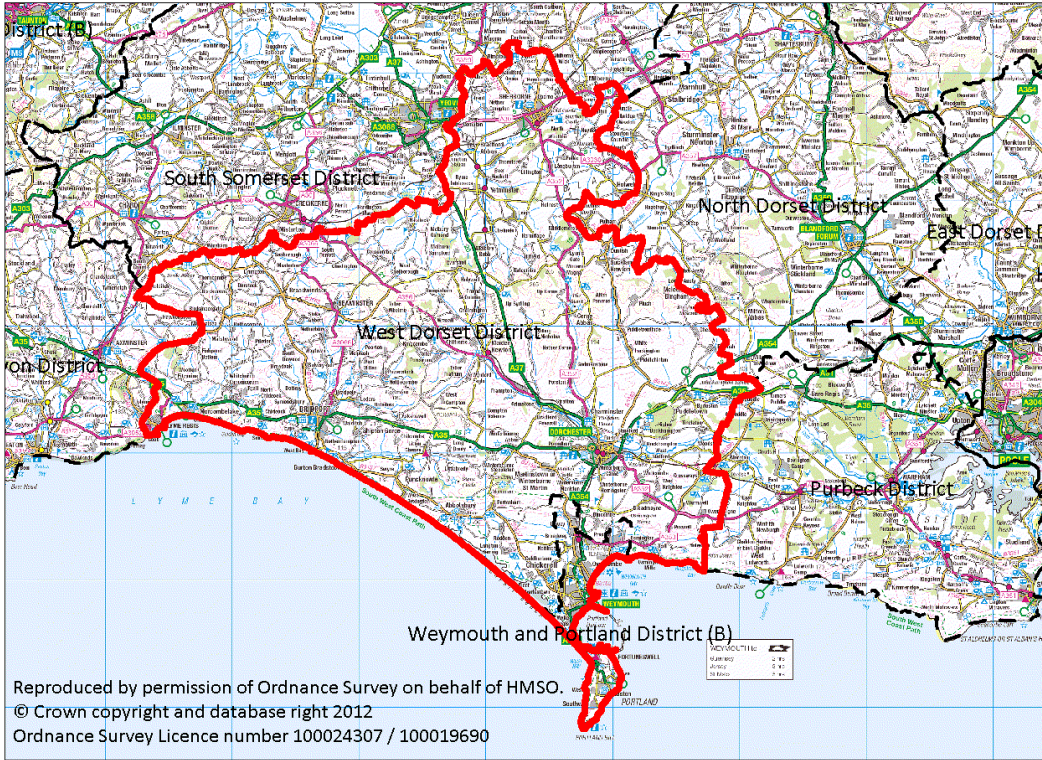
Where the word "will" has been used, this means that the policy test must be complied with and it is not expected that there will be exceptions made to this policy.

Where the word "should" is used, this means in general it is expected that the policy test will be met, but recognises that there may be exceptions made due to specific circumstances. It doesn't imply that the policy is optional. If an applicant considers that their case is an exception, then they should include information explaining the reasons why they consider such an exception should be made.

1.1.16 1.1.14 The plan brings together a large amount of government policy, research and evidence that have helped inform the planning policies that have been agreed. Further information can be found in the **Background Papers** on the website (www.dorsetforyou.com). And as part of the legislative requirements, a Sustainability Appraisal has also been produced which includes an assessment on equalities and health impacts.

1.2 THE PLAN CONTEXT

Figure 1.1: West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland plan area



- 1.2.1 The plan area covers the entire administrative area of West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland in the county of Dorset. There are strong links between the two council areas, and with neighbouring areas of Yeovil to the north, and Bournemouth and Poole to the east.
- 1.2.2 West Dorset is renowned for its outstanding environment, including a varied and beautiful landscape underpinned by great geodiversity which is expressed in the internationally recognised coastline, the Jurassic Coast World Heritage site, stunning and geologically unique coastline, and attractive villages and market towns. It has a range of cultural and historic associations, including those with Thomas Hardy’s novels, the Tolpuddle Martyrs and early discovery of fossils at Lyme Regis. Despite the high quality of life enjoyed by many in West Dorset there is a lack of affordable housing and some issues of rural isolation.
- 1.2.3 The Borough of Weymouth & Portland has an exceptionally high quality landscape, seascape and built heritage, and is a major tourist resort. However, it contains areas of multiple deprivation, with parts of Weymouth Town Centre, Littlemoor, Westham and Fortuneswell within the top 20% of deprived areas in England and Wales.
- 1.2.4 The main towns in the area are

Comment [A4]: 1.2A

	Weymouth 52,230 51,140 population	Weymouth is the largest urban area in Dorset, with its town centre and Esplanade as the retail, commercial, leisure, cultural and tourist heart of the Borough. The town is not a continuous built-up area but is dissected by open spaces and landscape features, including large wetland reserves.
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Comment [A5]: 1.2B

Dorchester 17,990 19,060 population	Dorchester is the largest town in West Dorset and has been the county town of Dorset since 1305. A market is held on Wednesdays. Major employers include Dorset County Council, West Dorset District Council and Dorset County Hospital.
Bridport area ¹ 14,250 13,570 population	Bridport is a market town located near the coast at the western end of Chesil Beach, at the confluence of the River Brit and its Asker and Symene tributaries. It originally thrived as a fishing port and rope-making centre.
Portland 12,460 12,840 population	Portland is physically and visually separated from Weymouth, linked by a single carriageway road on the causeway adjacent to Chesil Beach and The Fleet. Although an entity in its own right, Portland is made up of a group of villages, each with very distinctive features. The Port is an important regional facility and has potential to play a more significant role in the UK. Considerable regeneration has taken place here over the last 15 years.
Sherborne 9,690 9,520 population	Sherborne is a market town on the River Yeo and A30 road, on the edge of the Blackmore Vale east of Yeovil. Sherborne is famous for its abbey, castles, manor house and private schools. Much of the town, including many medieval and Georgian buildings and the Abbey, is built from distinctive ochre ham stone.
Chickerell 5,290 5,520 population	Chickerell is a small town north-west of Weymouth. Historically, fishing and brick making were the main industries in the area. The main employment area is now the Granby Industrial Estate.
Lyme Regis 3,590 3,670 population	Lyme Regis is a coastal town in Lyme Bay, on the English Channel coast at the Dorset-Devon boundary. The town is noted for the fossils found in the cliffs and beaches, which are part of the Heritage Coast—known as the Jurassic Coast—a World Heritage Site.
Beaminster 3,100 3,140 population	Beaminster is a small town standing at the head of the valley of the River Brit. It hosts the Beaminster Festival, an annual nine-day music and art festival. The historic routes and plot patterns radiating out from the small market square, together with the local building materials, exert a strong influence on the character of the town.

1.2.5 The population of the area has increased gradually over time and has been projected to continue to grow in the future. The level of growth has varied between towns and over the period, with some areas having experienced significantly more change than others.

Table 1.1: Percentage (%) population change from 1991⁴ – 2011⁰⁹

	1991	2001	2011	91-01	01-11	91-01	01-11
Beaminster	2,770	2920	3140	150	220	5%	8%
Bridport	11,690	12,730	13,570	1040	840	9%	7%
Chickerell	4,160	5310	5520	1150	210	28%	4%
Dorchester	15,100	16,180	19060	1080	2880	7%	18%
Lyme Regis	3,760	3,530	3,670	-230	140	-6%	4%
Portland	13,190	12800	12840	-390	40	-3%	0%

¹ Bridport area figures include Bridport town and the parishes of Allington, Bothenhampton and Bradpole and Symondsburry.

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West Dorset District Council and Weymouth and Portland Borough Council

Sherborne	8,740	9310	9520	570	210	7%	2%
Weymouth	48,010	50,920	52230	2910	1310	6%	3%
West Dorset	85500	92400	99300	6900	6900	8%	7%
Weymouth and Portland	61200	63700	65200	2500	1500	4%	2%
Plan area	146,700	156,100	164,500	9400	8400	6%	5%

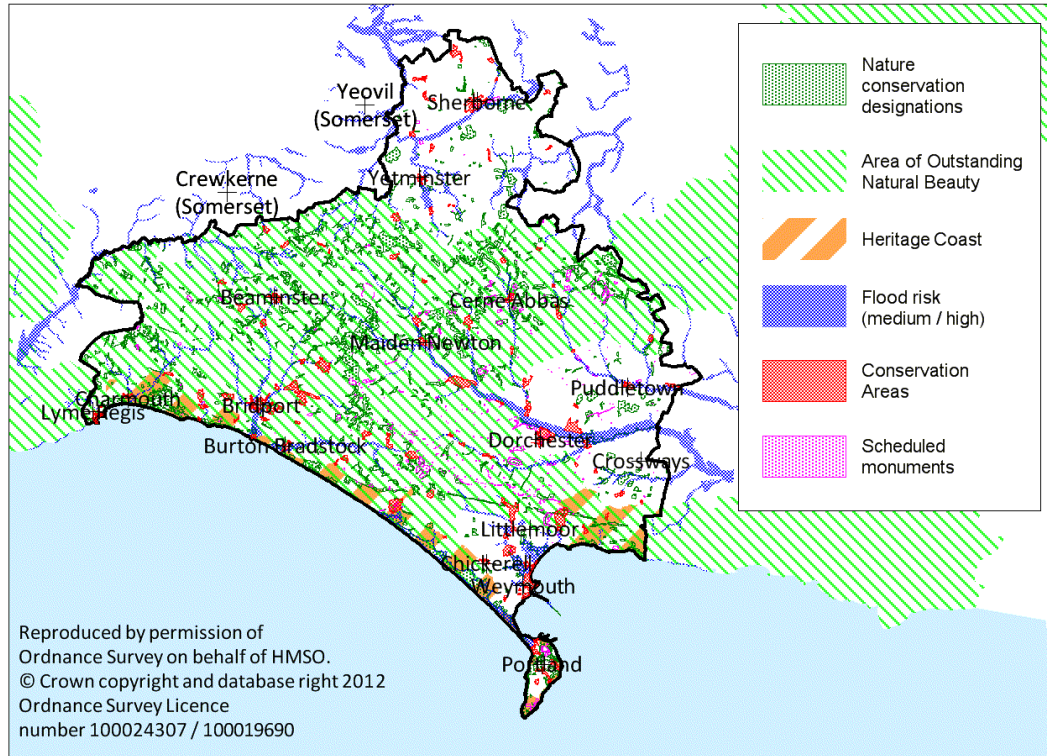
	1994	1999	2004	2009	94-99	99-04	04-09	5year average growth
Beaminster	2,850	2,880	3,000	3,100	1%	4%	3%	2.9%
Bridport area	12,790	13,020	14,220	14,250	2%	9%	0%	3.7%
Chickerell	4,760	5,090	5,380	5,290	7%	6%	-2%	3.7%
Dorchester	15,210	15700	17,170	17,990	3%	9%	5%	5.8%
Lyme Regis	3,600	37,80	3,590	3,590	5%	-5%	0%	0.0%
Portland	12,710	12,460	12,710	12,460	-2%	2%	-2%	-0.6%
Sherborne	9,358	9,490	9,460	9,690	1%	0%	2%	1.2%
Weymouth	50,390	50,040	51,390	51,140	-1%	3%	0%	0.5%
West Dorset	88,000	90,800	94,900	96,500	3%	5%	2%	3.1%
Weymouth & Portland	63,100	62,500	64,100	63,600	-1%	3%	-1%	0.3%
Plan area	151,100	153,300	159,000	160,100	1%	4%	1%	2.0%

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

- 1.2.6 The area contains a rich and wide variety of landscape, natural and built heritage features. The combined area of Weymouth & Portland Borough, and West Dorset District is approximately 112,000ha. Just over two-thirds of the plan area (69%) is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and a major part of the coastline is designated as a Heritage Coast and World Heritage Site. Over 3,200ha (approximately 3%) of land is of international importance for its nature conservation value, including coastal areas around the Fleet, and the Dorset heathlands to the east. A further 1,170ha (1%) are of national nature conservation importance. There is also a rich built heritage with many special places and buildings from all periods, with over 90 Conservation Areas, and around over 87,000 Listed Buildings of architectural or historic interest.
- 1.2.7 Some of the key issues that face our environment include the pressures of development on greenfield sites, visitor and traffic pressures, and changes in farming practices. However there are also many positive opportunities that development can bring, including improved land management and infrastructure as well as and the use of good quality design and materials to enhance the appearance of the area.
- 1.2.8 Climate change is expected to increase flooding instances of extreme weather including flooding and coastal erosion. ~~so t~~ there is a need to ensure that both existing and new communities are able to adapt both existing communities in the long term as protection may not always be possible. ~~and new development are protected in the long term.~~

Comment [A6]: 1.2C

Figure 1.2: Environmental designations

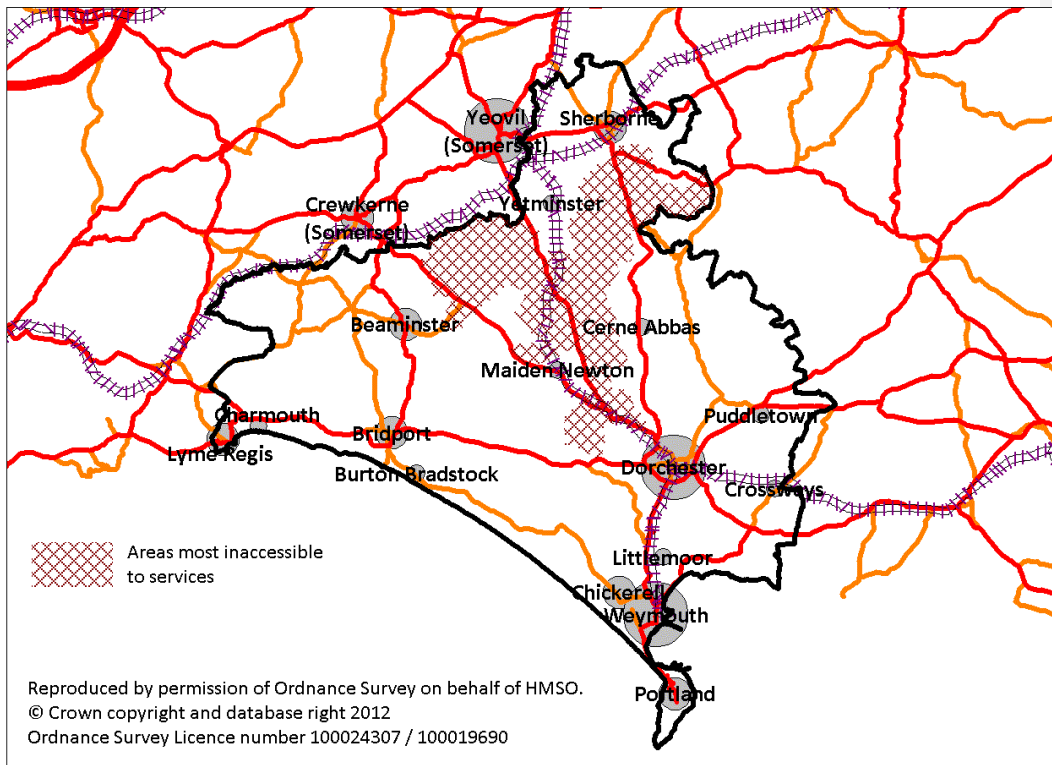


SOCIAL ISSUES

- 1.2.9 The 2008 Place Survey showed that there was a high level of satisfaction from people living in the area. 85% of people living in Weymouth and Portland, and 91% of people living in West Dorset, said they were satisfied with their local area as a place to live.
- 1.2.10 There is a high level of affordable housing need, with over 3,000 people on the housing register in West Dorset and 4,600 in Weymouth and Portland. The average house price outstrips local wages by a factor of 11 in Weymouth and Portland, and by a factor of 12 in West Dorset. More than 1 in every 20 homes in West Dorset is either a second or holiday home, and this proportion is especially acute in some coastal resorts. Increases in fuel prices will impact on local people, particularly those in older properties that have a poor energy performance rating.
- 1.2.11 The population is becoming increasingly elderly as people live longer and also because many people who come to live in this area are close to retirement age. This imbalance is exacerbated as young people also move out of the area because of limited opportunities to get relevant employment and relatively high local house prices.
- 1.2.12 There are no motorways within the area but there are rail links to London and Bristol. The ferry terminal in Weymouth Harbour serves the Channel Islands. Transportation can be a problem in the more rural areas where public transport provision is limited, some parts (Halstock, the Frome Valley, and the Cam Vale) are in the top 1% of areas in the country that are most inaccessible to services. This also has an impact on costs (and the carbon footprint) of local service provision, such as those borne by the county council and NHS in

transporting people to schools and medical facilities. Movement patterns indicate that distances travelled to work often exceed 10km, particularly from outlying rural areas. In Weymouth and Portland, many outbound commuters work in Dorchester. Significant seasonal variations in travel demand and movement often lead to further transport problems and congestion, particularly in urban areas. However over £100 million investment in the strategic road network has been made to relieve traffic congestion in Weymouth and improve the travel time within the Weymouth to Portland transport corridor.

Figure 1.3: Access issues



- 1.2.13 West Dorset has a relatively low rate of crime, however Weymouth and Portland has some of the highest crime rates in Dorset and includes a number of areas that have a higher than average crime rate compared to the rest of England and Wales. This is partly due to the greater density of population in an urban area, relative to the more dispersed rural populations, and is exacerbated by the high number of visitors during the holiday season. The 2008 Place Survey indicated that about one in four residents of Weymouth and Portland felt unsafe after dark, compared to one in 10 in West Dorset.
- 1.2.14 Arts and other cultural facilities can help stimulate new skills, encourage people to interact and reinforce their sense of belonging. The rural nature of West Dorset means there are limited entertainment, art and culture opportunities when compared with other districts. The main arts provision in West Dorset is in Bridport, although further provision is planned for Dorchester and Sherborne. In contrast, Weymouth and Portland has a greater concentration of cultural and leisure attractions and venues. Some of these venues are thriving through wider influences such as the Olympics and the designation of the East

Devon and South Dorset coastline as Britain's first Natural World Heritage site, although others require significant investment.

- 1.2.15 Health inequalities are increasing. Poor health is more prevalent in people on lower incomes, and where there is limited access to facilities that benefit health. In West Dorset this is most apparent in the more rural and isolated areas. Weymouth and Portland, as a predominantly urban area, has concentrations of health deprivation, including mental health, childhood obesity, and teenage pregnancy, in certain areas, with the most serious being found in Fortuneswell South and Littlemoor North.

ECONOMIC ISSUES

- 1.2.16 Wage levels are lower than the national average and there is a reported shortage of labour with relevant skills or training. This may increase over the plan period as a large proportion of existing trades people are due to retire.
- 1.2.17 Over 12,000 premises (about 38% of all premises) in West Dorset do not have access to broadband speeds of more than 2 megabits per second, and about 1,500 premises in Weymouth and Portland. Significant investment is planned to roll out superfast broadband throughout Dorset starting in 2012. Coverage of telecommunications masts has improved significantly but is still limited in places.
- 1.2.18 Whilst some towns, such as Bridport, have relatively balanced levels of jobs and housing, other towns, most notably Weymouth and Dorchester, have a significant imbalance. Weymouth has a significant amount of outward commuting to Dorchester for jobs, and Dorchester relies on a much wider area for its workforce and economic success. Many Portlanders have had to look for job opportunities on the mainland and some of the employment opportunities created on the island do not match the skills of the local workforce. In Sherborne there is an inward flow of lesser-skilled workers who cannot afford the local house prices, and an outward flow of the higher-skilled workforce to jobs elsewhere outside the town.

DUTY TO CO-OPERATE

- 1.2.19 Councils and other public bodies are expected to work together across administrative boundaries to plan for the housing, transport and infrastructure that local people need. This joint plan shows how the cross-boundary issues between Weymouth and the adjoining areas of West Dorset are being addressed. West Dorset District Council is also liaising on cross-boundary working in relation to the following locations to bring forward the right development for that area:
- Lyme Regis / Uplyme working with East Devon District Council
 - Crossways / Moreton working with Purbeck District Council
 - Edge of Yeovil working with South Somerset District Council

1.3 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

A VISION FOR WEST DORSET	A VISION FOR WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND
<p>The spectacular landscapes of West Dorset, from the panoramic chalk ridges to the wooded valleys and undeveloped coastline, the picturesque settlements and variety of natural habitats, are something that set it apart from the rest of the country. We are proud of this, and want to be able to say the same in 20 years time.</p> <p>West Dorset has many communities of different sizes, from the small, rural villages to the larger market towns. It is important to us that we have a thriving economy, decent affordable homes and a network of community facilities, so that local people of all ages and abilities can enjoy living here and playing an active part in their community.</p>	<p>We want the next 20 years to be an exciting time for the Borough, with significant investment and regeneration of key sites and infrastructure, making this a place where people of all ages will be engaged with their local community, feel a real sense of belonging and civic pride.</p> <p>Weymouth and Portland are special places, set within the World Heritage Coast and the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The relationship with the sea is key to our identity, past, present and future, from the beach to the port and harbours, the sailing opportunities, and all the related maritime industries.</p> <p>We want to keep the individual identities of the communities that make up our area, linking to our maritime heritage and the beautiful coastal and rural landscapes, but always looking to the future.</p>

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 1.3.1 Realising the vision will rely upon many different stakeholders and service providers. Strategic objectives have been identified, which provide a concise expression of the priorities of this Local Plan.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
Support the local economy to provide opportunities for high quality, better paid jobs
Meet local housing needs for all as far as is possible
Regenerate key areas including Weymouth and Dorchester town centres, to improve the area’s retail, arts, cultural and leisure offer; and increase employment opportunities
Support sustainable, safe and healthy communities with accessibility to a range of services and facilities
Protect and enhance the outstanding natural and built environment, including its landscape, biodiversity and geodiversity, and the local distinctiveness of places within the area – this will be the over-riding objective in those areas of the plan which are particularly sensitive to change
Reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, both by minimising the potential impacts and by adapting to those that are inevitable– this will be the over-riding objective in those areas of the plan which are at highest risk
Provide greater opportunities to reduce car use; improve safety; ensure convenient and appropriate public transport services; and seek greater network efficiency for pedestrians, and cyclists, <u>and equestrians</u>
Achieve high quality and sustainability in design, reflecting local character and distinctiveness of the area

Comment [A7]: 1.3A

HOW WILL THE LOCAL PLAN MEET THE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES?

STRATEGIC APPROACH

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Development should protect and enhance the natural environment - its landscape, seascapes and geological conservation interests, its wildlife and habitats and important local green spaces - by directing development away from sensitive areas that cannot accommodate change. ~~Where development is needed and harm cannot be avoided, and through providing adequate~~ appropriate mitigation to off-set any adverse impact to the landscape, wildlife and green infrastructure network will be required.

Comment [A8]: 2.1B

High priority will be given to protecting and enhancing the area's ~~built heritage~~ assets and ~~archaeological sites and features~~ - including its Listed Building and Conservation Areas, and other features with local historic or cultural associations, particularly where it contributes to the area's local distinctiveness.

Comment [A9]: 2.1C

Development will be directed away from areas where there is likely to be significant risk to human health or the wider environment, through flooding, coastal erosion and land instability, air and water pollution.

Development should be of high quality design to help achieve sustainable, safe and inclusive communities, enhancing quality of life for residents and visitors, and designed in keeping with or to positively contribute towards the local identity of the area

ACHIEVING A SUSTAINABLE PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT

In the period 2011-2031 development should help deliver a steady supply of employment and housing land to meet projected needs (estimated to be about 60ha of employment land and between 12,340 to 13,220 ~~about 12,600~~ new homes across the plan area). The distribution of development is influenced by:

Comment [A10]: 3.1A

- the needs, size, and roles of the area's settlements, taking into account any current imbalances of housing or jobs,
- the benefits of concentrating most development in locations where homes, jobs and facilities will be easily accessible to each other and there is a choice of transport modes,
- the availability of land, and whether it has been previously developed (brownfield);and
- the environmental constraints of the plan area.

The strategic allocations provide the main development opportunities and are fundamental to delivering sufficient development. These are located at Beaminster, Bridport, Chickerell, Crossways, Dorchester, Lyme Regis, Portland, Sherborne and Weymouth (including an area north of Littlemoor that lies partly within West Dorset), and are indicated in Table 3.2. The main towns and smaller settlements with defined development boundaries also provide a considerable supply of smaller sites through redevelopment and infill opportunities that are needed to meet projected needs.

Development opportunities in the more rural areas will be focused primarily at the larger villages, and should take place at an appropriate scale to the size of the village (unless identified as a strategic allocation). It is expected that neighbourhood development plans and other appropriate planning tools will be used to help bring forward new development, and may allocate additional sites, or extend an existing (or add a new) development boundary to help deliver this growth.

Away from existing settlements, development opportunities will be more limited to those activities that will help continue to support the rural economy or help in the long-term management of the countryside and its unique character.

ECONOMY

A continuing supply of land and premises suitable for employment uses is needed, of a type and scale consistent with **appropriate to the characteristics of** the local area, to provide sufficient opportunities for employment needs to be met locally, to reduce the need to travel and promote economic growth and social inclusion. This will be delivered through the allocation and provision of new sites (with the greater proportion of development at the towns), the suitable protection of existing employment sites (taking into account their significance), and flexible policies to allow development to come forward on other suitable sites.

Comment [A11]: 4.1G

The development of new retail and town centre uses will be directed to the town centres of Weymouth, Dorchester, Bridport, Sherborne and Lyme Regis. Outside the town centres, smaller scale development of shops, financial and professional services, food and drink, office, leisure and community uses will be directed towards local centres. Development should not undermine the functioning of any centre, or adversely affect its vitality or viability.

HOUSING

A continuing supply of housing land is needed to help meet the changing demographic and social needs of the area, and to help reduce the need to travel and promote economic growth and social inclusion. The type, size and mix of housing will be expected to reflect local needs as far as possible and result in balanced communities.

Although the total projected need for affordable housing is not expected to be met in the plan period, opportunities will be taken to secure affordable homes to meet local needs. This will include ensuring all new open market housing sites make a contribution (through providing new affordable homes or, where this is not possible, making a financial contribution), and through a range of flexible policies that encourage affordable housing to come forward where there are suitable opportunities.

COMMUNITY NEEDS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Community facilities that help promote social interaction as well as minimise the need to travel by car should be provided within local communities. Where possible and practicable (for example on larger developments), new local community facilities will be provided as part of the development, creating attractive and vibrant places to live. Existing local facilities will be protected through a flexible approach which recognises the changing needs in society.

Providing a safe transport route network for all types of travel, and providing choices for “greener” travel options where practicable, are also a key part of the strategy.

Some community facilities or infrastructure play a much wider, strategic role in our communities, such as flood defences, the strategic road and rail network and communications technologies. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be used to plan for these, with development contributing towards their delivery through either planning obligations or the Community Infrastructure Levy.

- 1.3.2 Communities preparing Neighbourhood Development Plans will need to show how their proposals are in general conformity with this strategic approach.

1.4 PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 1.4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework recognises the international imperative to tackle climate change and finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which we live our lives. It makes reference to the three aspects of sustainable development; economic, social and environmental. And it states that the planning system should play an active role in guiding development to sustainable solutions.

1.4.2 The councils will take a positive approach when determining planning applications which reflect the presumption in favour of development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. The councils will work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. The councils encourage pre application consultation and discussion with applicants and agents prior to planning applications being submitted, enabling applications to be determined in a more efficient and positive manner.

1.4.3 Planning applications which are consistent with the local plan policies (and where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay where practicable, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

INT1. PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

i) There will be a presumption in favour of sustainable development that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Where there are no policies relevant to an application, or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision, the following matters will be taken into account:

- the extent to which the proposal positively contributes to the strategic objectives of the local plan,
- whether specific policies in that National Planning Policy Framework indicate that development should be restricted, and
- whether the adverse impacts of granting permission could significantly outweigh the benefits.

Comment [A12]: 1.4A

1.4.1.5 MONITORING AND REVIEW

1.4.1.5.1 Although the plan is written to cover 20 years to 2031, it is likely that a review of the plan will happen well before the end date of the plan. This is necessary not only to ensure a continuity of policy beyond 2031, but also to respond to unforeseen changes that are likely to occur during the plan's lifetime.

1.4.21.5.2 Monitoring and, where relevant, targets, are included in relation to specific policies in the plan. The Councils will regularly monitor the extent to which the policies are effective and what they are delivering in terms of both new development, social and economic factors and environmental protection. And the Councils will also consider what implications changes to national policy may have on the effectiveness of the plan. The role of neighbourhood development plans will also be monitored as they have the ability to play a key role in the planning of new development. Any of these factors may trigger the need to consider an early review of the plan. Otherwise a review is likely to commence by no later than ~~2026~~2021 in order to maintain a robust five year land supply.

Comment [A13]: 1.4B

Comment [A14]: 1.4C